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## FORMATION OF A SYSTEM OF FOR CAREER GROWTH BASED ON ADHERENCE TO ANTI-DISCRIMINATION APPROACHES IN THE PROCESS OF TRAINING SPECIALISTS FOR SECURITY AND DEFENCE FORCES OF UKRAINE

*The mechanisms for forming a career growth system for specialists of the security and defence forces of Ukraine on anti-discrimination principles have been substantiated. It is emphasised that today anti-discrimination approaches to personnel policy are an integral part of NATO and EU standards, which indicates the importance of their integration into the system of training specialists for the security and defence forces of Ukraine. The mechanism for implementing the meritocratic principle in the context of forming a career growth system for specialists of the security and defence forces of Ukraine based on compliance with anti-discrimination approaches is investigated.*

**Keywords:** national security of Ukraine, state security, security and defence sector, security forces, defence forces, martial law, discrimination, prevention, counteraction, anti-discrimination policy, education, training of specialists, personnel policy, leadership, career growth, meritocratic principle, international standards, implementation.

**Statement of the problem.** Given the current challenges facing Ukraine in the context of full-scale war, the effective functioning of the security and defence forces [1, 2] directly depends on the quality of training of specialists, the transparency (objectivity) of their professional advancement and the fairness of career growth. Of particular importance in this context is the problem of overcoming (preventing, counteracting) discrimination, which remains one of the key barriers to building modern and effective security and defence forces capable of responding effectively to internal and external threats (both military and non-military). Discrimination, which manifests itself in various forms (gender, age, ethnic, political, etc.), not only hinders the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities, but also negatively affects the moral and psychological climate in units, undermining trust in leadership (command) and the motivation of personnel.

Today, anti-discrimination approaches to personnel policy are an integral part of NATO and EU standards, which shows how important it is to include them in the training system for Ukraine's security and defence forces. At the same time, the

implementation of these standards in domestic practice faces numerous organisational, legal and socio-cultural obstacles, which require systematic, scientifically sound solutions.

Therefore, the relevance of this study is determined by the social need to create an effective, transparent (objective) and fair system of career growth for specialists in the security and defence forces of Ukraine, which will meet modern international standards and ensure the implementation of the principle of non-discrimination. This, in turn, is a key condition for ensuring national security [3], strengthening the state's defence capability [4, 5], strengthening social trust and forming a positive international image of Ukraine as a modern, democratic state [6].

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The issue of compliance with the principle of non-discrimination in the training system for security and defence specialists is receiving increasing attention in the context of reforming Ukraine's security and defence sector and adapting to NATO and European Union (EU) standards. There is growing interest in academic discourse in combining issues of personnel policy, professional development and ensuring equal access to career

opportunities based on the principles of gender equality, non-discrimination on other grounds and human rights in general.

The issues of legal, organisational and managerial support for anti-discrimination policy in public administration and other spheres of public life have been given considerable attention in the research of scholars such as O. Bachynska, O. Bashchuk, V. Bondar, A. Dats, G. Zhuravleva, A. Korniiichenko, A. Kuchko, A. Predybailo, Z. Ravlinko, D. Svitovenko, I. Yankovets and others. Their works substantiate the need to develop a comprehensive system of legal, organisational and personnel measures to prevent and combat discrimination in public authorities, which directly concerns the security and defence sector.

Specific issues related to improving military education, gender equality and career advancement as important components of anti-discrimination policy in the security and defence sector have also been explored in the works of S. Biela, I. Buryaka, O. Verbochenko, A. Golovni, V. Yemanova, V. Kirilenko, A. Litvina, R. Musevich, N. Romanova, A. Stanishovsky, O. Togochynsky, V. Trobuk and other scholars who analyse compliance with the principles of equal access to service, training of specialists and career growth in the Armed Forces (AF) of Ukraine, the National Guard of Ukraine, the State Border Service of Ukraine and other security and defence entities of Ukraine.

However, despite the existence of individual works, a comprehensive scientific justification for the formation of a career growth system for specialists of the security and defence forces of Ukraine based on compliance with anti-discrimination approaches remains insufficiently developed.

**The purpose of the article** is to substantiate mechanisms for the formation of a career growth system for specialists in the security and defence forces of Ukraine based on anti-discrimination principles.

