COMMUNICATIVE POLICY OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

In the context of further development of consolidated democracy, availability and affordability of information technologies, the main administrative function of the state is inevitably reformatted from making and implementing managerial decisions to communication with citizens, involving them in the process of public policy development and implementation of socio-political decisions. It is revealed that this tendency poses new challenges to the professionalism of public servants and awareness of citizens, necessitates structural changes within public authorities, the increasing role of information offices (centers) and web portals in their activities. The novelty of the study is to use the case method and summarize the results, based on the historical and political traditions of the countries selected for the analysis and in the dimension of modern development of "connected society". The study provides an analysis of the characteristic features of the communication policy of public authorities in European countries (two post-Soviet countries and one country that became a member of the EU in the mid-twentieth century), with their distinguished temporal and contemporary trends in the development of government communications. It has been found that such a comparative approach will be useful for developing recommendations for improving

the communication policy of public authorities in European countries, in particular, in Ukraine. It is established that the countries of the post-soviet space before the 00's of the 21st century have had problems with stereotyped perceptions of dialogue as a poor management decision-making tool, time consuming and inefficient in the context of widespread access to democratic participation. The impact of reforms in the system of government communications that took place at the beginning of the 21st century in the post-Soviet countries was evaluated. It was emphasized that the development of government communications significantly contributed to the establishment of mutual communication lines between the state and society, the understanding of public opinion as a basic indicator of professionalism of public servants, provided for the modernization of the form of government information as a simple integrated message conditioned by public interest.

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1. INTRODUCTION

It seems indisputable that public confidence in the democratic path of development should be built on through broad public dialogue. However, in the young European democracies attests, the instrumental potential of the dialogue was not considered to be fully relevant to the objectives of public administration for a long time. A number of countries have been literally pushed to rethink public communications strategies through the opportunities provided by the Internet [1]. Because information technology contributes to the convergence of social problems and conflicts [2].

Concepts such as New Public Management, Post New Public Management, Good Governance and Public Value Management are equally based on evaluating the effectiveness and principles of flexibility, transparency, accountability, targeting, customer orientation, outcome measurement and, above all, bilateral communication and cooperation, which is the basis of communication ("less government – more governance").

In a broad sense, communication is an agreement that requires understanding, as well as building and maintaining relationships where dialogue is needed [3]. The classics of management thought emphasized: "To get a decentralized government, move from a hierarchy to teamwork and engagement" [4].

The Treaty on European Union states that every citizen has the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union and that all political decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen [5]. In 2005, the European Commission emphasized the focus on "dialogue and debate" in the work of the state in a document entitled "Plan D – for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate" [6].

As the researchers in [7] point out, the goal of institutional communication in public administration is to ensure public interest. Public administration should ensure a clear communication process, "written in simple language". Institutional communication enables public authorities to create an atmosphere of trust.

Well-known theorist in [8] has developed a consensus-oriented theory of public relations, which envisages the quality of communications at three levels: 1) the level of information disseminated by the system; 2) the level of organization whose information is disseminated by the media; 3) public awareness on this issue. The scholar emphasized that if the target audience considers a particular information issue to be extremely important or controversial, the tool of face-to-face consultation as well as on-line chatting and social networking should be used. Media platforms should be widely used [8].

In work [9], the Dutch scholars emphasized the growing influence of the media on the behaviour of politicians, the functioning of political and administrative institutions ("mediatization"). These researchers mentioned that relations between journalists and political actors are characterized by interdependence.

Theorist in [10] argued that channels for bilateral communication between government and citizens in the modern world have become more important. After all, public consultations and public feedback provide public officials with the information they need to tailor service packages that better meet customer needs. Researcher in [10] believes that there is a strong interest in developing "partnership approaches" between government, industry and public sectors to share their skills and experience in problem-solving and improving public sector service delivery.

According to [11], the effectiveness of public authorities depends directly on the constant exchange of political messages and decisions. According to [11], the concept of "governmental communication" should not be used only to refer to the communication of central executive bodies. Government communication also applies to the public relations cultivated for long-term by regional and local government-created institutions [11]. Such relationships are mutually beneficial.

Theorists in [12] identify three distinct theoretical traditions of exploring the perspectives of relations of media and public authorities: 1) public relations tradition (emphasis is placed on the transfer of the ideas to the general public); 2) agenda tradition (emphasis on how the media affect the political agenda); and 3) mediatization tradition of (the aspect of possible subjective interpretation of government messages in the media). In this study, we will follow Tradition No. 2 (see Table1 for details).

