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## **THE OPENNESS OF PERSONNEL POLICY AS A FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROFESSIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION**

## **РОЛЬ ВІДКРИТОСТІ КАДРОВОЇ ПОЛІТИКИ У ФОРМУВАННІ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ПУБЛІЧНОЇ СЛУЖБИ В УМОВАХ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОЇ ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ**

*The article examines the openness of personnel policy as a systemic factor in the development of a professional public service in the context of European integration. It is argued that the openness of personnel policy should be understood not merely as the publicity of vacancies, but as institutionally*

*guaranteed transparency of rules, criteria, data, and outcomes of HR decisions, ensuring equal access to public service, merit-based recruitment, accountability, and traceability of career development. Based on an analysis of Ukrainian legislation, OECD/SIGMA standards, the Ukraine Report 2024, analytical materials of the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service (NADS), and recent Ukrainian scholarship, the paper identifies key indicators of open personnel policy, including competitive and competency-based recruitment, transparency of evaluation and promotion procedures, digital traceability of HR processes, accountability, and continuity of professional development. The study demonstrates that within the European administrative space, the openness of personnel policy is directly associated with meritocracy, integrity, public trust, and institutional resilience. At the current stage, Ukraine combines the normative consolidation of European principles with a number of practical constraints, including formalized competition procedures, staffing shortages, uneven institutional capacity across levels of government, fragmented digitalization of HR processes, and limited transparency in certain career and remuneration decisions. The article proposes priority directions for improvement, including the implementation of HRMIS, strengthening competency-based selection mechanisms, ensuring the publication of criteria and results of HR procedures, integrating job classification with transparent remuneration systems, promoting needs-based professional development, and extending open personnel policy standards to local self-government service. The scientific novelty lies in conceptualizing the openness of personnel policy as a measurable characteristic of public service HR management and in substantiating a system of indicators and implementation priorities adapted to wartime conditions and the process of European integration.*

**Keywords:** *public service, personnel policy, openness, transparency, meritocracy, human resource management, European integration, professionalization, HRMIS, digitalization.*

*У статті досліджено відкритість кадрової політики як системний чинник формування професійної публічної служби в умовах європейської інтеграції України. Обґрунтовано, що відкритість кадрової політики слід*

розуміти не лише як публічність вакансій, а як інституційно забезпечену прозорість правил, критеріїв, даних і результатів кадрових рішень, яка гарантує рівний доступ до служби, меритократичний добір, підзвітність та відстежуваність кар'єрного руху службовців. На основі аналізу законодавства України, документів OECD/SIGMA, Ukraine Report 2024, матеріалів НАДС та сучасних праць українських науковців виокремлено ключові індикатори відкритої кадрової політики: конкурсність, компетентнісний добір, прозорість оцінювання і просування, цифрову простежуваність HR-процесів, підзвітність та безперервний професійний розвиток. Показано, що в європейському адміністративному просторі відкритість кадрової політики безпосередньо пов'язується з меритократією, доброчесністю, довірою до інституцій та інституційною стійкістю. Визначено, що сучасний стан України поєднує нормативне закріплення європейських принципів із низкою практичних проблем: формалізацією конкурсів, кадровим дефіцитом, нерівномірною спроможністю органів влади, фрагментарною цифровізацією та обмеженою прозорістю окремих кар'єрних і оплатних рішень. Запропоновано напрями вдосконалення: розгортання HRMIS, посилення компетентнісного добору, оприлюднення критеріїв і результатів кадрових процедур, поєднання класифікації посад із прозорою оплатою праці, орієнтацію професійного розвитку на виявлені потреби та поширення стандартів відкритості на службу в органах місцевого самоврядування. Наукова новизна полягає в уточненні змісту поняття відкритості кадрової політики як вимірюваної характеристики управління персоналом у публічній службі та в обґрунтуванні системи її індикаторів і пріоритетів імплементації з урахуванням воєнного стану й переговорного процесу щодо вступу до ЄС.

