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THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN RESPONSIBLE POLICY FORMATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION STATES AND UKRAINE

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Abstract. International non-governmental organizations have a significant impact on the formation of responsible policies in the EU countries and Ukraine, contributing to the implementation of democratic standards, human rights and sustainable development. This article analyzes the role of international non-governmental organizations in supporting democratic reforms, protecting human rights and implementing transparency standards. Separately, the mechanisms through which international non-governmental organizations influence the work of state governments are considered, in particular through monitoring, advocacy and involving the public in decision-making processes. Particular attention is paid to the challenges faced by organizations in Ukraine, including insufficient financial support, political pressure and limited access to resources. The conclusion of the article emphasizes the importance of cooperation between international non-governmental organizations, states and international partners to achieve sustainable change. It is noted that strengthening the interaction of organizations with international donors and civil society is a promising direction for further research, which will contribute to a more effective implementation of their mission. Prospects for further research focus on studying the effectiveness of these organizations in complex political environments.

Key words: international non-governmental organizations, responsible policy, democratic reforms, human rights protection, advocacy, transparency, civil society.

Introduction. International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) play an important role in holding governments accountable by promoting democratic reforms, human rights protection and sustainable development. They have become important actors in policy-making either in the European Union (EU) or Ukraine. Their activities cover a wide range of areas, including human rights protection, environmental protection, social inclusion and democratic reforms. Their role in supporting democratization processes and the development of civil society in Ukraine, which seeks to integrate into European structures and adapt to international standards, is particularly important. Their activities are particularly relevant in the context of the European Union and Ukraine, which seek to improve the effectiveness of their policies, adapt to modern global challenges and comply with international standards. In EU countries, INGOs often act as partners with governments in the development and implementation of policy initiatives, while in Ukraine their activities often take the form of a struggle for transparency, the rule of law and the fight against corruption. Despite their significant potential, INGOs face a number of obstacles, including unstable funding, political pressure, and a lack of understanding of their role by society. Researching the impact of these organizations is relevant to understanding their contribution to responsible policymaking and identifying ways to improve their effectiveness.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of international non-governmental organizations in responsible policies formation in the European Union and Ukraine, identify the key challenges they face, and formulate recommendations for improving the effectiveness of their activities. The following tasks arise from the purpose of the study:

- to explore the main mechanisms of INGO influence on policy-making in the EU and Ukraine;
- to identify examples of successful cooperation between INGOs and state structures;

- to analyze the challenges faced by INGOs in Ukraine;
- to assess the role of international donors in supporting the activities of INGOs;
- to develop recommendations for strengthening interaction between INGOs, governments and civil society.

The study is based on the analysis of scientific publications, reports of international organizations and regulatory documents. The comparative analysis method was used to assess the specifics of INGO activities in the EU countries and Ukraine. In addition, an analysis of practical cases of successful interaction of INGOs with governments was conducted and the effectiveness of influence mechanisms was assessed. To identify challenges and problems, the method of content analysis of reports and interviews with representatives of INGOs in Ukraine was used.

Previous research suggests that INGOs are a powerful tool for democratization and human rights protection in Europe. In EU countries, they work closely with governments on sustainable initiatives such as environmental protection, social inclusion and transparency. At the same time, in Ukraine, their activities are often limited by insufficient funding, difficulties in communicating with state authorities and political pressure. Anti-corruption initiatives that attract support from international donors are successful cases. However, research indicates the need to develop clearer mechanisms for interaction between INGOs, governments and civil society, which requires further study.

Presentation of the main material. International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in the European Union (EU) countries are actively involved in decision-making processes, providing expert assessments and recommendations. They participate in public consultations, organize awareness-raising campaigns and monitor the implementation of policies. International NGOs are important players in the European Union's decision-making system. Their participation is based on the principles of democracy and transparency. According to a study by the European Commission (European Commission, 2022), more than 70% of EU civil society organizations are involved in policy consultations in the areas of ecology, human rights protection, economic development and social inclusion. This includes participating in the development of regulatory acts, making proposals for changes to legislation and implementing recommendations on sustainable development strategies (State of the Union, 2022: 32). For example, organizations such as Amnesty International or Greenpeace have become key partners in shaping policies on human rights and environmental protection.

