

ELECTRONIC FORM OF CITIZENS' APPEAL AS AN INDICATOR OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract. *In Ukraine, the appeal of citizens to the subjects of office is an indicator of the democratization of the entire system of public administration, its openness, effectiveness, and efficiency. The official data on the number of appeals filed with the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine from 2017 to 2019 was analyzed, using correlation analysis, Pearson's chi-squared criterion, and theoretical and empirical distribution method. It was established that the prevailing form of citizens' appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2019 was the electronic form. The amount of using the electronic form has changed significantly from 2017 to 2019: the value of the Pearson's Chi-squared criterion is 332.622, $p < 0.001$. Moreover, it was determined that the value of the opportunity to focus on the application itself, and not on the accompanying formal application procedures, is the only significant harbinger of the thesis that using electronic forms makes the participation of citizens in public administration better. As a result of the study, it is proven that in Ukraine the distribution of the values of citizens' appeals to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine is different depending on the sphere of public relations; citizens' appeals to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine mostly concern the sphere of social protection: the value of Pearson's Chi-squared in 2019 is 27.203, $p < 0.01$; in 2018 – 29.855, $p < 0.01$; in 2017 – 28.65, $p < 0.01$. Besides, it was determined that the changes in the distribution of appeals to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine for 2017-2019 depending on the sphere of public relations were not identified.*

Keywords: *democratization, legal system, the Pearson's Chi-squared criterion, E-government concept.*

Raktiniai žodžiai: *demokratizavimas, teisinė sistema, Pirsono Chi kvadrato kriterijus, E- valdžios konceptas*

Introduction

Currently, Ukraine is at the stage of reforming the entire legal system, which is connected, firstly, with integration into the European Union, and secondly, with the improvement of legal regulation of all spheres of life. One of the issues requiring special attention is the creation of an information society using modern computer technologies and the use of global Internet systems (Tkach & Urmancheva, 2009; Sakulyeva, 2020). The expression of tendencies in the intensification of the use of electronic technologies in the field of public administration is the introduction of an electronic form of citizens' appeals (Yereskova et al., 2020; Bayanov et al., 2019). The innovation expands the possibilities of realizing the right of citizens to appeal, ensures the participation of citizens in solving socially significant issues, and appears as an indicator of citizens' trust in the government (Datta, 2020). In this regard, the scientific study of the problems of implementing the institute of appeals in electronic form is gaining relevance.

Analyzing the initiatives of the European Union on the development and implementation of the programs "e-Europe" and "e-Europe plus" we can distinguish the main initial stages of their implementation. They were first proclaimed by the European Commission in December 1999 in connection with the development of the European network. A course was pursued to ensure appropriate economic policies, emphasizing the need for better functioning capital markets and more competitive products for favorable innovation. The next step in the "e-Europe" Program of the Member States of the European Parliament was to write a progressive report to the Lisbon European Council (Máchová & Lněnička, 2015). At this summit, the heads of state and government undertook to take a number of steps, including setting a start date for the "e-Europe" program. The purpose of the "e-Europe" action plan was to identify the necessary measures for the implementation of the "e-Europe" program, including eleven areas where appropriate changes and additions should be made at the European level (Rot et al., 2020).

The citizens' appeal institute was created to ensure the constitutional principle of citizen participation in the management of state and public affairs (Nurbasari et al., 2019). All citizens have the right to submit individual or collective written appeals or to personally apply to state authorities, local self-government bodies and officials and functionaries of these bodies, who are obliged to consider the appeal by providing a reasoned answer within the time established by the law (Constitution of Ukraine, 1996). The role of the electronic form of interaction between citizens and public authorities has been updated and recognized by scientists and practitioners in the field of public administration within the framework of the E-Government concept (Mashchenko, 2017; Ming et al., 2020). In addition, global tendencies in the functioning of public authorities have made influence on the introduction of the E-government concept in Ukraine (Kovaliuk & Kobets, 2019). One of the directions was the use of an electronic form of appeal. The activities of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine regarding work with citizens can be deployed through the Internet and telecommunication technologies, which is especially valuable. The tendencies in the international scientific research data show that the predicted impact of the use of interactive technologies depends on the criteria that are taken into account (Suray

et al., 2020; Shkarlet et al., 2019). Therefore, the research aimed at providing a deeper understanding of the problem even with less data, can be as valuable as large polls. A review of the literature testifies to the distinctive conclusions about the impact of the institution of citizens' appeal on the functioning of public authorities (Kostygova et al., 2019). At the same time, citizens' appeals, regardless of the form of appeal, are defined as a way of joint management (Bull, 2015).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the practice of using the electronic form of appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, and whether it has a similar or excellent influence on the dynamics of appeals regarding specific areas of public relations (Novozhenov et al., 2020). The study is based on the official data published by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine from 2017 to 2019. The results that need to be reported in this article are new. Research questions are as follows:

1. Has the value of submitted appeals to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in electronic form from 2017 to 2019 changed in comparison with the use of written and oral forms of appeal?
2. Did the change in the form of appeal affect the indicators of a qualitative connection between the appeals and the specific sphere of public relations?

