

Zhuk, P.V.

Інститут регіональних досліджень НАН України, Львів

WE NEED SUPPORT

At the working meeting held in the Western Research Center, Serhii I. Pyrozhkov, Full Member and Vice President of the NAS of Ukraine, appreciated the accomplishments of the Dolishnii Institute for Regional Research with which he acquainted during his visit to Lviv Oblast, “The Institute for Regional Research of the NAS of Ukraine has been demonstrating positive dynamics. We need to know how many communities should be in Ukraine in order to ensure an organic balance between the community requests and the responses of regional public administrations”.

The interview with Petro Zhuk, Candidate of Economic Science and speaker at the Institute Scientific Board meeting (before Mr. Pyrozhkov) deals with the current researches related to the reform of administrative and territorial system.

– **Mr. Petro, how long has this subject been studied?**

– The fundamentals of administrative and territorial system formation have been studied by the Institute for a period longer than 10 years. Among the deliverables, there is a monograph research *Foreign and National Experience in the Administrative and Territorial System Reform* published in 2007. Since 2010, this problem has been a subject of both theoretical and applied research.

– **What do you mean?**

– I mean that according to the decision of the Board of the Economics Department of the NAS

of Ukraine of October 29, 2013, the Institute is appointed a chief institution for the *Administrative and Territorial System* direction of the *Regional Research* among organizations carrying out fundamental and applied research within the framework of the Economic Department of the NAS of Ukraine in 2014–2018.

– **Hence, the Institute is among implementing organizations in this direction, isn’t it?**

– Yes. It is. In addition to us, the implementing organizations are the Institute for Economic and Legal Research, the Institute for Economics and Forecasting, the Transcarpathian Regional Center for Socioeconomic and Humanitarian Research, and the R&D Center for Industrial Development Problems.

– **What is necessary or important in this regard, in your opinion?**

– Effective territorial framework for administrative and territorial governance (ATG), administrative and territorial system (ATS), methods for their formation; financial provision and separation of responsibilities of government authorities and self-governing; structure and principles of formation of government bodies in the ATG; proposals on improvement of the constitutional and legislative framework for the administrative and territorial reform.

Since 2010, we have succeeded with the preparation and transfer of the materials on decentralization and ATG reform to the central government bodies, self-governing bodies, and to the Economics Department of the NAS of Ukraine. These

materials include research memos (Basic Principles of Reform of Administrative and Territorial System and Self-Governing in Ukraine; Reform of Administrative and Territorial System in Ukraine (basic principles and directions) prepared by the working group consisting of experts from the IRR, the Board for the Study of Productive Forces of Ukraine, the R&D Center for Industrial Development Problems, and the Institute for Market Problems and Economic and Environment Research of the NAS of Ukraine); draft conception of administrative and territorial reform in Ukraine and the Conception of Reform of ATS of Ukraine; methodical guidelines for the simulation of communities at basic level; draft models of communities of Lviv Oblast regions with analytical materials; proposals on amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine related to ATS and decentralization, etc. I will not count all of them in order not to trouble the readers with excessive information.

– ***The readers, likely, want to know where these initiatives have been presented or highlighted...***

– I will mention several venues where we have held our events: the panel of the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction of Ukraine (Kyiv, 18.11.2010); the roundtable *the State and the Regions: from Paternalism to Partnership* (Kyiv, National Institute for Strategic Research, 18.11.2010); the roundtable for researchers and practical experts *Reform of Self-Governing and Territorial Structure of the Government in Ukraine* (Lviv, Lviv Public Administration, 19.05.2014); the roundtable *The Community: To Live in a New Way. The First Steps of Self-Governing Reform*, Center for Political and Legal Reforms, Association of the Cities of Ukraine, Center for Self-Governing Studies (Lviv, 20.11.2014); international workshop organized by the Institute *The Regional Policy in Ukraine: Current Status and Strategy of Reforms* (Lviv, 27–28.11.2014); conference of the Carpathian Network for Support of Community Development *The Opportunities for the Development*

of Communities of Carpathian Euroregion in the Context of Decentralization with the chairmen of Lviv Oblast Council and Lviv Public Administration and top officials of Oblast regions involved (Lviv, 28.05.2015), etc. The Institute experts have been engaged in the commission of Lviv Public Administration on considering the proposals of district public administrations on the formation of communities (Lviv, 13–15.05.2015).

– ***Hence, you are working hard! What is the Institute working at nowadays?***

– Since the third quarter of 2014, the Institute has been dealing with methodological principles and directions for the ATS reform in Ukraine. This research is made within the framework of the *Socioeconomic Potential of Sustainable Development of Ukraine and Its Regions in Post-Crisis Period* program of the Economics Department of the NAS of Ukraine.

– ***Oh, this topic is very deep...***

– Naturally. I would like to draw your attention to several aspects. This research is expected to explain to the central authorities the inconsistency and wrong character of some approaches to practical implementation of the Conception for the Reform of Self-Governing and Territorial Structure of Governance in Ukraine approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on April 1, 2014.

– ***How many are there such wrong approaches?***

– There is a fair bit of them. Among them, there are ignorance of existing and future centers for economic development as potential centers of basic ATU, as well as of the role of periphery factor in the formation of ATU; threat of a decrease in the population access to basic public services; efforts to reform the ATU system without preliminary assignment of responsibilities and authorities among ATU levels; and delays in decision-making on the formation of financial provision for self-governing, insufficient involvement of the government in financing the basic public services provided to the population,

etc. Finally, I would like to point out what should be done. Firstly, it is necessary to prepare proposals and draft legislative acts and regulations with respect to the essence and sequence of ATS reform. And the main thing is to cooperate more actively with the government authorities for the sake of implementation of respective developments and to popularize them through mass media.

The necessity of better popularization has been noted by speakers at scientific board meetings

and by Serhii Pyrozhkov, Vice President of the NAS of Ukraine, as well.

We live and learn... But, in any case, we should work more effectively. One more thing... we need support in establishing the cooperation with central government bodies and engaging the Institute experts in respective working groups and task forces.

Interview by *Bohdan ZALIZNIAK*,
Chief of the Press Center of Scientific Journalism
of WRC of the NAS of Ukraine and the MES of Ukraine,
Candidate of Philological Science