**Ключові слова:** публічна служба, кадрова політика, відкритість, прозорість, меритократія, управління персоналом, європейська інтеграція, професіоналізація, HRMIS, цифровізація.

Problem Statement. Ukraine's strategic course towards European Union membership, the transition to accession negotiations, and the simultaneous

need to ensure state resilience under conditions of full-scale war have significantly increased the requirements for the quality of the public service. On 25 June 2024, the European Union officially opened accession negotiations with Ukraine, while public administration reform continues to retain its status as one of the “fundamentals first” areas within the enlargement framework. Under these conditions, personnel policy is no longer merely an internal organisational function but is increasingly conceptualised as an instrument of the state’s European integration capacity.

The quality of human resources within public authorities directly affects the state’s ability to ensure continuity of governance, fulfil obligations related to the EU acquis, deliver high-quality public services, and implement recovery policies. At the same time, the HR domain most clearly exposes the gap between the declared principles of integrity, professionalism, and equal access, and the actual practices of appointments, performance evaluation, remuneration, and career advancement.

In this study, the openness of personnel policy is conceptualised as institutionally ensured transparency of rules, procedures, criteria, data, and outcomes of HR decisions, which guarantees equal access to public service, merit-based recruitment, accountability, and traceability of professional careers. At the same time, openness does not imply unrestricted disclosure of personal data; rather, it refers to the transparency of rules, criteria, procedures, and outcomes in compliance with legislation on information and personal data protection.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Contemporary Ukrainian scholars increasingly associate the professionalisation of the public service not only with formal competitive recruitment, but also with strategic human resource management, career development, digitalisation, and the use of HR analytics. In particular, Larina N.B. emphasises professionalisation and professional career development as key conditions for effective public administration [1]. Pasemko H., Taran O., and Babak D. consider professionalism as the foundation for the development of public service personnel [2]. At the same time, Lyndiuk O. links the modernisation of the civil service with meritocracy, inclusiveness, digitalisation, and high-quality service delivery [3].

Research by Parkhomenko-Kutsevil O.I. demonstrates that advanced HR tools, including HR analytics, digital platforms, artificial intelligence instruments, and innovative evaluation mechanisms, can enhance the accuracy and transparency of HR decisions, provided that their implementation is accompanied by appropriate ethical and procedural safeguards [4; 5]. Shkurat I.V. and Potapov O.Ye. emphasise the importance of scientifically grounded selection criteria, analysis of staffing needs, and increased transparency of HR decisions [6]. Yaremko I. and Melenchuk I. associate the growth of human resource capacity with processes of intellectualization and the strengthening of competency-based capabilities of public servants [7], while Petkun S. and Melnyk I. demonstrate that the digital transformation of public administration creates conditions for more transparent interaction and the automation of procedures [8].

At the same time, the issue of openness of personnel policy is often addressed either fragmentarily – within the context of anti-corruption mechanisms, digitalization, or civil service reform – or without sufficient operationalization. The question of openness of personnel policy as a measurable characteristic of human resource management in the public service remains insufficiently explored, particularly under conditions of martial law, the active phase of accession negotiations with the European Union, and the practical implementation of updated HR management instruments, including the remuneration reform and the introduction of a new job classification system initiated in 2025.

Research objectives. The aim of the article is to substantiate the role of the openness of personnel policy in the development of a professional public service in Ukraine in the context of European integration and to identify priority directions for improving HR mechanisms, taking into account European standards, wartime challenges, and newly introduced national reform instruments.

Presentation of the main material. In contemporary scholarly discourse, the openness of personnel policy can no longer be reduced to the formal publication of vacancies or recruitment procedures. It is increasingly conceptualized as a multidimensional characteristic of the human resource

management system, encompassing at least six interrelated dimensions: openness of access to public service, competitiveness and competency-based selection, procedural transparency, objectivity of evaluation, continuity of professional development, and accountability of HR decisions. The interaction of these dimensions forms an integrated institutional model that ensures the reproducibility of professional standards, reduces corruption risks, and strengthens trust in the public service. Accordingly, only their systemic integration creates the conditions for a substantive transition from patronage-based and clientelist practices to a meritocratic model of public governance.