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted on the basis of the data on citizens' appeals to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine using an electronic form. The reports of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine according to two criteria: the form of appeal and the sphere of public relations to which they relate: Information on the work with citizens' appeals received by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2017), Information on the work with citizens' appeals received by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2018), Information on the work with citizens' appeals received by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2019). The data on the form of appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine acquired the following meanings – oral form, written form and electronic form. The data on the sphere of appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine are based on the allocation of the main groups of public relations: the sphere of financial, tax, customs policy, the sphere of ensuring law and order, realization of the rights and freedoms of citizens; the sphere of activity of the central executive bodies, the sphere of social protection, the sphere of public facilities, the sphere of health protection, the sphere of land relations, the sphere of labour and wages, and other issues. At the same time, those spheres of public relations that are applicable to the general period under study have been selected. The statement regarding the analyzed data corresponds to the fact that the predominant use of the electronic form does not affect the subject of the appeals (Reddick, 2010; Ma & Zheng, 2019).

The data collected was analyzed using SPSS statistics. In addition to calculating standard descriptive measures, the normality of distributions was checked using the non-parametric criterion for comparing the data among themselves, via the Pearson's Chi-squared criterion. To determine the prevailing form of appeals to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2019, an analysis was carried out using the Pearson's Chi-squared

criterion. Based on the fact that in 2019, 20,845 appeals were submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, of which: 1,258 – verbally, 7,421 – in plain writing and 12,166 – in written electronic form (Table 1).

Table 1. The form of citizens' appeal to the cabinet of ministers of Ukraine in 2019

The form of citizens' appeal	Empirical distribution	Theoretical distribution
Oral form	1,258	6,948
Written simple form	7,421	6,948
Electronic form	12,166	6,948

The value of the χ^2 criterion is 5,385.469, $p < 0.001$, thus the prevailing form of citizens' appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2019 is revealed – this is an electronic form. To determine the prevailing form of appeals to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2018, an analysis was carried out using the Pearson's Chi-squared criterion. Based on the fact that in 2018, 25,758 appeals were submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, of which: 2,374 – orally, 10,765 – in written simple and 12,619 – in written electronic form (Table 2).

Table 2. The form of citizens' appeal to the cabinet of ministers of Ukraine in 2018

The form of citizens' appeal	Empirical distribution	Theoretical distribution
Oral form	2,374	8,586
Written simple form	10,765	8,586
Electronic form	12,619	8,586

The value of the χ^2 criterion is 4,533.293, $p = 1.000$, so the prevailing form of citizens' appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2018 was not revealed, and the values were distributed between a written simple and written electronic form. Based on the fact that in 2017, 31,213 appeals were submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, of which: 2,820 – verbally, 19,251 – in plain written and 9,142 – in written electronic form (Table 3).

Table 3. The form of citizens' appeal to the cabinet of ministers of Ukraine in 2017

The form of citizens' appeal	Empirical distribution	Theoretical distribution
Oral form	2,820	10,404
Written simple form	19,251	10,404
Electronic form	9,142	10,404

The value of the χ^2 criterion is 7070.259, $p < 0.001$, thus the prevailing form of citizens' appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2017 is revealed – a written simple form.

Results

In order to establish the answer to the first question, did the values of the submitted appeals to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine change depending on the form of appeal from 2017 to 2019, it was determined: the number of oral appeals from 2017 to 2019 decreased, since the value of the χ^2 criterion is 334,882 , $p < 0.001$; the number of written simple appeals decreased from 2017 to 2019, since the value of the χ^2 criterion is 2,857.305, $p < 0.001$; the number of electronic appeals increased from 2017 to 2019, since the value of the χ^2 criterion is 332.622, $p < 0.001$.

