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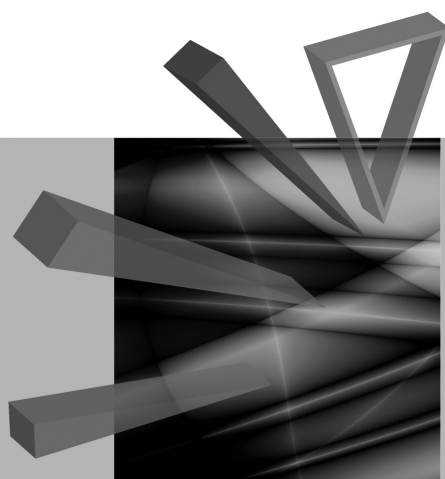
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# Regional Economy in Theory and Practice



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## **MODERNIZATION OF REGIONAL STRUCTURAL POLICY MECHANISMS IN UKRAINE IN THE PROCESS OF ITS EU INTEGRATION**

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**Summary:** Based on the theory of modernization, the question is raised as to how to implement in Ukraine the EU mechanisms of regional policy and the regional structural policy as its component. On the basis of the comparative analysis, the prerequisites and factors determining the structural policies of the EU and Ukraine are outlined. The risks (geo-economic, economic, energy, demographic) are determined that are associated with the structural distortions and can adversely affect Ukraine's integration into the EU. The mechanisms of regional structural policy are assessed, and the problems of their upgrading in Ukraine identified. The conclusion is made about the need for radical institutional solutions in Ukraine, including the development of selective programs of structural adjustment of regional economies.

**Keywords:** structural policy, EU regional policy, mechanisms of structural policy.

### **1. Introduction**

The expansion of the European Union, Ukraine's entry into the WTO, the global economic crisis, and the expectation of its second wave, like other globalization processes, produce a tremendous effect on the socio-economic development of the regions. In general, external challenges and internal problems cause a sharp differentiation of the Ukrainian regions. The internal factors include a deepening of structural distortions among regional economies. The main reasons are the following: absence of active measures on the structural transformation of the national economy, poor methodological base for choosing the priority structural adjustment of the national economy in general, and specifically its regional imperfections of acting mechanisms of structural policy.

Nevertheless, different mechanisms of structural adjustment depending upon the specificity of the national economy has been used by the countries of Western Europe, as well as by these of Central and Eastern Europe (second integration

wave), and that provides a relevant methodological and practical basis for the modernization of regional structural policy in Ukraine.

The institutional model of D. North [North 2000], scientific works by D. Puchala [Puchala 1993], R. Jones [Jones 2001], T. Bal-Woźniak [Bal-Woźniak 2007], I. Hladii, [Hladii 2006], N. Mikula and V. Tolkovanov [Mikula, Tolkovanov 2010], D. Lukianenko [Lukianenko 2007], W. Pappa [Pappa 2008] and others, make up the methodological base of this research.

The basis of the given research is a hypothesis on the improvement of the possibility for the regions to increase their compatibility on the basis of the structuring of their economies taking into account the challenges for the development of the national economic system and the modern processes occurring in the world economy. Based on the theory of modernization, we put forward the issue of implementation accounting for national identity, mechanisms of regional EU policy and its component, i.e. regional structural policy.

## **2. Preconditions and factors defining the regional structural policy in the EU and Ukraine**

In general, the regional structural policy of any country is determined by the following prerequisites: economic potential of the regions; regional equilibrium rate, geo-political and geo-economic statement of the regions; internal and external factors that determine trends of transformation of regional economic structures; challenges caused by the globalization and regionalization processes; institutional base for economic structuring of the regions.

The European Union, like the European market, is an example of a regional centralized model of development with a formed series of mega-regional contradictions [Lukianenko 2007, p. 32]. The main factors determining regional equilibrium (or imbalance) in the EU and in some member countries of this union are the following: peculiarities of modern regionalization of the global market, the complication of “globalism-regionalism” interrelation, development of a new model of spatial architectonics of the global market; functional regionalization of the modern European economic environment. Actually, there are three types of regional economic systems in the EU: a) formal, unified; b) functional (concentrated around a focus center, that is, a big company, a trade center, a research center); c) perceptual (determined by people’s attitudes towards territories). Four multifunctional centers have been formed within the European territory, whose economies are described through diversified structures, namely: “Big London”, “Amsterdam-Rotterdam” region, “Big Frankfurt with adjacent territories”, “Big Milan” [Hladii 2006, p. 320].

