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EUROPEAN PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY: GUIDELINES FOR UKRAINE

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Abstract

The article analyses in detail the modern European approaches to public health as a key factor in shaping the human potential of state, which is a crucial element of socio-economic development and is interpreted not only as an indicator of the success of state policy, but also as a strategic resource that affects demographic stability, labour productivity, social cohesion and competitiveness of the country. The article describes the main approaches of the European Union in the field of healthcare, which are based on the principles of humanism, equal access to healthcare services and integrated approaches to their provision. The author analyses the Key Pillars of Public Health Strategy of the European Health Policy, which outline the main directions, fundamental aspects and basic principles of the EU health strategy. Recommendations are given on how to adapt the best practices of European countries to the conditions of Ukraine, taking into account global challenges, including environmental threats, demographic crises and the consequences of war. The importance of rehabilitation programmes and comprehensive strategies aimed at preserving the physical, mental and social well-being of the population is emphasised.

Key words

health of the nation, human potential of the state, healthcare paradigm, state policy, healthcare systems, Ukraine.

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1. Introduction

In today's world, the humanistic concept of civilisation development and democratic state-building forms the basis of strategic UN documents, such as the Sustainable Development Goals. These documents define a human being as the highest value, and his or her life and health as the basic components of the foundation of human rights. Health is seen as a prerequisite for social well-being, economic progress and sustainable development. A special role is played by the principle of an integrated approach to health care, laid down by the World Health Organization in the 1978 Alma-Ata Declaration, which proclaims

health as a key right of every person and its provision as the responsibility of the state, based on the principles of universal access to medical services, equality in ensuring the citizens' rights and the introduction of innovative approaches to the prevention and treatment of diseases.

In this context, the citizens' health is a key indicator of the success of the state, and its status affects social stability and economic productivity, because, as Olga and Natalia Zavydivsky note,

“it is well known that the basis and driving force of human development is the phenomenon of health. Moreover, it is the health potential that determines the level of human potential. And it is the level and degree

of realisation of human potential that drives human development“ (Zavydivska, Zavydivska, (2023, p. 46).

The first quarter of the twenty-first century is characterised by a clearly defined rethinking of the public healthcare management paradigm, which is shifting the emphasis of the political and functional activities of the state and its public institutions onto human centredness and humanism. Today, these principles are increasingly embodied in national healthcare policies that reflect current political, economic, social, demographic, technological, environmental, climate and other global challenges to human civilisation.

2. Research methodology

Methodologically, this study is based on an integrated approach that includes a set of general scientific and special methods. The central component of the study is a systematic analysis that allows defining public health as a key component of the public policy. The systemic approach helps to identify the interrelationships between political, economic, social and cultural aspects that influence the development of a healthcare strategy.

The content analysis was used to study scientific publications, official documents of the European Union, the World Health Organisation and Ukrainian regulations. The analysis of the texts allowed identifying key principles of healthcare policy, such as equality, accessibility, innovation and sustainable development. For example, EU documents, including the Health 2020 strategy, provided an understanding of global trends in public health.

The method of comparative analysis allowed comparing the political approaches of different EU countries to healthcare with the national strategies of Ukraine. Particular attention was paid to the study of such aspects as the introduction of mediation in the management of conflicts in the healthcare system and the organisation of prevention programmes. For example, the experience of Nordic countries in providing integrated healthcare services has become the basis for developing recommendations for Ukraine. The paper also applies modelling techniques to create a strategic model for adapting European experience to the Ukrainian conditions. The developed model includes the following components: organisation of telemedicine, introduction of innovative technologies, development of health insurance and training of personnel to work in the context of digitalisation. In addition, statistical analysis was used to quantify the impact of factors on public health. The statistical data allowed determining the relationship between

economic indicators, public health and labour productivity.

The combination of these methods provided the basis for a comprehensive analysis covering both theoretical aspects and practical recommendations for improving Ukraine's healthcare policy. The use of European experience, including its integration into national realities, emphasises the possibility of improving the efficiency of the healthcare system through the introduction of humanistic principles, innovative approaches and integrated solutions.