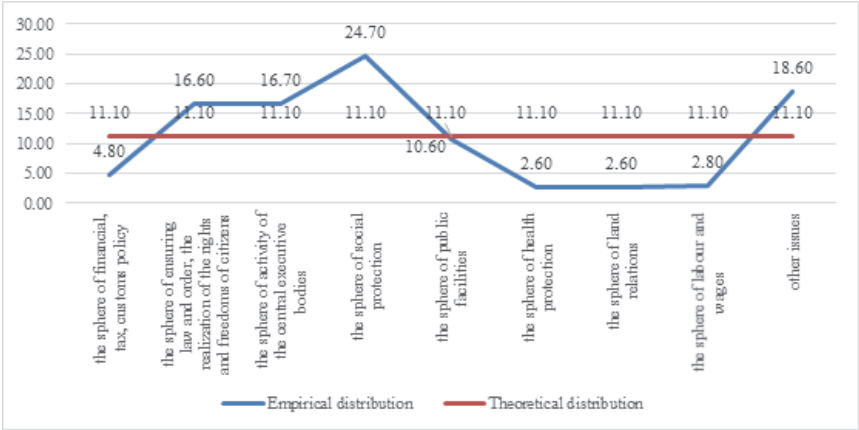


Figure 1. The predominant sphere of public relations, within which appeals were submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2019

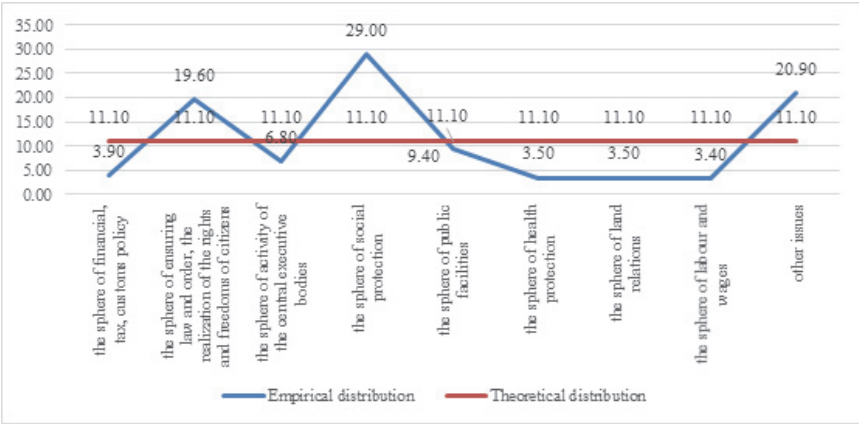


Figure 2. The predominant sphere of public relations, within which appeals were submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2018

In order to establish the influence of the form of appeal on the indicators of the qualitative relationship of appeals with specific public relations, the prevailing spheres of public relations were identified as a matter of priority, for which appeals were submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine from 2017 to 2019. Consequently, in 2019 the largest number of appeals related to the sphere of social protection (the value of the χ^2 criterion is 27.203, $p < 0.01$), which is shown in Figure 1; in 2018 – in the field of social protection (the value of the χ^2 criterion is 29.855, $p < 0.01$), which is shown in Figure 2; in 2017 – also in the field of social protection (the number of degrees of freedom is 28, $65r < 0.01$), which is shown in Figure 3.

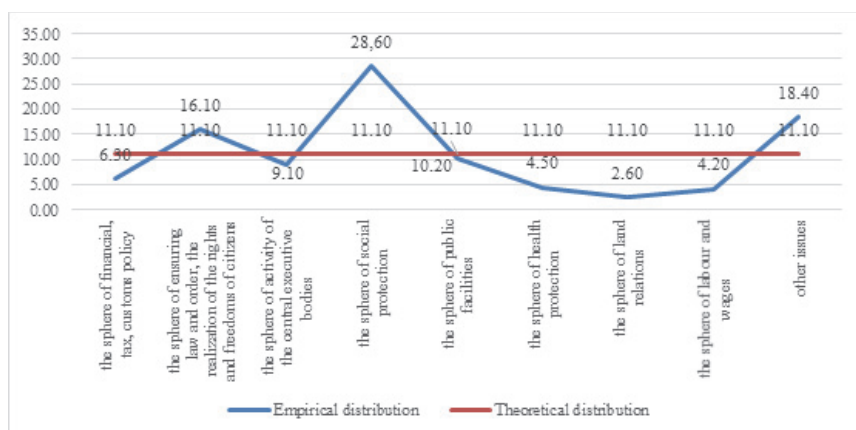


Figure 3. The predominant sphere of public relations, within which appeals were submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2017

The significance of changes in appeals to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in each particular area from 2017 to 2019 is analyzed, namely: in the field of financial, tax, customs policy with a value of χ^2 criterion 0.290, $p > 0.05$; in the field of ensuring law and order, the exercise of the rights and freedoms of citizens with a value of χ^2 of 0.198, $p > 0.05$; in the field of activity of central executive bodies with the value of the criterion χ^2 2.341, $p > 0.05$; in the field of social protection with the value of the criterion χ^2 0.209, $p > 0.05$; in the field of public facilities with the value of the criterion χ^2 0.037, $p > 0.05$ here of land relations with the value of the criterion χ^2 0.238, $p > 0.05$; in the field of labour and wages with the value of the criterion χ^2 0.132, $p > 0.05$.