The structure of the economy and structural policy of the regions are affected by such contradictions of economic globalization as irregularity, asynchronality,



and disproportionality. Practically all asymmetries of the development that are available in the conditions of the expansion of the Euro-Union pertain to Euro-centrism as a modern integration process [Lukianenko 2007, p. 32].

The peculiarity of the regional structural policy of the EU and the selection of the mechanisms for its implementation is also effected by the chosen models of regional development, in particular: the model of functional regional development (Sweden, Ireland, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands); system of national level planning with clearly structured operational plans; creation of regional development strategies; model of regional approach to economic development (Slovakia); orientation at financial instruments (structural and other funds). The EU has created special financial institutes, Structural Funds and the Common Structural Fund. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe were provided with funds within the PHARE and Interreg II Programs.

The definition of a regional policy aimed at the promotion of socio-economic convergence of countries and regions, leveling of territorial disparities through supporting uncompetitive regions is crucial for economic structuring. Among the priorities there are the following: promoting the structural transformation and development of depressed regions (GDP *per capita* in recent years < 75% average – Greece, Ireland, Eastern regions of Germany, etc.); providing financial assistance to the regions where a stagnant industry is observed; combating long-term unemployment; employment support initiatives; financing of agricultural areas, and accelerating the restructuring of agriculture; assistance to under-populated regions, where the population density does not exceed 8 people per 1 km<sup>2</sup> (Sweden, Finland); differentiation decrease in levels of economic development of the new EU member countries. In 2007–2013, the EU regional policy was budgeted with 348 billion EUR, including 278 billion EUR for the structural funds and 70 billion EUR for the Cohesion Fund. However, researchers are paying attention to the lack of flexibility of these financial institutions. The developed mechanisms for financing the EU regional policy include (TACIS 1996–2006, EU – 2.4 billion EUR, SHS – 90 million EUR, ENPI – 2007–2010 – 295 million EUR, 2010–2013, Eastern Partnership – 600 million EUR) [Mikula, Tolkovnov 2010, p. 8]

A certain effect of the structural adjustment of regional economies in Europe has been provided through cross-border cooperation, in particular, the development of Euro-regions. Such countries as Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, unlike Ukraine, have been directly bordering the EU since the 1970s and were provided with a significant amount of foreign direct investment and funds for cross-border cooperation.

The main challenges that exacerbate the problem of structural adjustment of the economy in Ukraine are the following: increasing competition for access to all resources, especially energy; Ukraine's lagging behind other European countries in terms of quality of life, level of investment attractiveness, development of

innovative environment; growth of disparities between regions; creation of a potential strain on Ukrainian borders through the formation of economic growth centers by neighboring states, leading to the outflow of labor, intellectual and other resources from the border regions; the growth of asymmetry regions, including the border ones. From the standpoint of the modern European Union, Ukraine looks like a typical “border country” where systemic reforms lag behind neighboring Poland, according to economist estimations by 7–8 years [Chuzhikov 2007, p. 87].

Based on the indicator evaluation of gross regional product, we can say that in Ukraine it is heavily differentiated by regions. The differences in its maximum and minimum parameters in 2008 were 13.3 times (in the Donetsk region – 117.646 million UAH, and in the Chernivtsi region – 8833 million UAH, respectively). In 2009–2010, against the background of the overall dynamics of the GRP decrease throughout the country (by about 15% in 2009 compared to 2008), these differences increased by 13.8 times [Osadnyk 2011]. The significant inter-regional differentiation is illustrated by the gross regional product *per capita*.

The level of structural imbalance in regional economies is described by the following factors: mismatch of the regional structural contribution into socio-economic performance of Ukraine in the natural-material part of their economic potential; certain monofunctionality of regional economies; technological conservatism and asymmetry of technological development; uneven concentration of labor capacity, etc. The post-transformation stage of regional development is characterized by a deepening of the structural deformations in their economies. Characteristic features of this trend include: uneven spatial concentration of business, the growth of entrepreneurial activity in the “center” at the expense of the periphery; deepening of imbalance between demand and supply of the workforce; deepening of the reproduction proportions distortion; lack of significant changes in the development of depressed regions [Melnyk 2011, p. 62].

The industrial and technological potential is powerfully shown in the Kyiv, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia and Lviv regions. The share of the three regions with the highest rated social and economic development (the city of Kyiv, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk regions) is more than 42% of the total gross regional product. Low-technology industries (share in the structure of production is 49–53%) are concentrated in the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Lviv regions, medium-low-tech (40%) – in almost all areas (except Zhytomyr, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kherson, Chernivtsi, Chernihiv); medium-high (6–8%) – Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv regions; high-tech (1–3%) – Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Lviv regions. Also other regional imbalances are still present [Melnyk 2012, pp. 115–137].