Table 1 Theoretical traditions of media influence [12]

	Public relation tradition (No.1)	**Agenda tradition (No. 2)**	**Mediatization tradition (No. 3)**
Essence	Public relations	Establishment of the agenda	Mediatization
Point of focus	Organization	Problem	Context
Focus	Sales of messages	Formation of the agenda	Interpretation of political events in the media
Main background	Business administration	Public administration	Society

Therefore, modern theorists are convinced that the main purpose of communication of public authorities is to involve citizens and other stakeholders in the processes of public policy implementation. The development of democracy, on the one hand, guarantees more and more rights to the citizens they need to know about and, on the other, requires more and more constructive citizen participation, their readiness to be responsible members of the society. Therefore, the effectiveness of communications by public authorities depends on a number of factors; their study, with a view to developing mechanisms for increasing the effectiveness of the state's communication policy, is a significant scientific challenge.

In the information society, the greatest threat to democracy is limited, incomplete access to information by the general public. It can lead to a distorted understanding of the content of the reforms (current management activities), and thus the lack of legitimacy of even effective reformatory governments (effective public administrations). From the point of view of organizational communication, information on services properly orientates their customers and directly influences the requests and ratings of the audience (and accordingly - the image of the state).

The hypotheses of this study are the following theses: the effectiveness of public policy depends to a large extent on the cooperation and benefits that all stakeholders receive in developing and implementing it. This cooperation is impossible without the exchange of information. In carrying out information activities, public authorities should base on marketing logic, proceeding from the position of clients (citizens). Because human (civic), along with expert, knowledge becomes an integral part of modern public policy. This requires increasing public awareness, modernization of public authorities' communication systems as market actors according to the logic of PR, while proceeding from public interest and public values (combining New Public Management market principles with public purpose and justice values of Good Governance in the Post (New) Public Value Management approach). The availability of information (awareness on socio-political issues) rationalizes the choice and behaviour of citizens, thus increasing the constructive component of civic participation.

2. METHODS

As Polish researcher in [13] points out, communication management still does not find a proper place in the work of public authorities, especially in post-Soviet countries. Therefore, three cases of countries with somewhat different models of communication policy of public authorities were selected for the study: 1) the case of the Netherlands as a UE post-founder EU country (joined the Union in 1958), characterized by a structured system of government communications at different levels; 2) the case of Latvia as a post-Soviet country, where rapid changes in the development of the system of government communications took place in the 00's of the 20th century; 3) the case of Poland as a post-Soviet country, where transformations with the aim of modernizing government communications have been successful since the 00's of the 20th century, but they are still dynamic. Poland and Latvia joined the EU in 2004.

Institutional, structural and temporal approaches will be used in the analysis of each case to examine the communicative policies of public authorities.

3. RESULTS

At the turn of the 1980's and 1990's, many European countries made significant changes in their approach to public sector management theory. This was due to the creation of a new concept of New Public Management. Strategic planning and marketing techniques were to help "sell" public policy to citizens. According to [14], they were considered useful because the researchers treated the relationship between the state and the taxpayers as a normal market exchange - citizens pay for some products and services provided by the public sector directly (when they actually had to buy and pay the price in the conditions similar to a market reality) or indirectly (through taxes).

In most European countries, the communication policy of public authorities is coordinated by an office located directly in or near a government building, serving as the main provider of citizen information services and meeting the general media information needs (Federale Voorlichtingsdienst (Service Fédérald' Information) in Belgium, the Bulgaria Government Information Service, French Service d'Inform du Gouvernement, Dipartimento per l'informazion e l'editoria in Italy). The central office of information is usually the main point of

contact for providing detailed information about a government organization, laws, plans, social services and benefits, statistics. The Central Information Directorate performs at least six functions: 1) conducting research and analysis, 2) advising senior officials, 3) managing media relations, 4) informing citizens; 5) coordination of communication policy and promotion of internal services, coordination of information flows; 6) measuring and evaluating public opinion.

The feedback created by these different methods should be used by public policy makers in shaping the political agenda according to the priorities of the public.