3. The social paradigm of the right to life and health as the core of EU health policy

The right to life and health is a central element of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, enshrined at the highest global political level of the United Nations. The relevant concepts of an anthropocentric approach and promotion of public health are at the heart of the pan-European strategies adopted by the World Health Organization's European Office and the European Commission and Council of the European Union and, in general, in the new global health paradigm, focused on the development of effective strategies to influence the behaviour of the population and target groups to maintain health and ensure a social and natural environment conducive to health.

In a purely scientific sense, a social paradigm is a set of values, experience, information and expectations shared by a community that forms a vision of a desirable and achievable social reality, mobilises research into social problems and agreement on methods of their solution, and contributes to the development of scientific knowledge and relevant practice (Krupnyk, Chabanova, 2011, p. 423). At the same time, in the political and applied dimension, this is reflected in the creation of executive bodies responsible for the formation and implementation of public policy in the healthcare sector, based on a comprehensive general approach to understanding the role of the state, society and medicine in ensuring the nation's health and guaranteeing and protecting human health as the highest constitutional value. At the level of public administration, the ideas of a human-centred approach are reflected in political and institutional transformations, including the transformation of ministries of health into multidisciplinary social, medical and educational agencies. The adoption of strategies focused primarily on social and value determinants of health, and the preservation of the health of healthy people through their motivation to behave properly (Semyhina, 2014,

p. 35). From a broader perspective, this includes a set of ideas, policies, strategies and tools that determine how the state builds a national health care system, organises its activities and responds to current challenges. The central element of this paradigm is the definition of the noospheric phenomenon of “health” as a strategic resource of the state’s human potential, which “is a set of natural qualities and capabilities of individuals, realised in a certain territory, which form both an individual and society as a whole and ultimately lead to socio-economic progress” (Karpiak, Herman, Kostyshyna, 2022, p. 62).

As we can see in the scientific discourse, the concepts of “health” and «human potential» are largely interrelated. In the modern scientific literature, the concept of «human potential of the state» is one of the key issues in discussions on sustainable development, national competitiveness and social welfare. Modern science defines human potential as a complex phenomenon that encompasses the physical, intellectual, cultural and spiritual characteristics of the population, which form the basis for the socio-economic progress of society and the state. This is the understanding underpinning the strategic vision of the UN Human Development Concept, which is based on the principle that economy exists for the development of people, not people for the development of economy. Whatever the rate of economic growth, there will be no social progress unless the three basic human capabilities are realised: to live a long and healthy life; to acquire, expand and update knowledge; and to have access to livelihoods that ensure a decent standard of living (Tulai, Karpishyn, Ferens, 2024, p. 87).

Marina Dyha offers a rather thorough definition of the concept of human potential, which she understands as a set of natural, genetically inherent (including health, abilities, talents: for example, a unique voice timbre and musical ear, etc.) and acquired capabilities (intellectual, physical, socio-cultural abilities, skills, abilities, competencies, human qualifications, etc.) that can be used to achieve individual and social goals; and depending on the level of implementation of capabilities (constant development, improvement, professional development, etc; improvement, advanced training, etc.), maintenance/non-maintenance in proper condition (health, including lifestyle, nutrition, environment) and application under certain conditions (socio-cultural, economic and demographic, labour relations, motivational, etc.) can bring different results (Dykha, 2020, p. 21).

In this context, health is seen as a central component of human potential. The concept of «health» itself is considered as a multidimensional phenomenon with a heterogeneous structure that combines

qualitatively different components and reflects the fundamental aspects of human existence (Zavydivska, Zavydivska, (2023, p. 48). In the public administration dimension, good health of the population is not only a goal, but also a tool for ensuring the stability of the economic, social and political system, as it directly affects labour productivity and social cohesion. It is also important to take into account that health is not a static characteristic but a dynamic indicator that requires constant monitoring, strategic planning and financial investment. Global environment factors are equally important, as the modern world poses new challenges to states due to globalisation, climate change and demographic shifts. In this sense, human potential is not only a set of physical and spiritual characteristics, but also the ability of an individual and society to adapt to crises and rapid changes. The citizens’ human potential is composed of the human potential of territorial communities, regions and the entire state, and in this synergistic integrity, this aggregate human potential determines the state’s ability to withstand challenges, which is especially important in the context of modern Ukraine, which is going through a period of economic and social transformation.