International NGOs have become important players in EU policy-making due to their ability to gather public opinion, provide expertise and lobby for civil society interests. Their activities cover a wide range of areas: from the protection of human rights to environmental initiatives. According to a report by the European Commission (2022), over 60% of new regulatory acts in the EU undergo a consultation phase with the participation of INGOs. For example, in 2020, organizations working in the field of social inclusion contributed to the development of the European Action Plan against Poverty (European Commission Report, 2022: 61). This interaction was made possible by the creation of public debate platforms, such as the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), which allow civil society to influence the decisions of European institutions.

One of the most successful areas of activity of INGOs is environmental protection. Organizations such as The World Wide Fund for Nature and Friends of the Earth actively promote initiatives to reduce carbon emissions, reduce plastic consumption and preserve biodiversity. Their participation in the implementation of the European Green Deal ensured the inclusion of public interests in this strategic document. For example, thanks to their campaigns, the governments of EU member states committed to achieving climate neutrality by 2050 (Kytsiuk, 2023: 4). INGOs also monitor the implementation of environmental regulations by EU member states, regularly publishing reports on violations.

Environmental policy is one of the most visible examples of successful INGO influence in the EU. Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth have been active participants in the development and monitoring of the implementation of the European Green Deal. Their initiatives have helped to strengthen envi-

ronmental regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, develop renewable energy sources and reduce plastic pollution. For example, campaigns against the use of single-use plastics in 2019 led to the adoption of an EU directive banning certain types of plastic products (European Green Deal, 2019, 31). In addition, environmental INGOs regularly monitor the implementation of environmental commitments by EU member states' governments, providing the public with reports on the real state of affairs.

For example, in 2020, Greenpeace launched a campaign criticizing the Nord Stream 2 project, highlighting the environmental threats. Their pressure contributed to the imposition of sanctions by the EU and a partial revision of the project. In addition, environmental INGOs are involved in the implementation of initiatives such as the LIFE program (development of eco-innovation). They provide technical expertise and help Member States integrate environmental standards into national strategies (Communication from The Commission, 2020, 11). In 2021, thanks to the efforts of Friends of the Earth Europe, several countries revised their deforestation plans aimed at preserving biodiversity.

INGOs in the European Union countries play a significant role as intermediaries between governments, international structures and the public. Their influence is based on the ability to mobilize resources, knowledge and public support to achieve goals. In particular, in the field of social policy, organizations such as Oxfam or Caritas Europe conduct an analysis of the consequences of economic reforms, focusing on supporting vulnerable groups. According to the European Economic and Social Committee (2021), INGOs provide 20-25% of expert support in the development of social programs at the EU level (Annual activity report, 2021: 14).

INGOs also advocate through grassroots campaigns and public consultations. In 2019, Climate Action Network Europe collected over 1 million signatures on a petition to the European Parliament demanding stronger climate targets under the Paris Agreement. This was an example of the successful use of direct democracy mechanisms to influence policy-making.

In Ukraine, INGOs actively cooperate with state authorities, contributing to the implementation of reforms and increasing transparency. They participate in the development of legislation, provide expert opinions and organize public discussions. For example, human rights organizations actively influence legislative initiatives in this area. International non-governmental organizations in Ukraine often act as partners for authorities, helping to implement reforms. For example, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), through its local offices, actively supports decentralization reforms, promotes the improvement of e-government mechanisms and raises citizens' awareness of democratic rights. Success in this cooperation is observed in the implementation of electronic services, such as the "Prozorro" system, which ensures transparency in public procurement. However, there are problems in this interaction, including insufficient integration of local communities into decision-making processes (Balan, 2021: 17).

In Ukraine, the role of INGOs has grown significantly in the last decade, especially after the Revolution of Dignity. Organizations such as the Center for Civil Liberties have been working closely with government agencies to implement democratic reforms. In particular, in 2021, INGOs participated in the development of a draft law on increasing the transparency of political party financing, which was initiated with the support of the Council of Europe. INGOs also work at the regional level, helping local communities implement decentralization initiatives. For example, the USAID DOBRE program helped build the capacity of local governments in 75 communities by developing development strategies and attracting international resources.