One of the tasks, for example, of the Finnish government's information unit is to inform ministers of accidents and other events that may escalate into special situations. Usually every public institution has an information center to manage external communications related to its field of activity. Information bureaus are sometimes perceived by public authorities as a mailbox for delivering messages. This simplistic view diminishes the key role of public communications in promoting public understanding, supporting public policy and enhancing the legitimacy of public authorities. Traditional media in Europe remain an important means through which governments communicate with the public. Therefore, public information officers need to constantly work to build trust between the media and the state, forming a mutual assessment of what is needed by both parties.

The central office of information usually manages the cooperation between information officers of different public authorities. In many countries, this office has a leading role in organizing regular meetings of information officers to review government topics, priorities, events and possible media campaigns. However, some public servants tend to perceive public communication as an additional activity in the decision-making process, rather than the main function of public authorities.

The UK has a Central Information Office, accountable to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The office is based in London and has eight regional offices. The institution employs just over 300 people. The main authority of the Office is to provide advice to the government, inform general public about procurement and project management, share information with the media. The Office's staff is special - most of the employed and public servants have been recruited from the private sector, enabling a fully customer-centric approach within the New Public Management concept. This is possible under the British model of public service. The project approach is widely used in the work of the Central Information Office. Project managers are specialists in their particular fields, who provide independent advice on the best way to achieve the communication goals of politicians, public officials with the public.

3.1. Case of the Netherlands

The Government Information Service plays a central role in supporting the government policy of the Netherlands [15]. This body employs about 135 people. The main activity of the bureau is to inform about weekly government meetings. This requires a great deal of prior consultation with the ministries. Emphasis is placed on publicizing and explaining policy through media independence; journalists that cover parliamentary affairs provide detailed information on official visits within the country and abroad. The office also supports journalists covering the public sector, helping to advertise for major events, especially when engaging a member of the Royal Family or the Prime Minister. The Office provides the Prime Minister and his advisers with information on events and issues that may be relevant to the policy adopted.

The Office staff provides the Queen's Cabinet, Parliament, State Council Committee, General Accounting Office, National Ombudsman and Ministry with the information from daily newspapers, radio, television and magazines. The Office generates this information using computerized documentation systems and also performs specific tasks in special circumstances

such as natural disasters, military affairs, hostage situations, storm tide alerts, etc. By law, the Head of the Office has a wide range of authorities for interrupting radio and television broadcasts in case of the urgent need to promptly inform the public.

The Netherlands Government Information Center has a 24-hour reporting system. A group of consultants forming a separate department is active in the field of research, audiovisual productions, printed production and development of media campaigns. This group assists the Office, as well as individual ministries, other government agencies.

The coordination center for the communication policy of public authorities in the Netherlands is the Information Council. The Information Council not only coordinates the information activities of the ministries and governmental institutions of the Netherlands, but also uses the media for government information. It consists of directors of information departments of ministries.

Direct public information activities of the government, using their own information resources, are becoming increasingly important in the Netherlands. Ministers run their own cross-media campaigns on specific topics, mixing information opportunities of television, radio, advertising and printed media.

According to the law on the country's media, radio and television, airtime is allocated for the Prime Minister to deliver public information. Information messages here are known as Postbus mail (P.O. Box 51), named after the post office number used by all ministries. These are short newsletters that the government sends to citizens, and are always available at post offices and public libraries.

3.2. Case of Latvia

As of 2000, a fifth of written requests to Latvian public authorities left unanswered [16]. The key figure in providing information to the Latvian public authorities is an information officer as a public sector employee. The exact name of this position depends on the place and the specific tasks the officer performs. Several hundred information officers work in their ministries and agencies.

The Latvian Law on Freedom of Information (adopted on October 29, 1998) determines two categories of information: "public information" that can be shared with the public and "restricted information". The latter is defined as "information ... intended for a limited group of persons in connection with their professional employment, if disclosure or loss of the content of the information may complicate the activities of the institutions" [17].

The dissemination of information in the system of public authorities of Latvia is quite decentralized. Latvia was one of the first European countries to launch online conversations of citizens and senior officials, subject to regular online public consultation.

In 2016, inefficient bureaucracy was identified as the second major barrier to business in Latvia after high taxes [18]. The main reason for low performance of public servants is the ineffective communication policy of public authorities [19]. As early as the beginning of the 21st century, a small number of public executives who, by virtue of their positions, interacted with entrepreneurs in the country, understood their values and needs, were in fact very far from making important political decisions [19].