Institutionally the prerequisites and factors of regional policy in Ukraine are presented in the following way. The formation of structural regional policy in Ukraine was influenced by such factors at the European level as: implementation of the process of European regionalization; formation and implementation of

communitarian regional policy of the EU directed at the support of the depressed, and restructuring of, the old industrial regions meeting the requirements of Maastricht Agreement; intensification of the processes of regional economic management and expanding the responsibilities of local authorities (according to the European Charter of Local Self-government); the EU's enlargement on the account of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe; intensification of interregional and cross-border cooperation.

Stating the regional imbalances and assessing Ukraine's place in the mega-regional economic environment, we can indicate the risks that may negatively affect its EU integration: 1) geo-economic risks caused by polarization of economic growth poles (western and eastern borders of Ukraine), which can create a bipolar environment that under favorable conditions may provide a synergistic effect of economic interaction of the East and West, and under unfavorable conditions may turn the country into a zone of competitive geopolitical struggle [Chuzhikov 2007, p. 87]; 2) economic risks which manifest themselves even today creating the problem of the choice of alternatives, either to choose an open competition of Ukrainian goods and services in the European market or focus on the CIS markets; 3) energy risks associated with the need to review the branch-wise and sectoral structure of regional economy, and promotion of the development of the economic energy sector; 4) demographic risks associated with the outflow of labor resources from the periphery to the center, the intensification of legal and illegal migration.

### **3. Mechanisms of regional structural policy and ways of their modernization in Ukraine**

Framework conditions of structural changes in the regions are identified by the mechanisms of the EU regional policy, including: targeted support of structural funds; provision of financial resources and financial assistance; promotion of enterprise restructuring and innovative development; granting investment premiums for the construction of facilities that improve the economic structure, i.e. the provision of soft loans for investment and the guarantees for loans, development of targeted programs of national, regional, and local significance; the introduction of unique social standards; government guarantees for commercial bank loans; encouragement of the deployment of new enterprises in the overcrowded cities and regions. Most of these mechanisms are used in the structuring of the regional economy in Ukraine. Some of them, like the directions of modernization, are described in the State Regional Development Strategy to 2015 [Liga.net 2013]: strategic programming and planning of regional development, implementation of agreements concluded between the government and local authorities, the mechanism implementation of concentration and

optimization of state resources flows, optimization of the network of special economic zones and territories of priority development, infrastructure development of regional and interregional markets; strengthening the role of local government to create a favorable investment climate; improvement of the transfers allocation assigned from the state budget; funding the priority actions of state targeted programs. A series of measures has been taken to stimulate the depressed areas.

The analysis revealed the following shortcomings and problems in the application of the regional structural policy in Ukraine:

1. The mechanism of choosing priorities. The State Regional Development Strategy for the period of up to 2015 institutionalized the priorities of state regional policy in respect of individual regions, and defined the mechanisms of their financial support. The lack of trends in reducing regional disparities is associated with the imperfect methods for determining priorities. There are two approaches to this: the first consists in eliminating disparities through government support, and subsidizing enterprises of various industries in depressed regions; the second (upgraded) is the efficient use of the regions' capacities, an independent determination of their priorities in the context of their business opportunities and networking with other regions [Marcou, Hildreth 2009]. Ukraine tends to the first option, because the agreements on the regional development are signed between the Government and local authorities in accordance with the national priorities of the development of regions identified in Appendix 1 of [Marcou, Hildreth 2009].

2. Mechanisms for financing structural changes in the regions. In practice, in Ukraine, they are underdeveloped. In the EU countries the following funding instruments are used: investment incentives and transfers to municipalities; subsidies provided to companies for initial investment; loans to municipalities for joint financing of economic infrastructure development; loans and guarantees provided to the companies engaged in agricultural business; investments in specific projects of regional significance; the state capital transfers to municipalities for collective investment into the regional development projects. The underdevelopment of the funding mechanisms of regional structural changes in Ukraine is caused by the following factors: poor budget share (low percentage) of the local budgets assigned for the development of regions; poor targeting of banking system of credits for the economy; imperfect mechanisms for the management of communal property.