Discussion

The institute of citizens' appeals is one of the most effective and efficient measures of public control over the activities of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, which at the same time creates the opportunity for citizens to participate in the public administration. The possibility of exercising by the citizens of Ukraine the right to submit proposals for

improvement to their bodies to public authorities, associations of citizens in accordance with their charter, to reveal shortcomings in their work, and to appeal the actions of officials of state and municipal bodies thus ensuring proper response at the regulatory level (Law of Ukraine No. 393/96-BP, 1996). Appeals of citizens to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine is a way for citizens to initiate legal relations with bodies of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and their officials in a form specified by law (including an electronic form) in order to realize their socio-economic, political and personal rights and legal interests. The content of the appeal combines two components: the essential (purpose, subject and background of the appeal) and formal (form, type of the appeal).

Appeals of citizens to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine can be in the form of a proposal (an appeal from citizens containing advice and/or recommendations regarding the activities of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine), an application (an appeal from citizens with a request to facilitate the implementation of their rights and interests fixed by applicable law, reports of violations of the law or deficiencies in the activities of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine), a complaint (an appeal with a request for the restoration of a violation by actions (inaction), decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers in Ukraine, and rights and protection of the legitimate interests of citizens. In addition, appeals can be filed in various forms: oral – can be set out by a citizen: at a personal appointment, using telephone communications through certain contact centers, telephone “hot lines” and recorded (registered) by an official (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 924, 2010); written – sent by mail or using the Internet, transmitted by a citizen personally or through an authorized person.

Since 2015, the practice of functioning of the public administration has been supplemented with such a form of appeal as electronic, which is caused by the use of information and communication technologies in all spheres of public relations (Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 797-r, 2017). The appeals filed in electronic form are subject to the general requirements that apply to all types of appeals, namely: the obligation to indicate the surname, name, patronymic of the author, a statement of the essence of the issue raised, comments, suggestions, statements or complaints, solicitations or requests; the use of the Ukrainian language as a language of appeal (Law of Ukraine No. 2704-VIII, 2019); the lack of content of calls for the overthrow of the constitutional order, violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, propaganda of war, violence, cruelty, incitement of interethnic, racial, religious hatred, calls for terrorist acts, encroachment on human rights and freedoms; compliance with the requirements of subjectivity and the like. The features of the electronic submission of appeals to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine consist in the method and form of submission. The electronic form is a kind of written one (Civil Code of Ukraine, 2003), since an expression of the will of the parties are equated to written using teletype, electronic or other technical means of communication). The visual form is an electronic document (Law of Ukraine No. 851-IV, 2003). Regarding the method of submission, it is a certain action (sequence of actions), a technique or a system of techniques, which makes it possible to file an electronic appeal. Electronic appeal can be received through an information (automated) system in which information processing tech-

nology is implemented using hardware and software, that is, electronically (Law of Ukraine No. 80/94-BP, 1994).

In general, appeals to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine may differ depending on the sign of receipt for: primary – first-time appeals; repeated ones that come from the same citizen in the case of a decision of a preliminary filed appeal in full, assuming a defect, not in essence, an appeal of a preliminary decision, a message about the untimely consideration of the previous application, if the time period for consideration established by law has expired, but the answer is not provided to the citizen; doublet – the appeal of the same person or group of persons on a similar issue if sent to various addressees and sent by addressees for consideration by belonging to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine; repeated – an appeal from one citizen arriving to the Cabinet of Ministers and identical in content, however, it is re-sent for a short period of time, on conditions that no previous response has been provided to the previous appeal within the established deadlines; mass – come in large numbers from different citizens with the same content or essence of the issue (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 828, 2008).