On democracy as an asymmetric communication process in Latvia, in which the public has great opportunities to express their opinions, but there is no significant feedback from the political elite, Latvian theorists in [20] notes.

The Latvian Constitution guarantees that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes the right to freely obtain, store and disseminate information, to express their opinions. Censorship is prohibited [21]. At the same time, as researcher in [22] points out, there

is a difference between the provisions of the regulatory documents and the real state of affairs has taken place. A researcher, studying the principles of work of business entities in municipalities in 2004, found that the implementation of constitutional principles is significantly delayed due to inertia, lack of potential (finances, human resources, know-how, technology) and unwillingness to change something in public authorities. However, individual municipalities and government agencies have started implementing projects for the creation of utilities supplying agencies, integrating marketing communication plans into their daily activities [22].

Effective dialogue between government and society has been established as one of the cornerstones in the important document Government Communication Policy Guidelines 2008-2013 [23]. According to the provisions of the document, the volume of administrative services provided through the Internet was expected to increase from 20% to 60%.

As of 2017, about 66.2% of the Latvian population used the Internet regularly [19], in Iceland and Denmark this figure is 80% [24]. The need to ensure "legal awareness and involvement of society in decision-making processes, ensuring modern communication" was identified in the Latvian document Public Administration Policy Development Guidelines for 2014-2020 [25] Public officials had to master the use of Twitter, Youtube, Facebook and local social networks. The State Chancellery, in collaboration with the Latvian School of Public Administration, has begun to work on a new modular system for training civil servants, incorporating topics such as "Customer orientation, cooperation, community engagement, integrity" and other principles and practices of good governance into educational programs [26].

In Latvia's modern public administration system, a two-way symmetrical model of public relations by [27] is introduced, in which communication is used for discussions, conflict resolution, mutual understanding and mutual respect between the organization and its stakeholders. The model assumes a transition from one-way communication – to two-way communication; from information and persuasion to relationships [28]. That is, communication policy provides internal dialogue within the organization on its behalf and external dialogue between the organization and its target audience.

According to some researchers, in the case of Latvia, it is possible to refer to asymmetric two-way communications rather than two-way symmetric communication [29]. According to [29], there is much to be achieved in the case of asymmetry, since people live in a large volume of information and do not have enough free time for frequent dialogues.

An example of active involvement of non-governmental organizations in making important socio-political decisions is exemplary. Their ability to stir up public participation, unite public opinion to shape public policy, carry out an informative function, and serve as an instrument of public policy implementation are appreciated. Significant progress has recently been observed in communications between government and non-governmental organizations (see Table 2 for details).

Table 2 Dynamics of participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of Latvia in the development and implementation of public policy

Year	2010	2015
Number of ministerial regulations drafted	1,374	1,152
NGOs participated in working groups on drafting regulations	17%	23%
Draft regulations discussed with the participation of NGOs	12%	14%
NGOs carried out expert analysis of draft regulations	19%	21%
NGOs submitted project reviews and proposals	40%	62%

Currently, the forms of NGOs participation in the public administration system have been enhanced. In 2009, a specially formed institution was created to coordinate the effective interaction of the NGOs with the state – the Secretariat of Special Assignments Minister for Social Integration.

As of 2016, 16,259 NGOs were registered in Latvia, of which 2.4% are constantly involved in the development and implementation of public policy [19]. This figure is still small. However, NGOs participation rates continue to increase. The Latvian Public Administration significantly facilitates the effective participation of non-governmental organizations in the adoption and implementation of public management decisions. This places high demands on the professionalism of the NGOs.

3.3. Case of Poland

The case of Poland may become a generalized image of post-communist countries, where the economy has gradually evolved from a model of distribution and command to a free market, but the development of democracy has been delayed by the untimely creation of structures and the use of tools needed to exchange information in the public sector.

In the context of the process of political modernization in the post-Soviet countries, the state is responsible for ensuring public interest, which may in some way relate to determining the rules of the game in a particular sector. For example, in the context of public sector regulation, the state is responsible for creating environmentally responsible behaviour of both economic entities and the general public (conducting educational campaigns, applying legal and economic factors). The social values protected by the Polish government more than market mechanisms are in line with the approved policy and fulfilment of international obligations.

Public officials in Poland now regard public communications as an important and integral tool of public administration.