One example of successful cooperation is the work of anti-corruption organizations, which, together with state bodies, develop and implement strategies to combat corruption. This includes monitoring the activities of officials, organizing public hearings and raising awareness among citizens about corruption risks. Among the successful examples are projects to support decentralization reform, which were implemented with the support of INGOs. These projects included training for representatives of

local communities, financing infrastructure development and creating regional platforms for dialogue with the government.

In 2022, in the context of the war in Ukraine, international INGOs, such as the Norwegian Refugee Council and the International Rescue Committee, together with the government, organized support programs for internally displaced persons. Their activities include financial assistance, the establishment of accommodation centers, and the provision of legal support. International non-governmental organizations specializing in human rights play an important role in monitoring and combating violations. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union are examples of organizations that actively document violations, especially in the conflict zone in Donbas. Their reports have become an important source of evidence for international legal processes, such as hearings at the International Criminal Court.

Human rights protection is one of the key areas of activity of INGOs. In the context of Russian aggression against Ukraine, organizations such as Human Rights Watch and the Ukrainian Helsinki Union have become important witnesses in documenting war crimes. For example, in 2022, reports were published on violations of the rights of the civilian population in Bucha and Mariupol, which became the basis for international investigations. The Ukrainian Helsinki Union for Human Rights (UHHRU) and Human Rights Watch document violations of the rights of the civilian population, including cases of torture, unlawful detention and disappearances. In 2022, after the start of full-scale Russian aggression, INGO reports became an important source of evidence for international courts (Tchobo, 2022: 14). For example, the Truth Hounds organization records war crimes in the occupied territories, and Amnesty International works to protect the rights of vulnerable groups, including children and women who have become victims of the conflict.

These organizations also conduct advocacy activities aimed at improving conditions of detention and access to legal aid. In cooperation with the Council of Europe, INGOs in Ukraine are developing programs to improve conditions in the penitentiary system.

The main challenges for INGOs in Ukraine are insufficient funding, political pressure, and limited access to resources. These factors make it difficult to effectively implement their programs and initiatives. For example, organizations involved in the fight against corruption face resistance from certain state structures.

Despite their significant potential, most Ukrainian INGOs face funding challenges. In most cases, their projects depend on grants from international donors, such as USAID, the European Union, or Scandinavian governments. According to a study by the Renaissance Foundation (2022), only 15% of Ukrainian organizations have stable sources of funding. According to the same study, over 70% of organizations depend on international donors, such as USAID, GIZ, or the EU (IRF Report, 2022: 31). This poses risks to the long-term sustainability of their projects, as donors often change their priorities or reduce funding due to political or economic circumstances. There is also a problem with the distribution of funds, as some donors favor large international INGOs, leaving local organizations without the necessary support. For example, in 2021, several regional organizations working in the field of IDP (internally displaced persons) rights protection were forced to reduce their programs due to lack of funds. At the same time, Ukrainian INGOs often have limited access to state funding due to insufficient legislative regulation in this area. This negatively affects the ability of INGOs to fulfill their function as a “watchdog” of state authorities and provide independent monitoring.

In the context of political instability in Ukraine, INGOs often face pressure from state structures. According to a study by the Center for Democracy and Rule of Law (2022), in 35% of cases, organizations working to combat corruption face discrediting campaigns in the media or direct threats. Political pressure on INGOs is one of the main threats to their independence. As Transparency International Ukraine (2023) notes, some government officials are trying to restrict the activities of organizations working on transparency and accountability issues. In 2021, the Verkhovna Rada con-

sidered a draft law that would have strengthened financial control over INGOs, which has drawn criticism from the international community. Political pressure is one of the main challenges for INGOs in Ukraine. Organizations working on anti-corruption, transparency, and justice issues often face discrediting campaigns in the media or direct interference from the government. For example, the Anti-Corruption Center has repeatedly stated that inspections by regulatory bodies were selective (Pressure on anti-corruption officers or political struggle – expert commentary, 2017). In 2021, a draft law requiring additional reporting for INGOs drew significant criticism from the EU and OSCE for attempting to limit the independence of civil society. Political pressure significantly complicates the work of organizations, reducing trust in them among the population and creating a negative information background. Also, according to the Ukrainian Institute for the Future (2022), some media outlets use manipulation to discredit anti-corruption initiatives funded by international donors. This creates additional challenges for organizations trying to protect public interests (Programs of the Ukrainian Institute for the Future, 2022).