**Summary of the main material.** Analysis of contemporary theory and practice shows that in the context of reforming Ukraine's security and defence sector and its integration into the Euro-Atlantic security space, the issue of developing an effective, transparent and inclusive career growth system is becoming particularly important [7–10]. The career trajectory of a specialist in the security

and defence forces is largely determined by the characteristics of the organisational culture, personnel policy, approaches to assessment, training and appointment to positions. In this context, adherence to anti-discrimination approaches is not only a requirement of the times, but also a necessary condition for building professional and morally and psychologically stable military and law enforcement teams capable of effectively performing their assigned tasks.

First of all, it should be noted that the concept of anti-discrimination policy covers a set of legal, organisational and managerial measures aimed at removing barriers and ensuring equal opportunities for all persons regardless of gender, age, race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, political or other beliefs, as well as other characteristics, the list of which is not exhaustive. In accordance with international standards, in particular NATO's anti-discrimination policy [11] and EU directives in this area [12, 13], these approaches should be integrated into all levels of human resource management, including the training and career development of specialists (military personnel, employees) of Ukraine's security and defence forces.

At the same time, in many cases, career advancement in military formations and law enforcement agencies often remains dependent on subjective factors, such as personal connections and internal loyalty, rather than solely on professional achievements or competencies.

Contemporary scientific research confirms the importance of personnel policy, military leadership, and career growth for ensuring national and state security, especially in conditions of full-scale war.

For example, according to the fair judgement of S. Bielai and I. Buriak, "the use of human resources, in particular human potential, to ensure the security and defence of the state is an extremely important task. Therefore, personnel policy is fundamental in determining the essence of professional development of personnel" [14, p. 14].

The issue of career growth for military personnel is given special attention not only at the doctrinal (scientific) level, but also at the national level, as evidenced by the adoption of a number of conceptual regulatory and legal acts in the field of military personnel policy.

Thus, according to the Concept of Military Personnel Policy in the Ministry of Defence of

Ukraine for the period until 2028 (approved by the Order of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine dated 27 October 2023 No. 637) [15], the main principles of military personnel policy include the following:

- the rule of law, democracy and humanity, a people-centred approach, respect for the individual and their constitutional rights and freedoms;

- efficiency, innovation, efficiency, adaptability, accountability and responsibility;

- consistency, predictability, competence, scientific approach, systematicity and unity of approaches in the formation and implementation of military personnel policy in accordance with its development directions;

- balance, optimal combination of the interests of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and specific individuals, consisting of mutual responsibility of specific individuals in the status of military personnel or employees and the Ministry of Defence for the performance of their duties and obligations;

- ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens of Ukraine to build and develop their careers, preventing discrimination on the basis of gender or other grounds;

- ensuring strict adherence to the meritocratic principle of career management for military personnel and an individual approach to personnel management;

- focus on ensuring the readiness of military command and control bodies, formations, military units, military educational institutions, establishments and organisations of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to effectively perform their assigned tasks;

- observance of guarantees of social and legal protection for military personnel and their families [15].

Thus, one of the key places in the implementation of military personnel policy is occupied by the combination of career growth principles and anti-discrimination approaches, which is fully extrapolated to the process of training specialists for the security and defence forces of Ukraine.

In the context of analysing the above-mentioned basic principles of military personnel policy, it is also worth emphasising such a principle as "ensuring strict adherence to *the meritocratic principle* of career management of military personnel and an individual approach to personnel work".

The combination of the Latin word "meritus" (worthy) and the Greek word "κράτος" (power) has a truly profound worldview and methodological meaning: power based on virtues. According to researchers [16], "such a concept or system of social relations or principles of governance, which is essential for the effective development of society, determines the power exercised by people who are distinguished by their abilities, achievements, professional competence, rather than social origin or ascribed status" [16, p. 170].

An analysis of specialised scientific sources [17, 18] gives grounds for understanding the term "meritocracy" in the following meanings:

- 1) as a principle of political governance that provides for the dominance of merit and competence in management decision-making;

- 2) as a concept of ensuring equal starting opportunities for self-realisation and professional development of individuals who demonstrate diligence, perseverance and ability to grow in conditions of open competition;

- 3) as a tool for the transparent selection and promotion of political or managerial elites based on knowledge, professionalism and practical experience, implemented through mechanisms such as competitive selection, attestation, qualification assessment, examinations (exams), etc.