In the case of Poland, the government model of the communication wheel, based on the following microenvironments, has been effectively implemented: multilevel; 2) intra-governmental level; 3) intergovernmental level; 4) external level. For each of these levels, there is an excellent information need that the Polish Government has to satisfy directly within its agenda.

Regarding government communication measures, for example, in the energy sector, they primarily relate to: 1) informing about the country's energy needs, publication of reports and statements on energy policy implementation; 2) informing the public about the economic framework of the energy market and the changes taking place there, and promoting socially responsible attitudes to the field of energy consumption; 3) informing consumers and producers about their rights and obligations arising from the applicable provisions; 4) providing information about the economic activity of the state in the energy sector and the implementation of corporate governance, especially on issues of energy transportation; 5) promoting the energy policy of the state by involving the society in its implementation, i.e. promotion of new environmentally friendly sources of energy. These directions of the communication policy are related to the relevant energy policy of the Republic of Poland until 2030, which identifies communications management by governmental institutions engaged in research and development as one of the most important policy instruments.

External and internal communication issues in the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Poland are handled by the Public Communication Bureau. It monitors and coordinates the activities of the Ministry in the field of media relations, organizes press conferences and other media events with the participation of the Ministry's leaders, monitors publications in the media on the activities of the Ministry and prepares press reviews for the Ministry's leaders and employees, maintains general profiles of services in social networks, fulfils the tasks in the field

of advertising, which fall within the competence of the Minister. The Bureau also coordinates the work on responding to citizens' requests for public information, monitors the implementation of the Citizen Project; coordinates programs of cooperation with non-governmental organizations. The authority of this department also includes the administration of the portal and the Ministry's Public Information Bulletin, preparation and publication of information materials on the Ministry's websites and in the Ministry's Public Information Bulletin, maintenance, modernization of the website, publication of the Ministry's Public Information Bulletin, administration of the intranet and ensuring internal communication of the Ministry.

Today, the expectations of citizens of the democratic countries of what information about government activities should be available have changed a lot [30]. The demand for greater responsibility and transparency of the activities of public authorities is also linked to new technologies, the potential of which can be used to disseminate a great volume of information much simpler and faster. For nearly a decade, citizens in Poland can view licensing rules, ask questions about public services, apply for a management service, learn about income tax procedures, read official statistics and comment on legislative proposals at any time of the day from home.

Prominent examples of the modernization of the communication policy of public authorities in Poland are also found at the local level. Public communication units have a high status in the structure of city governments and are the main developers and coordinators of the implementation of urban information policy, ensuring its coherence and effectiveness. Such units in the city governments perform not only auxiliary functions of the information support of the city administration, provide information to the residents of the city about the activities of local authorities, but also implement strategic projects aimed at long-term socio-economic development of cities. To fulfil the above-mentioned tasks, these units use a variety of communication tools, including modern information and communication technologies, social media, advertising, relevant communication channels to reach different target audiences within the city, country and abroad.

In general, it should be noted that, even in case of only websites or message boards located in institutions and information offices of public authorities of all levels, public communications management in modern Poland is at the highest technological level and has adequate provision.

4. DISCUSSION

The formation of a new culture of public communication in a democratic society substantially changes the traditional, in classic terms, pyramid of public administration, as a result of greater delegation of powers to local government and civil society organizations, increased public participation in public policy making and decision-making on socially significant issues. This urges the problem of modernizing the communication policy of public authorities at all levels, which would improve communication with citizens and involve them in making decisions on public administration. As a result, a powerful sector of public communication is formed as a component of political and managerial communication. This component is an indispensable attribute of a democratic society and is absent in an authoritarian one (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).
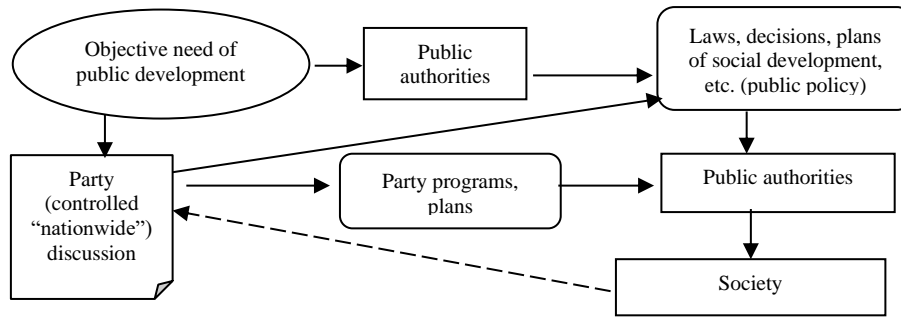
Figure 1 The model of political administrative communication in an authoritarian society

Source: author's development

In today's world, it is increasingly difficult for public officials to justify the need for limited access to certain information.