This integrated approach – combining professionalization, career development, competency-based selection, and results-oriented HRM – is emphasized by the majority of Ukrainian scholars in this field, who associate the quality of public service not only with recruitment procedures but also with the organizational capacity of the HR management system [1; 2; 6].

The system of key indicators of the openness of personnel policy is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.  
Indicators of the Openness of Personnel Policy in the Public Service

Dimension of Openness	Content	Practical Indicators	Expected Managerial Effect
Open Access	Equal opportunities for entry into public service	publication of vacancies; clear candidate requirements; accessible application channels	expansion of the candidate pool and improved quality of recruitment
Competitiveness and Meritocracy	Selection based on competencies rather than loyalty or informal connections	competitive procedures; testing; competency-based interviews; documented justification of decisions	strengthening professionalism and political neutrality
Procedural Transparency	Clear rules, criteria, and stages of the HR process	publication of evaluation criteria; job profiles; results of competitions and performance evaluations	increased trust in HR decisions
Objective Evaluation	Focus on performance	standardized performance indicators;	improved effectiveness and

	outcomes and competencies	competency frameworks; digital monitoring	results-based management
Professional Development	Availability of transparent opportunities for training and career advancement	individual development plans; needs-based training; transparent career pathways	development of talent pools and institutional capacity
Accountability and Digital Traceability	Ability to verify, analyze, and appeal HR decisions	HRMIS; public HR statistics; appeal mechanisms; procedural audits	reduction of corruption risks and strengthening managerial accountability

*Source: compiled by the author based on [9-12].*

As shown in Table 1, the proposed system of indicators allows the openness of personnel policy to be considered as a practically measurable characteristic. This is of particular importance, as the lack of measurability often turns the principle of openness into a purely declarative concept. For an adequate assessment of the actual state, it is necessary to monitor not only the formal conduct of competitive procedures, but also the degree of transparency of selection criteria, the share of HR decisions with digital traceability, the availability of appeal mechanisms, the linkage between performance evaluation and professional development, and the transparency of data on remuneration and job classification.

European standards of public governance increasingly link the openness of personnel policy with institutional resilience, integrity, and the performance of the public service. The OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability emphasizes a strategic approach to human capital, leadership development, learning, inclusion, and performance management [10]. The updated SIGMA Principles of Public Administration (2023) establish higher requirements for openness, digitalization, transparency, and accountability, while extending the framework beyond central government [9]. In Ukrainian scholarly discourse, these orientations are consistent with the conclusions of Lyndiuk O. regarding the need to overcome the contradictions of civil service modernization [1], as well as with the findings of Petkun S. and Melnyk I. on the

role of digital transformation in enhancing the transparency of governance processes [8].

European benchmarks of open personnel policy and their significance for Ukraine are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2.  
European Benchmarks of Open Personnel Policy and Their Significance for  
Ukraine

Document / Benchmark	Key Focus	Implications for Personnel Policy	Relevance for Ukraine
OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability (2019)	Leadership, capability, learning, inclusiveness	transition from administrative personnel management to strategic HRM	development of a professional and performance-oriented public service
SIGMA The Principles of Public Administration (2023)	Openness, transparency, digitalisation, accountability	application of clear standards for assessing HRM and the overall public administration system	provision of a framework for alignment with EU accession requirements
SIGMA Public Administration in Ukraine (2024)	Systemic monitoring of the state of public administration in Ukraine	identification of gaps in public service and HRM	confirmation of the need to strengthen HR capacity
European Commission Ukraine Report 2024	Transparent remuneration, merit-based recruitment, rollout of HRMIS	linkage between HR reform and the accession negotiation process and the Ukraine Plan	transformation of personnel policy into a dimension of fulfilling European integration commitments
National Instruments (2025–2026)	Job classification, unified remuneration approaches, updated methodologies	operationalisation of transparency through standardised rules and data	creation of a basis for job comparability and more transparent remuneration

