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The self-government reform in Poland in the 1990s – the process, advantages, and problem areas

One of the main reforms in Poland after 1989 was creation of local government (community were created in 1990, counties and provinces since 1999.). The implementation of this reform, apart from benefits, also caused problems. The main point of this report is to identify defects. The selected information were analysed – scientific publications, expert reports and questionnaire results. The conclusions showed that the main problems of self-government are: too small autonomy of activity, overdone imposition of tasks without sufficient cash, unclear role of counties. The article also shows other problems that limit the possibilities of local government activities. We should spread the knowledge about the existence of obstacles to development management Knowledge. Common awareness of restrictions will help policy makers take right actions that meet the needs of the community in a given area.

Keywords: *reform, local self-government, autonomy, administration, local development, regional development*

After 1989, one of the fundamental reforms in Poland was the introduction of self-governments: self-government communes were established in 1990, while self-government districts and voivodeships – since 1999. Apart from numerous advantages, the applied solutions also meant appearance of problem areas [7; 9; 10]. Determining such areas can contribute to improvement of the situation in Polish self-governments and protect policymakers from other countries, including Ukraine, from making similar mistakes. The article has presented the course of the self-government reform in Poland, as well as indicated the advantages of its introduction. The aim of this elaboration was to identify and list the problem areas resulting from implementation of the reform. In order to meet the objective, the purposeful selection method was used by analyzing selected source materials – scientific literature, expert reports, and survey results. Such a selection of resources allowed obtaining the current image of indicated issues, as well as their thorough description from the point of view of various stakeholders. The basic conclusions from the conducted analysis indicate that the main problems of self-governments are the limited autonomy arising from imposed tasks without provision of financial resources to support their implementation and the reasonableness of functioning of the districts. This article has also indicated a set of other issues that constitute the area for further analyses.

In January 1990, the Senate of the Republic of Poland adopted a set of self-government acts, on the basis of which self-governments were introduced in over two thousand communes. National councils were replaced with commune councils (with greater privileges) and elections were conducted for those councils (on 27 May 1990). Those were the first free elections since 1989. Commune councils chose their executive bodies, i.e. city presidents (in most cities with population over 50,000), mayors (in smaller towns), and municipal executive officers (in rural municipalities) [9; 10].

Introduction of changes was accompanied by intensive legislative works – 94 acts were changed in spring 1990. It resulted in mistakes, e.g. changes did not cover civil status departments. «On 28 May 1990, it appeared that there is no one in Poland who was able to officiate at weddings» – said Professor Jerzy Regulski, the co-creator of the self-government reform and government plenipotentiary for implementation

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of the reform. A decision was made on immediate revision (heads of civil status departments were, despite the situation, ordered to officiate at weddings). «People who got married at that time did not know they were to shack up for two weeks» – joked J. Regulski [9;12].

Eight years later, another stage of administrative reform was implemented. It regarded introduction of districts (which had not been planned before) [3, p. 286] and voivodeships – two additional levels of self-government. Elections were conducted for all three levels of self-government – commune councils, district councils, and sejmiks of voivodeships (on 11 October 1998), whereby authorities in districts and new voivodeships started to function when the new administration map of the country was introduced for use (on 1 January 1999) [10].

On 1 January 1999, an administrative reform came into force. It introduced a three-level territorial structure. The territory of Poland was divided into: 16 voivodeships, 308 country districts, and 2479 communes. Among communes: 1566 were rural municipalities, 608 – mixed municipalities, 305 – urban municipalities (town communes), including 65 town communes with district rights (so-called municipal districts).

In order to complement the reform, there was also an introduction of elections for municipal executive officers, mayors, and city presidents – starting from local government elections in 2002 (on 27 October and 10 November) [9; 10].

Council members, municipal executive officers, mayors, and city presidents are elected in general elections. They are the single-person managerial bodies of their units. Chief district officers in districts and marshals in self-governing voivodeships are selected by council members. According to the status dated 15 March 2015, self-governments had 1565 municipal executive officers, 806 mayors, 107 city presidents, 314 chief district officers, 16 voivodeship marshals, and a total of 46,700 council members in councils of communes, districts, and sejmiks of voivodeships.

