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## BASIC POSTULATES OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE OF UKRAINE

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### Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of the basic postulates of reforming the administrative-territorial structure of Ukraine. The authors proved that the regional volume of geographical support of this problem – informational, cartographic, geoinformational, scientific, pilot-project is much wider. The increased attention of geographers to the problems of the ATR and the new ATS is evidenced by the first dissertation developments and the growing flow of publications and scientific discussions on regionalization and administrative-territorial arrangement of the country.

**Keywords: administrative-territorial structure; region; system; geography.**

# ОСНОВНІ ПОСТУЛАТИ НОВОГО АДМІНІСТРАТИВНО-ТЕРИТОРІАЛЬНОГО УСТРОЮ УКРАЇНИ

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**Анотація.** Стаття присвячена дослідженню основних постулатів реформування адміністративно-територіального устрою України. Авторами доведено, що регіональний обсяг географічного забезпечення цієї проблеми – інформаційного, картографічного, геоінформаційного, наукового, пілотно-проектного значно ширший. Про посилену увагу географів до проблем АТР і нового АТУ свідчать перші дисертаційні розробки і зростаючий потік публікацій і наукових обговорень питань регіоналізації та адміністративно-територіального облаштування країни.

**Ключові слова:** адміністративно-територіальний устрій; регіон; система; географія.

In all Eastern European countries during the 1990s, administrative-territorial reforms were carried out, claiming the following pattern: a new political system, a new system of power, necessarily accompanied and fixed by a new administrative-territorial structure. The exception is our country, although there are significant steps towards administrative-territorial reform (ATR). In 2000, a state commission on the administrative-territorial structure (ATS) of Ukraine was created. At one time, the government of the country had the post of Deputy Prime Minister for ATR. Numerous projects of the new ATS of the country, taxonomy of new administrative-territorial units (ATU) and principles of their allocation were developed and discussed. Recall that many projects of the new ATS are developed by geographers. Geographers were members of the commission on the ATS of Ukraine. There are principles (postulates) regarding the new ATS of the country.

The first such postulate is the need to link the new ATS with the regionalization of the country. EU countries for the development and implementation of regional policy are necessarily divided into regions approved by national legislation. This is one of the requirements for Central

and Eastern European countries that want to join the EU. Established peculiar "standards" of regions by their size and socio-economic potential (NUTS-2). There is no official regionalization in Ukraine yet. Schemes of regions considered in school and university geography are purely cognitive in nature and only.

The state regional policy is currently conducted in the regions of the ARC. Here are some examples illustrating the inadmissibility of this scale of regionalization. Strategy of socio-economic development of Ukraine and its regions for the period up to 2015 was developed in such a way that the prospects and priorities of the Carpathians are justified in four regional programs – independently and uncoordinated. The development of the sea-economic complex of the country is spelled out in six regions (and ARC) – it is also inconsistently and uncoordinated. Regional capitals are as equal Kharkiv and Poltava, Odesa and Kherson, etc. It is clear that the real regions of Ukraine should be much larger than the existing areas [7].

Currently, the regionalization of Ukraine is being developed according to two approaches. According to the first, they do not touch the current ATS and distinguish regions by grouping and combining neighboring regions. According to the second, they offer a radical APR and distinguish regions as ATU of the first level (instead of the modern regional division). We believe that this approach will solve two interrelated problems: create a reliable basis for the development and implementation of state regional policy and lay the foundations for a more rational ATS of Ukraine, taking into account the real diversity of natural resource and socio-economic conditions of the country [5,7].

The new ATS of Ukraine should be developed on fundamental geographical principles, combined with the regionalization of the country.

The second principle (postulate) of the new ATS is as follows. The basis of the new ATS should be a detailed analysis of the resettlement of the country's population. It is the spatial distribution of the population that creates the objective genetic, historical and geographical basis of the administrative-territorial structure of the country. At this time, Ukraine has officially approved a multi-level settlement system tied to the current ATS. Systems of settlement of various levels and scales are distinguished: national, regional and ARC, inter-district (groups of administrative districts), district, local (groups of settlements). On the one hand, this is logical, since the settlement systems must be controlled, on the other hand, it is wrong, since the modern ATS is devoid of an objective geographical, in particular, the resettlement, basis. For example,

the Odesa region during Soviet time changed its composition and borders five times (5 versions of the Odesa regional settlement system), the Kherson region was formed on March 30, 1944. (!), which is due to an error in the newspaper Pravda (which could not be a mistake). What objectivity of such a decision can we talk about?

The conclusion is obvious: not settlement systems should be tied to the current ATS, but the new ATS should rely on genetically rooted, historically-geographically predetermined settlement systems of different territorial regions.

Numerous projects of the new ATS of the country use various signs and criteria for the allocation of ATU at different levels. According to the geographical methodology, among such features should be natural and socio-economic complexes of appropriate types and spatial scales, as well as territorial settlement systems (already discussed), industrial and social infrastructure, production, recreation, spiritual life (ethnic-confessional, etc.). This is the third postulate of the geographical justification of the new ATS of the country. For the development of a new ATS of the country, it is not enough to use component (even generalized macro-component) territorial complexes and territorial systems. ATU should ideally be a territory with socio-natural or natural-economic homogeneity and integrity. The geographers still lack the theory and methodology of highly integrated socio-natural (natural-economic) territorial complexes and systems, natural-economic regions and raions. And the development of appropriate theoretical foundations and methodological principles is an urgent task of geographical science. As an example of the discrepancy between the characteristics of nature, resettlement and economy at the regional level in the current ATS, we can recall the forest-steppe mining south of the Luhansk region and its steppe agricultural northern and central parts, the industrial centers of Donetsk and Zaporizhzhya regions and their rural Azov periphery, the belonging of the northern part of the Lviv region to Polesia is comparable to the forest-steppe Roztocze, etc.