According to O. Okhotnikova [19], "the meritocratic principle in the selection of managerial personnel is manifested in the early selection of talented individuals who have managerial abilities, charisma, a high level of intelligence, communication skills, and who are honest, responsible, impartial and have a strong personal core. The principle of meritocracy in the system of forming the managerial elite is manifested in equal access to the public administration system for all professionally trained individuals with high moral qualities who have passed the appropriate selection process and have experience in the field of management" [19, p. 33].

The study shows that in the system of training and professional development of security and defence specialists in Ukraine, the meritocratic principle, i.e. promotion based on merit, competence and professional results, plays a key role in ensuring the objectivity, transparency and effectiveness of personnel policy. Its importance is enhanced in the context of the reform of Ukraine's security and defence sector and its integration into

the Euro-Atlantic security space, where meritocracy is seen as the basis of modern personnel policy.

Meritocracy is a natural counterbalance to discrimination, particularly on the basis of gender, age, ethnic origin, political or religious beliefs. It guides institutions (in particular security and defence forces) not by social stereotypes or internal corporate loyalty, but by the actual professional qualities of individuals, their decision-making abilities, leadership skills, analytical thinking and willingness to take responsibility for the results of their actions.

The introduction of the meritocratic principle in Ukraine's security and defence sector in the context of anti-discriminatory personnel policy means:

- rejection of subjectivity in personnel decisions;
- ensuring equal access to positions, training programmes (retraining, advanced training) and career advancement for all entities (military personnel, employees);
- transparency and standardisation of procedures for evaluating the results of professional (service) activities;
- introduction and strict adherence to competitive mechanisms for appointment to management positions;
- building trust in the personnel management system in military formations and law enforcement agencies, which is critically important for combat cohesion, motivation and psychological stability of personnel, especially in the current conditions.

Special attention should be paid to the role of military and law enforcement educational institutions, which are the basic centre for the formation of the human resources of Ukraine's security and defence forces. It is at this stage (training of specialists for the security and defence forces) that it is advisable to introduce modules on anti-discrimination education, ethical leadership skills, objective assessment, etc.

Thus, within the security and defence sector, where discipline, responsibility and coordinated performance of assigned tasks are of paramount importance, meritocracy acts as an institutional guarantee of fairness to ensure that leadership (command) positions are held by truly competent specialists, rather than those who have informal advantages or status.

These principles are not only enshrined in the policy documents of Ukraine's security and

defence sector, but also in NATO and EU international standards. In particular, they are mentioned in NATO's annual report "Diversity and Inclusion" [11], as well as in EU directives ("On implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons regardless of racial or ethnic origin" dated 29 June 2000 No. 2000/43/EU [12], "On establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation" dated 27 November 2000 No. 2000/78/EC [13]), promotion in the field of professional activity (career growth) based on merit is recognised as a component of ensuring equality and non-discrimination. Accordingly, Ukraine's integration into European and Euro-Atlantic standards requires the implementation of the meritocratic principle in the personnel policy system of the security and defence forces.

As follows from the above, the meritocratic principle not only reflects positive national practice in the formation and implementation of personnel policy in the security and defence forces, but also demonstrates the compatibility of the relevant policy with international standards.

Therefore, the combination of the meritocratic principle with anti-discriminatory approaches makes it possible to form a system of career growth for specialists in the security and defence forces of Ukraine, which not only complies with NATO and EU international standards, but also contributes to strengthening the institutional stability of the state, increasing the motivation of military personnel and law enforcement agencies, and improving the effectiveness of the performance of assigned tasks.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the results of developing mechanisms for forming a career growth system for specialists in the security and defence forces of Ukraine on an anti-discriminatory basis, the following conclusions were made.

1. The results of the study show that the development of a career growth system for specialists in the security and defence forces of Ukraine requires a comprehensive rethinking in light of modern anti-discrimination approaches, which are an integral part of democratic governance and an important condition for Euro-Atlantic integration. Ensuring equal opportunities for all categories of specialists, regardless of gender, age, nationality, social origin or other

characteristics, should become a basic principle of personnel policy in the security sector.