The tasks and competences were distributed among individual tiers of self-government and government administration [13; 21]. Local governments were to acquire financing for the tasks they were entrusted with from the share in taxes from natural persons and legal entities, as well as from subsidies and grants. The authority of the government was to end at the voivodeship level, with the voivode as the governmental representative. The voivode had supervision rights regarding decisions at all levels of local governments [10].

Communes constitute the basic territorial self-government unit. They are independent from district and voivodeship self-government. The independence of commune self-governments does not exclude cooperation between individual bodies of local government [17]. Supra-municipal tasks constitute the obligation of districts located near communes. District self-governments operate within areas such as, i.a.: spatial planning, healthcare, protection of the environment, social assistance, safety of the citizens [19]. Districts are liable for, i.a. hospitals, high-schools, cultural institutions, employment service, district roads, various services, inspections, and protection services. Local governments functioning in communes and districts is responsible to the citizens for providing public services, managing the public assets of the community, and communal life services.

Self-government in a voivodeship is responsible for the regional policy and solving structural problems of the region (in cooperation with the government and local governments). It is responsible for voivodeship roads. Areas of communal life are also included – within the scope of culture of the country, education, and healthcare [20].

The government and government (central and field) administration perform the tasks arising from implementation of the state policy. The majority of field administration units operates as a part of combined voivodeship administration – under the authority of voivodes. Voivodes are also responsible for supervision over activities of all self-government units in the voivodeship (based on the criteria of compliance with law) [16; 6].

Among the advantages of the conducted reform, one can distinguish, i.e. subduing the monopolies of a totalitarian country, facilitation regarding acquisition of cash from the EU funds, and establishing a modern standard for public life.

According to J. Regulski, the self-government reform managed to break the five monopolies of a totalitarian country – political, authority, ownership, financial, and employment monopolies.

1. The political monopoly was subdued thanks to free elections.
2. The monopoly of authority was subdued by granting autonomy to self-governments (until that moment, municipal authorities had been subject to voivodeship authorities and those had been subject to state authorities).
3. Ownership monopoly was subdued thanks to the fact that communes received properties (before 1990, field bodies of state administration had no legal personality and they only administered state assets).
4. Financial monopoly was subdued thanks to financial empowerment of communes (which had been operating as a part of the country budget).
5. Employment monopoly was subdued through provision of employers to self-governments (they used to be employed in state administration) [9].

Moreover, it proved to be advantageous to have self-governments that, after Poland entered the European Union (2004), obtained resources for investments from the EU cohesion funds, which were mainly directed to the local government tier. [10] What is more, «new voivodeships represent commercial and population potential that significantly better refers to indicators characterizing analogous territorial units in those countries (the EU – author’s note). «Thus, by using the same rules that had been adopted in the member states of the European Union, it was possible to establish a modern standard of public life [1; 6].

Each reform, apart from its advantages, involves errors, difficulties, and ambiguity referring to implementation of its concept and practical application. In order to recall the problem areas of the self-government reform in Poland, three key sources of information have been used. First have been the indications made by Witold Kie un, professor of economics and active critic with regard to applied solutions. Second, the Report dated 2013 prepared by the think tank Forum Odnowa «Samorz d 3.0» and, as the third source, the Report dated 2016 prepared by the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy in cooperation with the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform, titled «Efficient local government office. The development of staff competences as the element of constructing efficient local administration» [15, s. 19-45]. The selection of resources enables, in the author’s opinion, a relatively thorough overview of the key problem areas. Importantly, it is a view from the perspective of various stakeholders – from the perspective of a scientist – the author of the alternative administration reform programme, market analysts, and local government officials as such.

The first from the specified stakeholders pointed out the application of an inefficient management model, unclear limits in district-commune relationship, insufficient size of districts, and excessively developed administration system.