The human potential of the state is not only an object of assessment, but also a process of its development, which depends on the integration of health, education, social capital of individuals and territorial communities and public policy. Such an understanding ontologically brings our categorical and conceptual chain to a higher level of strategizing - to the level of “public health”, which is broadly defined as an integral indicator of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being of the population, which determines the citizens’ quality of life, the level of socio-economic development, environmental conditions and efficiency of the health care system, reflecting the society’s ability to provide conditions for longevity and self-realisation of each person” (Radchenko, 2011, p. 69).

Thus, preserving and developing the human potential of the state and, more broadly, public health (in the established EU terminology) and the health of the nation (in the established Ukrainian terminology) is a key task of modern politics, as human capital determines the state’s ability to adapt to global challenges and ensure sustainable development. In our opinion, the concept of ensuring and developing the health of the nation should take into account the unique characteristics of each country, including historical, cultural and economic contexts. In economic terms, the health of the population has a direct impact on labour productivity and domestic and foreign economic competitiveness, so since the

second half of the nineteenth century, it was classical economic management that was at the origin of the institution of employee health insurance. In the twentieth century, states and municipal authorities formed a clear understanding that it is more efficient and cost-effective to preserve the health of the nation and its citizens than to constantly eliminate epidemics or provide treatment for advanced diseases. Therefore, one of the key priorities of modern democratic states is to create conditions for a healthy lifestyle, including through investment in prevention programmes, education and environmental safety. This influence results in the realisation of human potential, which is primarily expressed in the increase in added value, incomes of individuals, profits of business entities and, in general, in the growth of the productive capacity of socio-economic systems. However, such an effect is possible only if there is a clearly defined goal, synchronisation and focus of actions, and intensity of efforts (Karpiak, Herman, Kostyshyna, 2022, p. 62).

4. Key Pillars of Public Health Strategy of the European Health Policy

The state policy in the field of national health is a key tool for shaping the human potential of the state, increasing life expectancy and the overall quality of the nation's health. It covers multifaceted aspects aimed at preserving, promoting and developing the health of the population, which affects both the demographic situation and productivity, economic stability and social cohesion.

The European health policy contains a number of Key Pillars of Public Health Strategy, which outline the main directions, fundamental aspects and basic principles of the EU health strategy. At the same time, there is no single official document like the Code that would simultaneously describe and detail the measures for each of the key areas; they are mostly outlined in separate documents adopted at different times and dedicated to two or three new areas each time. At the same time, it is easy to distinguish nine key pillars among fundamental documents of this type:

- Prevention of diseases and promotion of a healthy lifestyle (Health Promotion and Disease Prevention);
- Ensuring access to healthcare services (Equal Access to Healthcare);
 - Mental Health and Well-being;
 - Preparedness for Pandemics and Health Crises;
 - Environmental and Health Interactions;
 - Investment in Research and Innovation in Health;
 - Digitalisation of Healthcare Systems;

- Development and strengthening of human resources in the healthcare system (Workforce Development in Healthcare);

- Financial sustainability of healthcare systems (Sustainable Healthcare Financing).

Let us briefly describe these areas.

Prevention of diseases and promotion of healthy lifestyles is a key component of the public health strategy in the European Union, aimed at ensuring a high quality of life for the population both by reducing the prevalence of chronic and infectious diseases and by fostering a conscious attitude to one's own health and raising awareness of the risk factors that affect health. Vaccination, regular physical activity, healthy eating and avoidance of harmful habits, such as smoking and alcohol consumption, remain at the centre of EU strategies, which is in line with WHO recommendations (World Health Organization, 2016, 20).

As part of these measures, educational programmes for different age groups are being actively developed to teach people how to lead a healthy lifestyle. In addition, initiatives such as obesity prevention or cardiovascular disease and cancer control are receiving significant support through national and regional programmes in EU member states. This pillar is based on the principles laid down in the WHO Regional Office for Europe's Health 2020 Strategy, adopted in 2012, which aims to ensure sustainable health by raising awareness of risk factors and promoting health-conscious behaviours. The Health 2020 strategy emphasises that disease prevention not only helps to reduce the economic burden on health systems, but also contributes to building more sustainable and healthy communities (World Health Organization, 2016, 34). In this context, close collaboration between government agencies, educational institutions, civil society organisations and the media is crucial to creating an environment that supports healthy lifestyles.