Technical factors have also had a significant impact on the modernization of the communication policy of public authorities. The most powerful development of public communication at the beginning of the 21st century probably led to the widespread use of the Internet by the public authorities as a means of communication between the public and officers. As of 2000, all European governments had an official website, and almost all ministries and major agencies also had their own web pages.
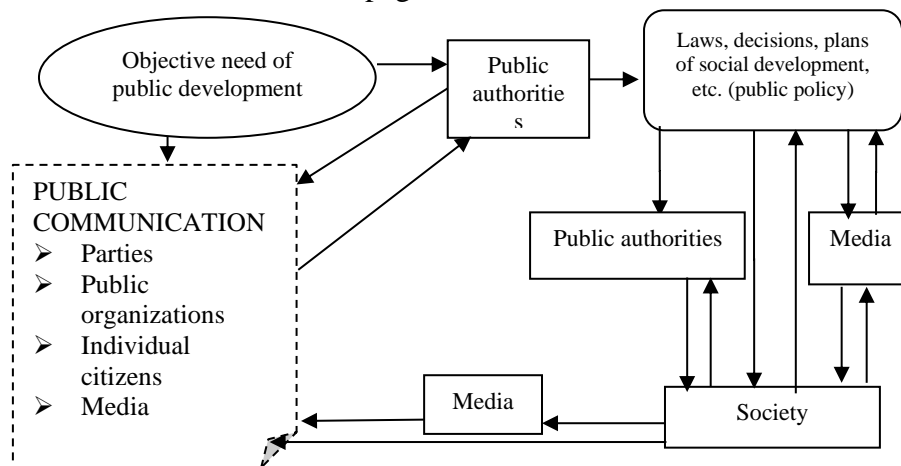

Figure 2 The model of political administrative communication in a democratic society

Source: author's development

In 2000, Switzerland was one of the first to clearly identify five criteria that must be met by on-line public information (namely, it must be reliable, useful, complete, objective and easily accessible). In this way, the communicative policy of public authorities in the developed democracies has for two decades provided a situation where participatory democracy begins to overtake representative democracy and where citizens are increasingly becoming active partners rather than passive consumers. This poses new challenges for public administration systems: 1) efforts must be actively directed to overcoming the "digital gap" (the problem of providing widespread Internet access in economically underdeveloped regions); 2) it is necessary to modernize the system of training, refresher training of public servants in the field of communications in the modern information space, provide the information services themselves with the state-of-the-art equipment, etc.

By its specifics, public administration as a socio-cultural phenomenon is related to the manner, structure, methods of institutional communication, which should become part of the organizational culture of each institution. The manner of such communication, according to [7],

should include: communication between different levels of public administration; liaison between political authorities and the administration; communication at the same level; interaction between social performers and administration; social communication.

Through the process of communication, public authorities seek to establish a close relationship with the citizen; seeing him/her close and starting a dialogue, they become more focused on his/her demands and complaints.

As with any communication process, it is normal that interventions and barriers arise and complicate the communication process. The phenomenon of "noise" is an indispensable component of the communication model [31]. The complexity of the causes that determine the difficulties and barriers associated with the communication process makes the possibility of regulation, adaptation and conversion mandatory in the relevant systems. The main factor in this regulation is the feedback that allows the recipient, in this case - a citizen - to respond to significant problems, and the sender - a public official or spokesman of a government agency - to perceive these signals.

In the process of modernizing the communication policy of public authorities in European countries, in particular Eastern and Central Europe, the role of the media in the public communication system is being rethought. Researcher in [32] points out that the relationship between public authorities and the media has now grown from competitive to cooperative, but are still far from progressive: sometimes public servants are hostile to journalists when the latter reveal scandals, and journalists are stereotyped in evaluating some messages of public officials as propaganda.