The new ATS of the country should take into account the geographical paradigm of the territorial organization of society and the concept of regional territorial structures of resettlement and economy. This is the fourth postulate of the geographical justification of the new ATS and the taxonomy of its ATU. Different territorial organization, different types of territorial structures of nature, population and economy for the geographers themselves have already become textbook, but they are too slowly included in the practice of urban planning, territorial planning, public administration and local self-government.

For coastal regions of the country with their coastal-facade territorial organization in the new ATS, it is necessary to take into account coastal zones that concentrate population, infrastructure, economy, as well as zones of attraction - Hinterlands, Forlands (according to Alfred Hettner), to large port cities, economic echeloning of the territory and water area along the coastline. For regions with powerful "regional capitals," it is necessary to establish fundamentally new ATUs that will combine large and medium-sized cities with their suburban zones – zones of "common interests." For the border region, the presence of international treaty formations – Euroregions, which must be correctly "entered" into the new ATS, has become characteristic. As an example of the inconsistency of the existing euro-regions, we recall the "Lower Danube," which includes three counties of Romania, one county of Moldova and the whole (!) Odesa region (it would be logical to include in the Euroregion only four Danube regions of the Odesa region). For regions with a developed mining industry, it is necessary to single out urban agglomerations and bushes of mining points and centers as units of the ATS.

The fifth postulate of the geographical basis of the new ATS of the country is the need to form natural frameworks for the environmental safety of the regions. The Laws of Ukraine "On the Program for the Formation of the National Ecological Network of Ukraine for 2000-2015" (2000) and "On the Ecological Network" (2004) created the legal framework for this direction. The Decree of the Government (2000) obliged all regional state administrations and the Cabinet of Ministers of the ARC to develop and approve concepts and programs for the formation of regional environmental networks (eco-networks). It is significant that the regions that have sufficiently strong geographical faculties in their universities have fulfilled this order of the Cabinet of Ministers. The new ATS of the country needs to be generalized in a certain way with the national and especially with regional eco-networks. The criteria for such compliance are quite simple: ATU of the first level (regions, territories, lands) should have a rational and balanced natural framework of environmental safety – a regional eco-network [6].

Let us recall another geographical approach that must be used in the development of a new ATS of the country. In the early 1990s, EU countries began to develop territory planning in the regional dimension (Baltic Basin Territory Planning Program, etc.). This direction somewhat echoes the district planning, which was aimed at streamlining the natural environment, settling and placing production in relatively small, densely populated territories. By the Decree of the

Government (2000), the General Scheme of Planning of the Territory of Ukraine was developed, approved by the Law of Ukraine (2002) and awarded the State Prize of Ukraine (2003). [1].

At present, the development of regional planning schemes has begun, and general plans of cities are regularly drawn up. Planning of territories together with district planning and drawing up general plans of cities we call geoplanning, the purpose of which is to streamline the living environment of society for its ecological recovery, improve the quality of life of the population, more complete and effective use of the natural resource potential of the territory. This is the sixth postulate of the geographical justification of the new ATS of the country. ATU of different levels in the new ATS should be distinguished taking into account the geoplanational features of the territory, according to the characteristic spatial combinations of certain types of economic use of the territory, transport and infrastructure networks. The geographers should actively develop regional schemes for planning the territory and fully use them to develop a new ATS of the country.

Another interesting and meaningful direction of geographical science remains insufficiently developed in theoretical-methodological and methodological aspects. The geographers have developed the concept of the process of economic development of the territory, stages and stages of settlement and development of the territory, etc., which together determine the seventh postulate of the geographical development of the new ATS of the country. Within Ukraine, the geographical amplitude of economic development of different territories reaches 700-1000 years, the historical and geographical features of the settlement and economic development of different parts of Ukraine differ significantly. It is necessary to systematize and typify the main varieties of settlement and economic development of certain regions of the country, classify them according to certain "trajectories" of socio-economic formation, levels of development of productive forces, inherited and acquired problems of further socio-economic movement. A deep understanding of the historical and geographical differences in the settlement and economic development of different parts of Ukraine, their impact on the territorial organization of the population and economy will serve as a justification for a more correct scheme of the ATS of the country.

The above list shows the main directions of the participation of geographical science in the development of a new ATS and the implementation of the ATR, which is essential for the implementation of an effective regional policy and the improvement of the entire system of

public administration and local self-government. The regional scope of geographical support for this problem – informational, cartographic, geoinformational, scientific, pilot-project is much wider. The increased attention of geographers to the problems of the ATR and the new ATS is evidenced by the first dissertation developments [3] and the growing flow of publications and scientific discussions on regionalization and administrative-territorial arrangement of the country.

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The authors agree on equal distribution of partial participation.

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### **Informed Consent Statement**

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

### **Data Availability Statement**

All information is publicly available and data regarding this particular patient can be obtained upon request from corresponding senior author.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### **Acknowledgments**

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