Specific is the procedure for submitting appeals to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine using an electronic form, which consists of the following stages: creating an appeal using an electronic form; consideration of the appeal; provision of the answer and its possible appeal. In order to submit an appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in electronic form, you must log in to the site of the subject of the appeal. At this stage, the initiator (the author of the appeal) fills out a special form. In order to create a new appeal, you must log in to the site, and then select the “submit electronic appeal” function. A user who has not logged into the site will not get access to a special form for creating a new electronic appeal. After the successful implementation of these actions, the text is placed. The appeal should state the essence of the appeal, indicate the surname, name, patronymic of the author, and email address. Regarding the content of the appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the essence of the appeal and the proposal should be stated. All proposals, applications and complaints that have been received should be accepted and centrally registered on the day they are received, and those that arrived on a non-working day and time – the next working day after it – on registration and control cards suitable for processing by personal computers (Rosenberg, 2020). The use of an electronic digital signature when sending an electronic appeal is not required. At the stage of consideration and resolution of citizens’ appeals, a set of procedural actions is carried out by an authorized person (Dias, 2020). At this stage, the consideration of the appeal is carried out on the merits, in case of need, verification of the facts stated in the complaint or statement, and clarification of the reasons for citizens to complain. In the investigation, a decision is made that must meet such requirements as: validity and legality. The submission by citizens of applications, complaints and proposals to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine as a whole affects the effectiveness and efficiency of the latter.

Conclusions

1. The article is devoted to the practical significance of the use of the electronic form with the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine as a way of gauging citizens' appeal, which ensures the constitutional right to participate in the management of public affairs.
2. The institution of citizens' appeals is one of the most efficient and effective measures of public control over the activities of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and other public organs, which at the same time creates an opportunity for citizens to participate in public administration. The possibility for citizens of Ukraine to exercise the right to submit information for consideration to public authorities, associations of citizens in accordance with their charter proposals for improving their activities, to reveal shortcomings in work, and to appeal against the actions of officials of state and municipal bodies in ensuring appropriate response at the regulatory level.
3. In the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, it seems expedient to use the electronic form of appeals, because state bodies should take into account the opinions of citizens in all circumstances. Citizens' appeals to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and other public authorities are an effective way for citizens to initiate legal relations with the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and other state bodies, and their officials, in order to implement their socio-economic, political and personal rights and legitimate interests.
4. The authors propose to use the electronic form of appeal not as an alternative, but as the main way of interaction of citizens with the subjects of public administration. At the same time, this study considered not only the effectiveness of using the electronic form of citizens appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, but also the features of such a document, ensuring the safety of possibly confidential information contained in it and the rules of such documents.

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Elektroninė piliečių kreipimosi forma kaip viešojo administravimo skaitmeninės transformacijos rodiklis

Anotacija

Ukrainoje piliečių kreipimasis į valdžios institucijas yra visos viešojo administravimo sistemos demokratizacijos, jos atvirumo, efektyvumo ir efektyvumo rodiklis. Šiame straipsnyje, naudojant koreliacijos analizę, Pearsono Chi kvadrato kriterijų ir teorinį bei empirinį paskirstymo metodą, buvo analizuojami oficialūs duomenys apie apeliacijų, pateiktų Ukrainos ministrų kabinetui, skaičių (nuo 2017 iki 2019 metų). Buvo nustatyta, kad 2019 m. vyraujanti piliečių kreipimosi į Ukrainos ministrų kabinetą forma buvo elektroninė. Elektroninės formos naudojimas nuo 2017 m. Iki 2019 m. labai pasikeitė: Pearsono Chi kvadrato kriterijaus vertė yra 332,622, $p < 0,001$. Be to, buvo nuspręsta sutelkti dėmesį į pačių paraišką, o ne į oficialias paraiškų (apeliacijų) teikimo procedūras ir tai yra pagrindinė šio straipsnio esmė. Straipsnyje teigiama, kad naudojant elektronines kreipimosi ir apeliacijų formas piliečių dalyvavimas viešajame valdyme tampa žymiai svarbesnis ir aktualesnis. Šio tyrimo (straipsnio) rezultatais buvo nustatyta, kad Ukrainos piliečių kreipimūsi į Ukrainos ministrų kabinetą vertybių pasiskirstymas, atsižvelgiant į viešojo sektoriaus sritis, skiriasi. Piliečių kreipimasis į Ukrainos ministrų kabinetą dažniausiai susijęs su socialinės apsaugos sritimi: Pearsono Chi kvadrato vertė 2019 m. buvo 27,203, $p < 0,01$; 2018 m. – 29,855, $p < 0,01$; 2017 m. – 28,65, $p < 0,01$. Be to, nustatyti, apeliacijų į Ukrainos ministrų kabinetą paskirstymo pokyčiai 2017–2019 m.

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