One of the most important areas of INGO activity is the fight against corruption. Organizations such as Transparency International Ukraine and the Anti-Corruption Action Centre contribute to the development of anti-corruption legislation, the introduction of independent bodies such as the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU), and increasing the transparency of state structures. Their initiatives have helped reduce corruption risks in the public procurement system. The fight against corruption is one of the priority areas of INGO activity in Ukraine. They play a key role in monitoring corruption schemes, proposing anti-corruption laws, and promoting open data. For example, in 2016, it was thanks to the efforts of INGOs that an electronic declaration platform was launched, which allows checking the property status of officials. At the same time, the DOZORRO organization created a network of public monitors who track violations in public procurement. Thanks to these initiatives, the level of public trust in anti-corruption bodies, such as NABU, has increased by 25% over the past five years. In addition, organizations are developing training programs for civil servants aimed at improving ethics at work. The success of these initiatives is confirmed by a USAID report (2022), which states that the level of trust in NABU among citizens has increased by 25% over the past three years (Viktorchuk, 2023: 143).

An important part of INGOs' activities is working with the media to raise public awareness. Advocacy campaigns organized by international organizations such as Freedom House actively promote the issues of freedom of speech and media independence. For example, such campaigns have achieved the repeal of laws that could restrict the activities of journalists.

At the regional level, INGOs play an important role in developing local self-government and engaging citizens in decision-making. The USAID DOBRE program, implemented with the support of local INGOs, contributed to the development of sustainable development strategies for over 100 communities. In 2021, a number of civil society organizations, as part of the "U-LEAD with Europe" initiative, conducted trainings for local leaders, which improved the management competencies of over 300 representatives of territorial communities in Ukraine.

INGOs in Ukraine actively cooperate with international organizations such as UNDP, UNICEF and OSCE to implement joint projects in the fields of education, medicine, environment and justice. For example, the UNDP project "Recovery and Peacebuilding" helps communities affected by conflict to rebuild infrastructure and create opportunities for economic growth. At the same time, international partners contribute to strengthening the capacity of Ukrainian INGOs through training, exchange of experience and funding of new initiatives.

Conclusions. International non-governmental organizations play an important role in shaping responsible policies in both the European Union and Ukraine. Their activities cover a wide range of areas, including democratization, human rights protection, the fight against corruption, support for social reforms, and environmental protection. In EU countries, INGOs have a significant impact on

decision-making processes due to their expert support, advocacy campaigns, and ability to mobilize public opinion. In Ukraine, their influence is somewhat limited due to political pressure, unstable funding, and the lack of clear mechanisms for cooperation with state structures. Despite this, examples of successful initiatives, such as the introduction of anti-corruption mechanisms or support for the rights of internally displaced persons, indicate the high effectiveness of INGOs in addressing critical issues.

In the context of the European Union, INGOs are a powerful tool for democratic participation of citizens in policy-making. They provide a platform for public dialogue, promote transparency of governments and accountability of politicians. Their contribution to the implementation of the European Green Deal, the fight against climate change and the preservation of biodiversity attracts particular attention. However, even in EU countries, INGOs face problems related to threats to independence, lack of funding or underestimation of their role by national governments. This underlines the need for further development of international partnerships, improvement of regulatory and legal mechanisms for supporting organizations and raising public awareness of their activities.

In Ukraine, where democratic processes are still in their infancy, the role of INGOs is particularly important. They act as catalysts for reform, a source of knowledge, and mechanisms for monitoring compliance with international standards. However, challenges related to financial dependence on donors, political pressure, and limited access to state resources constrain their potential. To ensure the sustainable development of civil society in Ukraine, it is important to create an enabling environment for INGOs: introduce transparent state funding mechanisms, strengthen protection of organizations from political pressure, and encourage their cooperation with local communities.

Thus, the further development of INGOs depends on their ability to adapt to modern challenges, effectively use available resources and expand their role as independent actors of civil society. Their success in the EU and in Ukraine demonstrates that civic activism can influence policy-making, change society and ensure responsible governance. Further research should be aimed at studying the effectiveness of INGO activities in different regions and developing new strategies to strengthen their role in the modern world.

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