Kristina Honcharuk, Head of "The Ukrainian Trade Union of Seafarers and Maritime industry workers", Lecturer at the Department of National Security Prince Volodymyr the Great Educational and Scientific Institute of Law and Security
Private Joint-Stock Company "Higher Education Institution "Interregional Academy of Personnel Management"
Kyiv, Ukraine

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INSTITUTIONAL INTERACTION BETWEEN THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OF UKRAINE'S MARITIME SECTOR

Ukraine's maritime sector is of strategic importance for the functioning of the national economy, foreign trade, the transport system, and the country's integration into the global economic space. At the same time, the specific nature of its operation, the large number of administrative and regulatory procedures, the international character of seafarers' employment, and the need to comply with international standards necessitate the development of an effective model of public administration in the sector. Under these conditions, interaction between public authorities and civil society institutions capable of exercising public oversight, representing the interests of the professional community, and providing feedback between governing actors and citizens becomes particularly important.

The traditional model of public administration primarily envisaged a one-way managerial influence of the state on the regulated sphere. By contrast, contemporary concepts of good governance and participatory governance are based on transparency, accountability, openness, and the involvement of interested social groups in the preparation and implementation of administrative decisions [1]. In the maritime sector, such actors include civil society organisations, trade unions, and other professional associations of seafarers. Their practical activities demonstrate a gradual transformation from predominantly representative and protective functions towards direct participation in public oversight, reform advocacy, expert support, and interaction with public authorities.

The importance of civil society has become particularly evident in the reform of the system of seafarers' training and certification. The long-standing existence of complex administrative procedures, a significant

scope of discretionary powers, and insufficient transparency at certain stages of issuing qualification documents created conditions conducive to corruption risks. Under such circumstances, civil society organisations began to perform the function of independent external oversight, combining the monitoring of administrative procedures with public communication, preparation of submissions to public authorities, advocacy for regulatory changes, and mobilisation of the professional community.

The experience of seafarers' civic activism in 2020–2023 is illustrative in this regard, when systematic public campaigns and protests helped bring the problems of corruption and excessive administrative burdens in the field of certification to the attention of the state. One of the outcomes of the reform process was the adoption of Law of Ukraine No. 1578-IX, which changed the approaches to determining qualification requirements for crew members and created prerequisites for further formalisation of the relevant procedures. At the same time, the expansion of electronic services and computerised forms of competence assessment demonstrated the potential of minimising direct contact between applicants and public officials as one of the instruments for reducing corruption risks [3].

However, digitalisation alone does not guarantee the proper quality of public administration. Transferring an administrative procedure into a digital environment without eliminating non-transparent algorithms, excessive discretion, or artificial administrative barriers may not eliminate existing risks but merely transform them. Therefore, the digital transformation of the maritime sector should be combined with public monitoring of the quality of electronic administrative services, openness of information concerning decision-making procedures, and the availability of effective mechanisms for challenging such decisions. In this context, public oversight acquires the role of a permanent feedback mechanism between the state and recipients of administrative services.

A second important area of institutional interaction is the activity of seafarers' professional associations. Under the legislation, trade unions exercise public oversight over compliance with labour legislation and represent and protect the labour and socio-economic rights of employees. In the maritime sphere, the importance of these powers is reinforced by the international nature of Ukrainian seafarers' employment and the need to ensure compliance with standards established by international maritime and labour law [4].

At the same time, the functions of professional associations are gradually extending beyond the traditional representation of employees' interests. They facilitate communication between seafarers and public authorities, participate in the work of public, consultative, and advisory bodies, provide legal and informational support, assist in resolving labour disputes, and take part in discussions of draft regulatory legal acts. For this reason, professional associations of seafarers should be regarded as institutional intermediaries between the state, employers, and the professional community, whose activities contribute to more substantiated administrative decision-making [2].

The issue of interaction between the state and the professional community gained additional importance following the beginning of the full-scale armed aggression against Ukraine. The introduction of martial law and the restrictions associated with it confronted the state with the need to simultaneously ensure national security requirements and preserve the human-resource potential of the maritime sector. Restrictions affecting the ability of certain categories of seafarers to pursue their professional activities, difficulties in renewing qualification documents, and problems related to crew rotation and repatriation significantly complicated the exercise of their labour rights. As I.O. Danylova notes, recognising Ukrainian seafarers as key workers may help overcome administrative restrictions and ensure the stability of maritime supply chains [5].

In our view, the further development of public administration in the maritime sector should involve a transition from episodic interaction between the state and civil society and professional associations towards the establishment of a permanent institutional mechanism for such cooperation. Its components may include the systematic involvement of representatives of the professional community in working groups and consultative and advisory bodies, public assessment of draft regulatory legal acts, monitoring of the quality of administrative services for seafarers, and the creation of digital feedback channels with public authorities.

At the same time, preserving the independence of the civil society sector is of fundamental importance. Institutional interaction should not turn civil society organisations into a formal extension of the state apparatus. On the contrary, their value to the public administration system lies precisely in their capacity to independently assess administrative decisions, identify systemic shortcomings, and represent the position of the professional community. Accordingly, the optimal approach is

a partnership model in which the state retains its public-authority and regulatory powers, while civil society provides independent oversight, expert participation, and continuous feedback.

Thus, civil society organisations and professional associations of seafarers are gradually transforming from objects of state policy into active participants in its formulation and implementation. Their involvement creates an additional level of institutional oversight, contributes to reducing corruption risks, increases the transparency of administrative procedures, and enables the needs of the professional community to be taken into account more effectively. A promising model for the development of public administration in Ukraine's maritime sector should therefore be based on systematic interaction among the state, civil society, and the professional community, founded on the principles of good governance, accountability, digital openness, and mutual institutional responsibility.

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