2. An analysis of NATO and EU regulatory documents has shown that preventing and combating discrimination in personnel policy is a priority area for developing organisational culture, which affects the effectiveness of service, staff motivation and the strengthening of internal security in military formations and law enforcement agencies. The security and defence forces of Ukraine are undergoing active reform, so the introduction of anti-discrimination standards in professional training and promotion processes is not only relevant but also strategically necessary.

3. The study found that an effective career development system for specialists in Ukraine's security and defence forces should be based on the following principles:

- transparent criteria for evaluating professional performance;
- equal access to educational and professional opportunities;
- organisational support for gender equality and other anti-discrimination approaches;
- continuous monitoring of compliance with non-discrimination principles.

4. Adherence to anti-discrimination approaches in the training and promotion of Ukrainian security and defence specialists should be considered an integral part of the overall human resources development strategy, in line with the principles of the rule of law, ensuring social justice and increasing public trust in the military and law enforcement agencies.

5. Meritocracy as a principle of personnel policy in Ukraine's security and defence forces means that promotion, career advancement and access to leadership (command) positions should be based solely on personal merit, competence, leadership, professional achievements and level of training, rather than on discriminatory or subjective criteria, such as gender, age, nationality, political preferences, proximity to leadership (command), etc.

Further research will focus on developing a conceptual model for preventing and combating discrimination in the system of training specialists for the security and defence forces of Ukraine.

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### **ФОРМУВАННЯ СИСТЕМИ КАР'ЄРНОГО ЗРОСТАННЯ НА ОСНОВІ ДОТРИМАННЯ АНТИДИСКРИМІНАЦІЙНИХ ПІДХОДІВ У ПРОЦЕСІ ПІДГОТОВКИ ФАХІВЦІВ ДЛЯ СИЛ БЕЗПЕКИ І ОБОРОНИ УКРАЇНИ**

*У статті обґрунтовано механізми формування системи кар'єрного зростання фахівців сил безпеки і оборони України на антидискримінаційних засадах. Наголошено, що на сьогодні антидискримінаційні підходи до кадрової політики є невід'ємним складником стандартів НАТО та ЄС, що свідчить про важливість їх інтеграції у систему підготовки фахівців для сил безпеки і оборони України.*

*Під час аналізу нормативних документів НАТО та ЄС доведено, що питання запобігання і протидії дискримінації в кадровій політиці є пріоритетним напрямом розвитку організаційної культури, а це впливає на ефективність служби, мотивацію персоналу та зміцнення внутрішньої безпеки у військових формуваннях і правоохоронних органах. Сили безпеки і оборони України перебувають на етапі активного реформування, тому впровадження антидискримінаційних стандартів у процеси професійної підготовки та просування по службі є не лише актуальним, а і стратегічно необхідним.*

*У межах дослідження встановлено, що ефективна система кар'єрного зростання фахівців сил безпеки і оборони України має ґрунтуватися на таких засадах:*

- прозорі критерії оцінювання професійної діяльності;*
- рівний доступ до освітніх і професійних можливостей;*
- організаційна підтримка гендерної рівності та інших антидискримінаційних підходів;*
- постійний моніторинг дотримання принципів недискримінації.*

*Досліджено механізм реалізації меритократичного принципу в контексті формування системи кар'єрного зростання фахівців сил безпеки і оборони України на основі дотримання антидискримінаційних підходів. Зокрема, меритократія як принцип кадрової політики в силах безпеки і оборони України передбачає, що просування по службі, кар'єрне зростання та доступ до керівних (командних) посад мають ґрунтуватися виключно на особистих заслугах, компетентності, лідерстві, професійних досягненнях і рівні підготовки, а не на дискримінаційних або суб'єктивних критеріях, наприклад, стать, вік, національність, політичні вподобання, наближеність до керівництва (командування) та ін.*

**Ключові слова:** національна безпека України, державна безпека, сектор безпеки і оборони, сили безпеки, сили оборони, воєнний стан, дискримінація, запобігання, протидія, антидискримінаційна політика, освіта, підготовка фахівців, кадрова політика, лідерство, кар'єрне зростання, меритократичний принцип, міжнародні стандарти, імплементація.

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