1. Inefficient management model – the structure of public management, which covered districts, is detrimental in terms of organizational and financial effectiveness. W. Kie un claimed that «the planned steep, multi-level, expensive, or even archaic structure of administration was contradictory to the modern concept for structures of public management (...)» [3, p. 299]. He found introduction of districts as a mistake, especially in a situation, in which communes were able to conclude agreements within implementation of public tasks and establish municipal cooperatives [2].
2. Lack of accurate determination of the district-commune relationship – both units function within the same territory, in an identical area of activities (supervising organizational units of various scale), complementary. «It leads to

- creation of an organizational abomination: two self-government units within the same territory and, what is more, in an identical area of activities, that have no organizational ties provided for in acts. «It leads to conflicts [3, p. 308-310].
3. Too small districts – the solution applied in Poland, among countries that have implemented a similar model, is, according to W. Kieżun, a Europe-wide phenomenon. He claimed: «Our district is the smallest and the weakest second level of self-government in Europe. «[2] He stated that districts, in such number, would be too small to independently deal with the entrusted competences, including managing schools, hospitals, or road maintenance. Indeed, throughout 15 years of their existence, many district self-governments have found themselves on the verge of bankruptcy [10].
 4. An excessively developed administrative system – W. Kieżun pointed out that the three-level division leads to bureaucracy and excessive power of administration over the citizens. «The poorest regions of the whole European Union must pay high costs to maintain the administration system that is unnecessarily expanded and serves only a small portion of citizens. The citizens must pay for the luxurious life of officials who manage large, duplicated structures. It leads to corruption, arrogance of the authorities, and lack of social dialogue «[2].

W. Kieżun included a rich description of reform implementation and his opinion on it in his work «Patologia transformacji» (The Pathology of Transformation) [3, p. 295-329].

In November 2013, a Report prepared by the think tank Forum Od-nowa «Samorząd 3.0» was released [8]. It reflected the opinion of 11 specialists from the scientific, non-governmental, administration, and private sectors. The report presented a vision, directions of changes, and propositions for modifications within the area of functioning of self-governments in Poland. [8, p. 3] The report indicated that the self-government established in the 1990s did not have proper instruments to face the growing civilizational challenges. The report presented the then status in form of a diagnosis, which distinguished 5 problem areas that included: independence, flexibility, transparency, responsibility, and efficiency [8, p. 3].

It was decided that the self-government is dependent. Although it was highlighted that it manages a share in the taxes, but it has little own sources of income. The government thoroughly regulates every aspect of the activities of territorial self-government units (TSU) e.g. in education, social area, and labor market policy [8, p. 6].

Second, it was noticed that the self-government is inflexible, since each community has a limited right to make basic management decisions. Local authorities have no freedom in deciding on what should be centralized or decentralized within their structure, when to do that, as well as what should be done independently and what should be performed with the participation of external entities [8, p. 6].

The self-government was deemed non-transparent (due to information chaos), both in terms of the self-government and the processes it participated in. It refers to the lack of uniform standards concerning the scope and form of disclosed information on the assets of self-governments. Thus, citizens have no access to standardized, commonly accessible, current, and most accurate information on the functioning of their local community [8, p. 7].

What is more, it was decided that the self-government is not very responsible, which results from the fact that the system puts too much faith in the formal supervision of the state, instead of focusing on mechanisms of social control [8, p. 7]. It was also pointed out that the self-government is inefficient due to its complex organization and structure. The three levels of management (commune, district, and voivodeship) very often have the same tasks. Consequently, it is very often impossible to clearly indicate the level responsible for a particular public area [8, p. 8].

A similar opinion can be found in the Report on analyses conducted in 2016 by the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy [15]. The elaboration has presented the results of analyses regarding the circumstances of the current activity of self-government offices at commune level. A survey and individual interviews with self-government leaders of the majority of Polish communes were conducted.

