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**STATE REGIONAL POLICY IN UKRAINE:
BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES, LEGISLATIVE BASIS**

Regional policy is currently being implemented in all countries of the world, as an integral part of state policy. The main objectives of state regional policy consist in the integrity and the unity of the territory, the balance of national and regional interests, reducing the differences in socio-economic development and living standards, the creation of equal conditions for all citizens, regardless their place of residence.

The regional policy issues are considered in the scientific works of well-known Ukrainian and foreign scientists such as: M. Dolishnii, V. Kuibida, Z. Varnalii, Y. Makogon, I. Burakovskii, M. Izha, A. Tkachuk, N. Mikula, M. Perkmann, M. Kenon. and many others.

This article deals with the formation of regional policy in the independent Ukraine and highlights the notion of the state regional policy, its major objectives and directions, prerequisites for the formation in Ukraine and the legal framework.

In the Soviet period regional studies were conducted in the context of centralized approach to the administration, where the state was the only active subject. The place and role of the state in shaping regional policy have been defined via command-administrative management paradigm.

After Ukraine gained its independence in 1991, it was expected that regional policy will attract more attention, because the differences between the regions in economic and social development were very significant.

The key approaches to the principles of national regional policy at the constitutional level were laid down in several articles of the Ukrainian Constitution, «The Concept of the State Regional Policy» approved by the Decree of the President of Ukraine № 341/2001 on the 25th of May, 2001, the Law «On fundamentals of domestic and foreign policy» and some other normative documents.

The legislation in the field of regional development, which was formed during the years 1991 – 2013, has created a system including strategic and planning documents in the field of regional development, defines the institutions responsible for state regional policy and also assigns the sources for the funding of regional development. At the same time the special law «On the principles of state regional policy» was adopted by the Parliament only in February 2015. This law defines legal, economic, social, environmental, humanitarian and institutional framework for the state regional policy as a part of the internal policy of Ukraine.

In particular, the document contains the definition of the objectives, principles and priorities of the state regional policy, defines the power of its subjects as well as instruments for financing and monitoring. New features include a paragraph regulating the participation of non-governmental bodies – regional development agencies – in the development and implementation of state regional policy. This long-awaited law foreseen by the Agenda of Association between the EU and Ukraine should contribute to the creation of real effective regional policy in Ukraine, as well as form basic legislative framework for its implementation.

The analysis shows the necessity of the formation in Ukraine of the state regional policy based on new principles, involving the subjects of public relations at the regional and local levels: local communities, government authorities, NGOs, business and regional elite. Ukraine cannot remain in a situation when the state regional policy is just a nice slogan in the electoral campaign. This policy as well as personnel policy has to become the major one, especially for such a large country as Ukraine is, with its large-scale and very diverse regions.