*Source: compiled by the author based on [9-11; 13-15].*

Particularly illustrative for Ukraine are the conclusions of the European Commission presented in the Ukraine Report 2024. The report notes that Ukraine has achieved a certain level of preparedness in the field of public administration reform and has made measurable progress; however, the fulfilment of tasks related to EU accession and post-war recovery requires strengthening the capacity of public administration, improving human resource management, and enhancing data-driven governance and monitoring. Among the key recommendations are the advancement of legislation on a fair and transparent remuneration system based on functional job classification, the improvement of merit-based recruitment, promotion, and dismissal procedures, and further progress in the nationwide rollout and effective use of a unified HRMIS [13].

As demonstrated in Table 2, European practice in this area is not uniform. In continental administrative models (e.g., Germany and France), greater emphasis is placed on standardized requirements, examinations, clearly defined career trajectories, and the stability of the civil service corps. In position-based and mixed models (notably Sweden, the Netherlands, Poland, and Estonia), more importance is attached to openness of entry to specific positions, intersectoral mobility, more flexible competency profiles, and the use of digital selection tools. A common feature across these models is not the specific format of competition procedures, but rather the requirement for transparency of rules, justification of decisions, and the ability to verify their integrity.

In Ukraine, the principles of equal access, competitiveness, transparency, and political neutrality are enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine [16] and the Law of Ukraine "On Civil Service" [17]. Normatively, this provides a solid foundation for an open personnel policy. At the same time, martial law, staff losses, restrictions on traditional competitive mechanisms, uneven institutional capacity across public authorities, and the need for rapid staffing have led to a gap between the normative model and its practical implementation. As noted by Lyndiuk O., the modernization of the civil service in Ukraine is characterized by a contradiction between a formally progressive regulatory framework and the limited institutional capacity for its effective implementation [1].

In 2025–2026, HR reform in Ukraine has been reinforced by new instruments directly linked to the transparency of personnel decisions. Law No. 4282-IX of 11 March 2025, which entered into force on 1 April 2025, introduces unified approaches to the remuneration of civil servants based on job classification [14]. The updated Methodology for Job Classification in the Civil Service, effective from 21 January 2026, establishes unified classification principles, more clearly delineates the roles of stakeholders, and refines the grounds for reclassification [15]. Taken together, these changes enhance job comparability, transparency of remuneration, and the predictability of career structures within the civil service.

The practical dimension of the issue is confirmed by recent data from the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service (NADS). According to monitoring results for the first quarter of 2025, the actual number of employed civil servants amounted to 156,792, while the number of vacant positions reached 30,522 [18]. This indicates a persistent staffing deficit that complicates the implementation of a fully open personnel policy and often pushes public authorities toward short-term staffing decisions. At the same time, in 2025 NADS consolidated individual professional training needs of 139,909 civil servants [19], while its official resources systematically publish analytical materials on organisational culture in the public service (including the 2023 and 2025 survey waves), HR unit needs, the engagement of young professionals, and other aspects of HRM [12]. In line with the conclusions of Shkurat I. and Potapov O. [6], as well as Yaremko I. and Melenchuk I. [7], this deficit should be interpreted not only as a quantitative issue but also as a significant risk of loss of institutional memory, reduced adaptability, and weakened capacity of the public service for learning and renewal.

Special attention should be paid to the fact that the openness of personnel policy must extend to the entire public service, not only its civil service segment. The Law of Ukraine “On Service in Local Self-Government Bodies” No. 3077-IX [20] has already been adopted; however, its entry into force has been postponed: it will become effective six months after its publication, but not earlier than six months after the termination or cancellation of martial law [21]. This implies that the adaptation of standards of openness,

professional development, and evaluation to the level of local self-government is not a distant but rather a preparatory task of the current period.