The following problem areas were indicated among the deficiencies of self-government reforms [15, p. 19-45]:

- Financial problems and shortage;
- Lack of partnership between the self-government and the central government;
- Defective legal solutions and overregulation of the self-government system;
- Inconsistent or inefficient development policy of the state;
- Inefficient structure of self-government;
- Poor cooperation between TSUs;
- Problems in implementation of chosen public policies;
- Lack of special order;
- Local-based district and voivodeship self-governments;
- Internal conflicts of authorities in self-government units;
- Leadership in self-government, communication with citizens.

The assessment by subjects of the study included, on one hand, poorly calculated budgets of self-governments and, on the other hand, the assigned tasks described in a wide sense. It leads to management problems of the self-government and difficulties in implementation of tasks according to citizens' expectations. What is more, the progressive financial burden of self-governments resulting, among others, from excessive number of tasks implied on self-government authorities, obstructs implementation of a flexible and independent development policy. Thus, in practice, self-governments are more and more often used to serve the role of the developer of central orders. At the same time, one can notice lack of trust and an antagonistic approach of the central authorities towards self-governments. Meanwhile, local governments, especially large cities, expect more active and flexible actions of the government administration in some areas, including support in relations with strong partners. What is more, the subjects pointed out the legal incapacitation of self-government. They indicated the fact that introduced laws and regulations very often are inadequate to the needs of citizens and capabilities of the local government. «They (local government officials – author's note) amicably highlight the fact that the centrally enacted law very often does not create the opportunities to acknowledge the regional or local circumstances within the implementation of public tasks. In subjects' opinion, it deprives the self-government administration of the ability to adjust the method of task implementation to local needs and it can be considered as incapacitation of the self-government» [15, p. 23]. Difficult relations between self-government and the central government are worsened by overregulation – the government and the parliament regulate more and more social policies and aspects of everyday life that, in local government officials' opinion, do not require such regulations. They also draw attention to the lack of a predictable, coherently conducted policy for development of the country, which results in lack of basic stabilization that would allow development at local level. However, local government officials notice something more than just the lack of strategic planning concerning the development of the country. They are aware of the lack of actual coordination in development planning at local level, which results from no strategic thinking and actions in self-government. It gives rise to a phenomenon where of neighboring self-government units or units functioning in the same region approve divergent strategic plans and make mutually contradicting decisions.

Another problem refers to distribution of tasks – their fragmentation, involvement of districts in their implementation, as well as mixing of competences that are the source of conflicts.

The three levels of self-government, with a high number of communes and weak districts, generates the problem of task fragmentation. For instance, it is sometimes unknown who is responsible for road management. The «managers» are numerous – we have commune, district, city district, voivodeship, state, and private roads. A similar situation occurs in the area of education, health, or social assistance. Districts are the most controversial aspect within the scope of task distribution. They have reduced competences (many of which have been terminated within the last dozen of years), lack of own income, and insufficient financing for the tasks they are entrusted with (education, healthcare). It forces the commune units to participate in the investment expenses of the districts. Hence, it is considered that districts are financially inefficient and their further upkeep is highly ineffective – especially in situations, in which a major part of budget of the district is used to maintain the administration. Mixing of competences (e.g. within the scope of road or healthcare management) leads to conflicts. It particularly involves the relations between districts and overlords of government administration structures who operate within the same territory, including both the leaders – municipal executive officers and chief district officers, as well as the lower, clerical level. The negative consequences of such situations have impact on the citizens. «It has been pointed out in that case that the mandate of a municipal executive officer, mayor, or president is stronger than the mandate of a chief district officer yet, at the same time, the separation of those two administration structures is sometimes misunderstood (especially in the case of newly appointed leaders)» [15, p. 30]. Due to the above indications, there is an observed lack of sufficient cooperation between territorial self-government units. Such cooperation is very often limited to implementation of design tasks.

The most frequent detailed problem area mentioned by local government officials is the area of operations of education facilities. Although self-governments are the official school governing bodies (that are responsible for their activities), a vast part of decisions concerning functioning of schools has been reserved for institutions of state administration. Thus, formation of long-term local education policy by governments is very often illusory. Despite the limited impact on the operations of educational units subordinate to self-government, the costs of their activities greatly affect the local budget. Then, according to local government officials, there is no possibility of introducing desired changes in that area.