Among other things, employees of information offices of public authorities should be constantly prepared to work in the conditions of crisis communications. In this context, the public sector communication model, referred to as the "public sector crisis communication synthesis model" of [33] draws attention. This model includes six steps: continuous public relations efforts, identification and preparation for potential crises, internal preparation and rehearsal, crisis event, evaluation and review of public relations efforts, and analysis of interagency and political coordination [33]. This model is useful for analyzing the internal environment of the organization and self-improvement of the institution. This model is a more complex scheme for managing public communications. The model differentiates the determinants of public sector communications, such as the devaluation of communications, which results, in particular, from the reduction of spending on communication policies in public budgets.

When forming a particular model of communication, a public authority should take into account all the conditions and restrictions outlined above. Attempting to do so has led the above-mentioned scholars to creation of a government model of a communication wheel based on four complementary microenvironments [33]: 1) multilevel, when two or more levels of administration collaborate on one problem; 2) intra-governmental - within an institution or agency; 3) intergovernmental, where units of the same governmental level cooperate; 4) external, involving stakeholders, especially the private sector and non-governmental organizations. In all four micro-environments, public servants share experience and resources and coordinate communication [33]. In each of these environments, information can be exchanged through different channels directly or indirectly. Therefore, in our view, the use of cross-media platforms for government communication is indeed a requirement today. It is also important to overcome the constraints that public authorities are extremely hierarchical organizations, their economic resources are limited and used in a very complex way. As noted earlier, it is often a limitation that communication management is sometimes not perceived as an important area of public administration.

Models of communication policy of public authorities should be consistent with the main objectives of this policy. There are several generally agreed positions for understanding of these models. Tasks of communicative policy of public authorities, according to the approaches of some modern theoretical schools are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Generalization of modern approaches to determining the tasks of public authorities' communication policy

	George Washington University [34]	**McClellan paradigm (the paradigm of communication of public diplomacy)**
Tasks of public authorities' communication policy	engagement	action
	advocacy	advocacy
	informing	knowledge dissemination (informing)
	-	interest (motivation to participate in socio-political affairs)
	-	awareness (raising public awareness)

Therefore, it can be agreed that public policy development should be aimed at the widest possible range of the public in order to enrich and broaden political arguments and debates and to foster competition between ideas and values [35]. Thus, it is important to organize a genuine dialogue between public policy makers, professionals and an "active" public. Practical implementation of public policy as public learning is based on values of participation, shared decision-making, decentralization, which involves the use of dialogue, communication, cooperation [36], active participation in public choice as a means of policy development and implementation. The communication policy of the public authorities of democratic states is now based on this conceptual ground.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In the course of the study, based on the analysis of the communication policy of public authorities of the Netherlands, Latvia and Poland, the hypothesis was confirmed. In all progressive models of public management, communication is at the heart of the main functions. However, in a number of countries that have recently embarked on the path of advanced democracy, there are problems with a culture of consultation, coherent internal communication between government agencies and responsible citizen participation. Increased citizen participation is a key indicator of effective communication between public authorities at different levels. It requires the creation and promotion of good practices regarding transparency. At the same time, public authorities often do not regard public communication as an important function of their own, and the resources available to implement communication policy are quite limited. However, we have found that despite certain risks (information security issues, digital gap), greater openness of the administration can contribute to democracy, legitimacy and public support for democratic institutions (so society benefits therefrom). The communicative policy of the public authorities of European countries has common features, first and foremost a shared understanding of democratic values and common principles for building European administrative space.

The case of the Netherlands testified to the high level of integrity and ethics of the professional activities of public managers; the low level of corruption here has become an added value of the transparency, openness and collegiality of public authorities. In the Netherlands, since the early 1990's, clients of public authorities have been regarded not as an ordinary citizen, but as an integral part of the structure of public policy implementation.

The state should constantly ensure the proper quality of the information and democratic discussion space to facilitate public participation, to take into account the public opinion, to

explain the decisions made and to promote common values in appealing to the public interest. According to the case of Latvia, citizen participation develops people's confidence in their country. At the same time, the use of dialogue in state-public communications may be constrained by lack of time (if changes need to be implemented quickly), insufficient communication skills of stakeholders, and also by the complexity of the public communication model itself (if stakeholders have significantly different opinions, formation of an agreed position is problematic). However, it is through dialogue that a rational agreement can be reached between publicly competing opinions based on a common public interest (including in the process of discussing socially significant issues and making administrative decisions).

We have found that public policy transparency will necessarily have political and social benefits, especially in the long run. Therefore, the governments of modern democratic countries are likely to develop their own "codes of communication" and recommendations for effective digital communication technologies in the near future. This new issue requires further scientific research.

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