The implementation of the principle of openness of personnel policy in Ukraine is accompanied by a number of systemic challenges, each characterised by specific manifestations, risks for the professionalisation of the public service, and corresponding priority response measures.

First, the formalisation of competitive recruitment is manifested in nominal openness combined with insufficient quality of competency assessment, which creates risks of weakening meritocracy and reducing trust in competitive procedures. Addressing this requires the introduction of competency-based selection, the application of standardised criteria, and proper documentation of the grounds for HR decisions.

Second, the staffing deficit is reflected in a significant number of vacancies, staff overload, and difficulties in attracting qualified professionals, leading to reduced institutional capacity and an increased risk of ad hoc appointments. In this context, priority measures include workforce planning, the development of talent pools, and the attraction of young professionals and specialists from related sectors.

Third, the fragmented digitalisation of HR processes is characterised by limited digital traceability of recruitment, promotion, evaluation, and training, which constrains analytical capacity and oversight of HR processes. Accordingly, a consistent rollout of HRMIS, the unification of HR data, and the development of public statistics and dashboard-based approaches are required.

Fourth, uneven institutional capacity is manifested in disparities between central and local authorities, resulting in asymmetries in the quality of personnel policy and reinforcing territorial imbalances. This necessitates strengthening methodological support for HR units, disseminating unified standards, and expanding training programmes.

Fifth, the limited transparency of career progression and remuneration decisions is evident in the insufficient clarity of career pathways and the logic of pay systems, leading to staff demotivation, opacity of remuneration, and increased organizational tensions. This requires the integration of job

classification with transparent remuneration frameworks, performance evaluation systems, and effective appeal mechanisms.

As follows from the above, reorienting Ukraine's personnel policy towards genuine openness requires not a return to formalised competitiveness as an end in itself, but the establishment of a full-cycle transparent HRM system. This entails the publication of clear job profiles and selection criteria; the documentation of HR decisions; the provision of digital traceability across recruitment, evaluation, and training processes; the alignment of professional development with actual institutional needs; the development of transparent remuneration architectures; and the introduction of mechanisms for review, audit, and appeal of HR decisions.

Accordingly, the openness of personnel policy should be understood not as a supplementary ethical principle, but as an organisational mechanism for ensuring state capacity.

Conclusions. The openness of personnel policy constitutes one of the key factors in the development of a professional public service in the context of Ukraine's European integration. It is defined as institutionally ensured transparency of rules, criteria, data, and outcomes of HR decisions, which guarantees equal access to public service, merit-based recruitment, accountability, and traceability of career development, thereby creating the foundation for a transition from a declarative understanding of openness to its practical operationalisation through a system of indicators.

Within the European administrative space, the openness of personnel policy is directly associated with meritocracy, integrity, performance, and institutional trust. For Ukraine, this issue has gained additional significance following the official opening of EU accession negotiations and the integration of HR reforms into the logic of implementing the Ukraine Plan and European Commission recommendations. The updated SIGMA Principles, the SIGMA Monitoring Report for Ukraine, and national reforms in job classification and remuneration collectively establish a new framework for evaluating and improving personnel policy.

The current situation in Ukraine is characterised by a combination of normative openness and practical constraints, including the formalisation of

competitive procedures, staffing shortages, uneven institutional capacity, fragmented digitalisation of HR processes, and limited transparency in certain career and remuneration decisions. Further improvement of personnel policy should follow a full-cycle HRM logic, encompassing competency-based recruitment, transparent remuneration systems, digital analytics, accountability mechanisms, and needs-based professional development.

A promising direction for further research is the development of methodologies for the empirical measurement of the openness of personnel policy across different segments of the public service, particularly at the level of central executive authorities, specialised state bodies, and local self-government. This would enable an assessment of the impact of declared openness standards on the quality of HR decisions and the level of professionalization of the public service.

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