Territorial self-government is greatly responsible for implementation of tasks within the area of social policy, including policies regarding employment, housing, healthcare, social assistance, and childcare. Fulfillment of those tasks depends on cooperation between municipal, district, and voivodeship institutions. It often lacks coherence, consequence, and flexible application of helpful instruments. Thus, the social policy implemented at local level was claimed to be ineffective.

Another problem is the local spatial policy. It is considered to be critically undeveloped. In Poland, there is a spatial chaos that is nowhere to be found in other European countries. It is connected with the processes that make urban development expand into open areas. «Increase of the size of settlement areas at country level is accompanied with a decline in the population, which generates unjustified financial liabilities for the state and self-governments and leads to deterioration of citizens' living conditions» [15, p. 36; 4, p. 26-28].

The above-mentioned research highlighted the negative phenomena related to politicization of the functioning of regional authorities and authorities in larger cities. The influence of actions taken by political parties on the functioning of self-government units can, e.g. result in a situation, in which an elected municipal executive officer or president will have the local council against them. Of course, such a situation can have a significant negative impact on the current management of the unit, as well as the social acceptance with regard to self-government activities.

The key element in the process of constructing self-governance was the matter of creating and forming mutual responsibility of the citizens for the development of the local community. However, the self-government leaders in the above-mentioned research highlighted that efficient management regarding selected areas of self-government activity is very often obstructed by people's mentality and the accompanying mutual responsibility of the citizens. According to J. Regulski, «people very often do not realize what self-governance is about. They do not realize that not only they can make independent decisions, but also, they are expected to do so. They can decide on their own local matters and have impact on how those matters will be solved» [11, p. 70]. The above relates to the problem of public consultations, which encounter a high degree of skepticism on part of local communities. Involvement in consultations is even less probable due to practices applied by self-government authorities, as well as the social belief in party-based local administration and its lack of interest in matters of the citizens. One can notice general social inactivity, lack of common need to participate in public life, shortcomings of citizen awareness, and the low level of public capital. Hence, it seems to be very important to have a local leader who «should prove himself or herself to make accurate analyses of the local situation, be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their unit, be convincing, have an interesting concept on how to improve that unit, and, finally, have proper people who will be able to implement formulated plans» [15, p. 39]. The lack of real, deliberate, and competent leadership might lead to weak local management and hinder the will of the society to actively participate in making decisions on local matters.

Local government officials distinguished problem areas concerning implementation of tasks by public offices. Their indications have been presented in Table 1 [15, p. 64]. The comparison seems to be a useful hint for the self-government leaders in Ukraine, pointing out the particularly vulnerable areas of public office activity.

Table 1

(Complete or partial) problem areas regarding implementation of tasks by self-government offices according to secretaries of TSUs (% of indications)

Problem area	partial	major
Implementation of electronic administration and computerization of the office	45.8	31.0
Public transport and roads	48.8	18.9
Audit, internal supervision, and management control	47.6	14.9
Protection of the environment	51.7	9.6
IT training, usage of information technology tools	46.7	13.7
Planning and implementation of investments in infrastructure	46.8	11.1
Education policy of the TSU	45.4	11.9
Spatial planning and real estate management	48.5	8.7
Building relations with citizens, social consultations, co-operation	43.8	9.9
Social policy, social integration, activities of social assistance institutions	45.9	6.9
Acquisition, handling, and management of external funds	43.4	9.0
Human resources management, team-work methods, resolving conflicts	44.2	8.2
Strategic management of TSUs	45.4	6.9
Protection of confidential information and personal data protection	41.0	6.3
Administration proceedings, procedures, and decisions	39.3	3.3
Cooperation with non-governmental organizations	34.0	6.5
Activities of culture institutions, implementation of cultural policy	32.3	7.6

One of the possible solutions for such difficulties are staff trainings. Local government officials communicated demand for an insight into computerization of offices, audit, and management control, protection of personal data and confidential information, team management, acquisition, handling and managing external funds, as well as tendering and administrative proceedings [15, p. 114].

