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E-PETITIONS AS A TOOL OF “DE-COMMUNIZATION”
LAWS PACKAGE IMPLEMENTATION

Problem setting. On April 9, 2015 Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted four laws, which are together called "de-communization package". The most resonant among them was the Law of Ukraine "On the condemnation of Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes in Ukraine and the prohibition of their symbols propaganda", and it has been implemented within unusually limited as to the Ukrainian political tradition time frame. In terms of the bill promotion such an approach was understandable, but on the other hand, it postponed the beginning of public discussion and its component – awareness-raising activities. Thus, such dynamic development negatively affected the communicative component of the process of "de-communization". The situation emerged when at first the resonant law was adopted, and only then, at the stage of implementation, the general public was involved into its discussion.

Recent research and publications analysis. The adoption of laws on "de-communization" and their implementation have become the subject of many scientific texts, which authors are historians, political scientists, lawyers, sociologists, cultural scientists, etc. Interesting publications on the subject belong to V. Vyatrovych, G. Kasyanov, Volodymir Kulik, O. Motyl, S. Nabok, A. Portnov, O. Shevel. These and many other specialists analyze "de-communization" as a political and ideological phenomenon, but this problem has not almost been studied in terms of public administration. For example, in 2015-2016 twelve specialized publications of NAPA and its regional institutes have not devoted any articles to this topic. Therefore, the urgent task is to examine the "de-communization" as an example of the local authorities’ ability to cooperate with
the public in order to implement large-scale projects in clearly specified period of time.

**The paper objective** is the interaction of local authorities and members of the territorial community in the implementation of laws on "de-communization." The subject of analysis is electronic petitions that citizens submitted to the local governments of the cities – regional centers of Ukraine.

**The paper main body.** "De-communization" has become a powerful challenge for local governments. Never before in the history of Ukraine has a law required from local authorities to conduct large-scale renaming in a relatively short period of time.

One of the channels of communication and at the same time interesting source of information as to people's "de-communization" moods is electronic petitions submitted by citizens to the City Council official website. The requirements under which a properly presented citizen’s opinion is taken into consideration by the City Council are different and are correlated with the scale of a settlement. Typically, the larger a city is, the greater is the required number of signatures and the longer is the period of their collection.

Proposals for implementing practices of “de-communization” laws have a recognized position in the list of petitions to the local governments of Kyiv, Poltava, Sumy, Kharkiv, Chernihiv and other cities of Ukraine. In the petitions array in western Ukrainian cities this theme is marginal, because "de-sovietization" and "de-russification" of the symbolic space of Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Khmelnytsky started and held actively back in the 1990s. So, accumulated number of petitions allows us to make representative conclusions about their impact on the government activity during the renaming campaign.

**Conclusions of the research.** Electronic petitions have become an effective tool for the implementation of the Law on "de-communization", their distribution is associated with the introduction of amendments to the Law of Ukraine "On citizens' appeals” from 2 July 2015.
As the petitions contents demonstrate the greatest resonance among the citizens is not only in the abolition of the old names but a search for new relevant names of the urban environment. In some cases, the law has caused desire of people not only "de-communize", but also "de-sovietizate" and even "de-russificate" Ukrainian cities’ names, as evidenced by the petition for rescission of the street names associated with the leaders of the Soviet and Russian history and culture, which are formally not the Law.

A significant conflict potential is hidden in the initiatives as to locations of demolished/dismantled monuments to Soviet leaders. To identify timely the ways of localization, and ideally to prevent such conflicts is one of the urgent tasks of local governments and executive bodies at the regional level.