3. Strategic mechanism. Despite the elaboration of regional development strategies in Ukraine, most of them lack a program of economic restructuring. This is caused by the absence of the active program of economic restructuring in Ukraine, as well as some caution in choosing a "breakthrough strategy". This situation creates an environment for the conservation of technological, reproductive, and sectoral imbalances in the regions.

4. Mechanisms for innovation in the structural policy of the regions. The European innovation tools that are aimed at improving the equalization of individual EU economies are reflected in the table of results of European innovations (Europe Innovation Scoreboard). Based on the method of creating EIS, the following five types of mechanisms can be distinguished: educational, financial, motivational, economic and institutional. Educational mechanisms are aimed at creating human capital; financial mechanisms follow the formation of knowledge, the development of the economy based on knowledge; motivation mechanisms are aimed at stimulating the innovation in the form of technological, organizational and managerial innovations; economic are for the development of industry and services, which require medium and high technology development; and mainly institutional concern the protection of intellectual property. According to T. Bal-Woźniak's estimates, the synthetic rate of innovation in the EU25 is 0.42. The leader is Sweden (0.72), the rate of Poland is 0.23 [Bal-Woźniak 2007, p. 321]. Ukraine does not have these estimates for regions. This is connected not only with the lack of an adequate statistical base, but also with the absence of decisive steps towards the innovative model of development. In this regard, there remains a raw vector of development inherent in most regions.

5. The mechanism of reorientation of investment in priority sectors of the economy is most common in structural regional policy. It provides for the investment promotion in the priority economic activities, improvement of the investment climate in the regions. Despite the fact that such mechanism was initiated in Ukraine, investments, including foreign, are concentrated in the industries with rapid turnover (financial sector, trade, real estate transactions), and in economically powerful regions, like Kyiv, Autonomous Republic of Crimea, because of the competitive sectors of the economy concentration there, and their good infrastructure.

6. The mechanism of interregional, including cross-border cooperation. 19 out of 25 regions of Ukraine have national borders. The EU-countries practice corroborated the efficiency of the Euroregions to improve the structuring of the regional economies which joined them. In Ukraine there are seven Euroregions, namely: Buh, Carpathian Euroregion, Lower Danube, Upper Prut, Dniipro, Slobozhanshchyna, Yaroslavna, initiated by the Council of Europe – the Black Sea region [Mikula, Tolkovanov 2010, p. 9]. The initiated mechanisms that will contribute to the structural changes of the areas joined with the Euroregions, including financial support for the projects and programs of cross-border cooperation, the formation and development of cross-border clusters. Despite the fact that four Euroregions include the areas of the European EU member countries, the asymmetry remains in the development of Ukrainian and Polish regions, particularly those whose participation in these regional organizations is insufficiently effective to improve the structure of the regional economies.

However, the intensification of economic cooperation in the border areas and in the Euroregions should be considered as a sectoral integration of Ukraine into the EU.

#### 4. Conclusions

The improvement of the regional economic structure of Ukraine is impossible without radical institutional decisions. The current mechanisms of Ukraine's regional structural policy present a number of shortcomings. As far as the restructuring is impossible in the short term, it should be viewed within the framework of the State and regional development strategies and should be based on the multi-criterion principle. With respect to some regions within their development strategies, there should be elaborated a selective program of structural adjustment of the economy. The flexible use of the European mechanisms of regional structural policy is possible by following the course of decentralized management that is involved in the administrative and territorial reform.

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## **MODERNIZACJA MECHANIZMÓW REGIONALNEJ POLITYKI STRUKTURALNEJ UKRAINY W PROCESIE INTEGRACJI Z UNIĄ EUROPEJSKĄ**

**Streszczenie:** Opierając się na teorii modernizacji, podniesiono kwestię wdrożenia na Ukrainie mechanizmów polityki regionalnej UE i jej składowej – regionalnej polityki strukturalnej. Na podstawie analizy porównawczej przedstawiono założenia i czynniki determinujące politykę strukturalną UE i Ukrainy. Zaznaczono ryzyka (geoekonomiczne, gospodarcze, energetyczne, demograficzne), które są związane ze strukturalnymi deformacjami i mogą negatywnie wpłynąć na integrację Ukrainy z UE. Oceniono mechanizmy regionalnej polityki strukturalnej i określono problemy ich modernizacji na Ukrainie. We wnioskach zaznaczono potrzebę radykalnych rozwiązań instytucjonalnych na Ukrainie, m.in. opracowane selektywnych programów strukturalnej korekcji ekonomii regionów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** polityka strukturalna, polityka regionalna Unii Europejskiej, mechanizmy polityki strukturalnej.