When it comes to problem areas pointed out in the specified material resources, one may add one more aspect – although basically harmless, even grotesque, but still a problem that shows lack of precision in legislation – the problems with nomenclature. Names of territorial self-government units, names of their offices and bodies do not reflect uniform rules. Hence, the official plates with the coat-of-arms of Poland that are placed on the buildings, in acts of local law, on secretarial forms there is a great variety of options used, e.g.: commune, town and commune, commune and town, municipal office, municipality office, town and municipal office, city office, city hall, town and commune mayor, commune and town mayor, commune mayor [6]. The full guidelines on that matter can be found in the act on introduction of basic three tier division of administration [21] and in the local government act [18]. However, they do not include provisions that would state a uniform name for offices in urban municipalities [6].

One of the classic examples of issues local governments struggle with can be the situation that took place in September 2016, when at the beginning of a new school year, a school in Kielce, which had been administered by the City of Kielce¹, for children from the hospital psychiatric ward ceased its operations. The decision of the city resulted from the fact that the psychiatric ward was separated from the Voivodeship Polyclinical Hospital in Kielce – in 2013, the facility was taken over by the Świętokrzyskie Center of Psychiatry in Morawica (located within the neighboring commune of Morawica), the establishing body of which is the marshal's office. The City of Kielce decided that in light of the new legal situation, the task of administering the school should be taken over by another self-government – the district of Kielce or the voivodeship self-government, especially due to the fact that the ward treats children from all parts of Poland.

Removal of lessons conducted at the ward, which had already not belonged to the City of Kielce for a long time, resulted in a series of protests – lead by parents, social activists, teachers, the education superintendent – against the decision made by the City of Kielce. In the meantime, the role of the city was not that obvious. In Poland, management over elementary schools is one of the tasks of communes, management over special schools (but not schools of regional and supra-regional importance) is the task of districts, while schools of regional and supra-regional importance are a part of own tasks of voivodeships. That was where the dispute on competences appeared. Only after express actions of the City of Kielce in 2016, it was possible to have a successful dialogue between the self-government leaders of the City of Kielce, district of Kielce, and the marshal's office. The previous attempts of negotiations had been unsuccessful. As in the title of one of the press notes: «Hospital-based school hot like a potato» – no one wanted to take care of it.

The Kielce chief district officer (district of Kielce) commented on the matter as follows – «I see that the city wants to contribute a small pebble to our garden, but we already have our tasks». The vice-president of the city, however, claimed – «We deal here with a situation when no one knows what to do about all of this. (...) We have to defend ourselves».

As a result of a mutual agreement, it was determined that the authorities of Kielce would supervise the facility until the end of the school year and after that the supervision would be performed by the self-government of Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship.

Indeed, the Board of Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship made a decision in May 2017 to maintain the hospital-based school, which on 1 September 2017 was included into the Special Schools Complex of the Rehabilitation Center in Czarniecka Góra administered by the self-government of Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship. The educational subsidy unused by the commune of Kielce was transferred, by mutual agreement, to the self-government of the voivodeship in form of a designated subsidy.

¹ The City of Kielce as the commune and municipal district of Kielce – indicated actions as a part of the tasks of the district.

It is an example of a situation in which the conflict resulted from the lack of precision in the distribution of competences between levels of self-government. Thanks to mutual cooperation of local governments, it was possible to solve an issue that had great social impact. It is only a pity that self-government officials took real actions only in a critical situation, when implementation of compulsory education for children from the hospital ward was threatened.

The author prepared the description of the above-mentioned situation twice. For the first time – it was based on press notes. For the second time, when the gathered material was confronted with managers of the Municipal Office of Kielce. The surprisingly large discrepancy in the message was caused by mistakes in the press description of the events, including the legal background or even the cited amounts. It is another example of problems self-government leaders must struggle with – lack of diligence of journalists that sometimes results in a false image of the activities undertaken by the territorial unit. «Tomorrow I will find out what I said yesterday» is a frequent description of the relationship between the leaders and the media. It most certainly lowers the satisfaction from one's work in favor of the local environment and deepens the disparities in understanding and trust among the stakeholders.

Summing up, the critics' concerns about the reform have been broadly confirmed. The presence of districts in the structure, as well as their size, results in an overlap of competences and the risk of bankruptcy of district self-governments due to the excessively developed administration system. Another significant aspect of problems in self-governments in Poland is the limitation of autonomous activities due to imposing specific tasks without providing proper financial resources for their implementation [15, p. 19-45]. When it comes to ongoing management, leaders draw attention to problems with computerization, management control, protection of personal details, acquisition of funds, and cooperation of public offices with their local environment. Greater organizational and financial independence would help local government officials implement their vision for development. Moreover, removal of redundant regulations and simplification of procedures would help the leaders increase the flexibility of actions and have them better adjusted to the expectations of local communities.

Of course, some of the postulates are reflected in the legislation. An example of changes that have been an attempt to improve the system is the possibility of establishing district and commune initiatives since 2016. The purpose of that form is to implement tasks which are beyond the jurisdiction of one level of territorial self-government – mutual performance of tasks within the scope of public transport, education, or road management [22]. That change has expanded the current possibilities of cooperation as a part of self-government agreements.

A stable, well-organized, and efficient self-government is one of the key elements of regional and local development, as well as establishing the competitive position of a particular territorial unit. The understanding of existing limitations, mistakes, and shortcomings of the created system helps in modernizing it and enhancing the functioning of self-governments in the long run [5, p. 226]. «Within that scope, every country develops its own, unique structure. Thus, Polish regions must be treated as an open-ended solution that might greatly evolve in the future» [14, p. 19].

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Лижва Е. Реформа місцевого самоврядування в Польщі у 1990-ті роки – перебіг, переваги та проблемні зони.

Однією з найфундаментальніших реформ, проведених Польщею, була реформа місцевого самоврядування, яка проходила у два етапи: створення самоврядних комун у 1990 р. й самоврядних районів і воєводств у 1999 р. Основними перевагами цієї реформи є відхід від методів управління тоталітарною державою, спрощення процедури отримання фінансування з фондів Європейського Союзу, встановлення сучасних стандартів життя.

Але крім численних позитивних моментів, рішення, які ухвалювались на той час, призвели до появи значних проблем. Визначення цих проблемних сфер може сприяти покращенню ситуації з органами влади на місцях в Польщі, а також вберегти політиків інших країн, у тому числі України, від подібних помилок. Стаття висвітлює процес проведення реформи місцевого самоврядування в Польщі та визначає її переваги. Метою статті є дослідити перелік проблемних сфер, які виникли під час і після запровадження реформи. Для досягнення цієї мети був використаний метод цільової вибірки на основі аналізу вибраних джерел – наукової літератури, експертних звітів і результатів досліджень. Такий вибір ресурсів сприяв розумінню сучасної ситуації та її всесторонньому вивченню відповідно до думок різноманітних учасників реформи та зацікавлених сторін. Проведений аналіз дозволяє зробити висновки про те, що основними проблемами органів місцевого самоврядування є обмежена автономія, яка виникає через широкий спектр покладених на них завдань без достатньої кількості доступних фінансових ресурсів, і сумнівна доцільність функціонування самоврядних районів. Крім цього, експерти також зазначають брак співпраці між місцевою та центральною владою, неефективні рішення в правовому полі та надмірну врезультюваність системи самоврядування, нестабільну політику розвитку держави, внутрішні конфлікти між представниками органів місцевого самоврядування. У статті також окреслено сфери подальших досліджень, включаючи можливості накопичення ресурсів, співпраці державних структур з оточенням, скорочення кількості регулятивних актів і спрощення процедур.

Ключові слова: реформа, місцеве самоврядування, автономія, адміністрація, місцевий розвиток, регіональний розвиток.

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