Ensuring accessibility of healthcare services in the European Union is one of the cornerstones of modern public health policy aimed at reducing health inequalities and creating conditions for equal access to healthcare and essential healthcare services for all citizens. This direction is based on the Health Systems in Transition regulation adopted in 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO) Observatory for Health Systems and Policy, which emphasises the removal of barriers that limit access to services, such as financial hardship, geographic remoteness and social exclusion (European Commission, 2021, p. 15).

European countries are implementing mechanisms of insurance and subsidisation of healthcare services that allow the most vulnerable populations to receive

quality healthcare. Health Systems in Transition emphasises that the availability of health services should be accompanied by an increase in their quality, as well as transparency and efficiency of health systems (World Health Organisation, 2024, 26). Particular attention is paid to addressing the problem of inequality in access between rural and urban areas, for which telemedicine services, mobile clinics and digital solutions are being actively developed. In addition, the introduction of quality standards for medical care helps to increase trust in medical institutions and reduce the outflow of patients to other countries.

Protecting the mental health of citizens has become one of the most important challenges of modern European public health policy, given the growing number of people suffering from depression, anxiety disorders and other mental health problems. The 2013 document *The European Framework for Action on Mental Health and Well-being of the WHO Regional Office for Europe*, which is fundamental to this area, emphasises that mental health is not only a matter of individual well-being, but also an important factor in social and economic development (World Health Organization, 2021, p. 12).

The main directions of this policy are to ensure access to psychological care, integrate mental health into primary health care, and reduce the stigma of people with mental disorders. Training of medical personnel and implementation of early intervention programmes that allow detecting and treating disorders at the initial stages play an important role in this. In the context of this strategy, special attention is paid to young people, as this age group is the most affected by mental disorders due to social pressure, economic challenges and the dynamics of modern life (World Health Organization, 2021, p. 19). One of the key achievements in this area is the expansion of the support network, which includes both governmental and non-governmental organisations working at the community level.

The fight against pandemics and infectious diseases is a fundamental aspect of public health, which underlines the importance of timely threat detection, rapid response and coordination between the member states of the European Community in emergency situations. As an institutional response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), specially established in September 2021, develops and coordinates measures related to the response to health threats, including the expansion of laboratory capacity and capacities for the production of vaccines, medical supplies and

effective monitoring systems, the creation of medical supplies stockpiles, etc. (European Commission, 2021, 18). Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic have become a key driver for building more resilient health systems that can cope with large patient flows and ensure the smooth operation of health facilities even in crisis conditions (World Health Organization, 2024, p. 22). Therefore, considerable efforts are being made to create a system for preventing new pandemics by improving epidemiological surveillance mechanisms and introducing digital platforms that allow for the rapid exchange of data on infectious disease outbreaks. In addition, efforts are being made to prepare medical personnel to work in a crisis, including through education programmes and simulation training. Another key area is the development of international cooperation in vaccine research and production, which guarantees quick access to the necessary drugs for all EU member states.

The interaction between environment and health is one of the key areas of the European public health strategy, which recognises the impact of environmental factors on the general state of the population. This approach is based on the understanding that while for most living things on Earth the environment is just an environment, for humans it manifests itself in the inseparable unity of the social and natural environment (Balyuk, Kovalchuk, Pozniak, 2024, 402). Among the current threats to health, Oksana Tulai, Natalia Karpishyn, and Bohdan Ferens note dangerous planetary changes, particularly the intensification of the climate crisis, namely, more and more record temperatures, droughts, fires, and extreme storms. In addition, the consequences of the destruction of biodiversity are unpredictable for humanity, with more than one million species of plants and animals threatened with extinction, and it is not known how this will affect the scale of food and other agricultural products (Tulai, Karpishyn, Ferens, 2024, 90).

In the context of the impact of the environment on health, the WHO and the European Commission pay particular attention to climate change, which contributes to the spread of new infectious diseases due to rising temperatures and changes in biodiversity. In this context, adaptation programmes are being implemented to help healthcare systems prepare for new challenges, such as heat, floods, or toxic pollution (World Health Organization, 2016, 15). The strategic “European Green Deal” adopted by the European Commission in 2019, emphasises the importance of combating air, water and soil pollution, which have a direct impact on the development of respiratory, cardiovascular and cancer diseases (European Commission, 2019, p. 29).

The Green Deal policy framework is a guideline for combating climate change and improving the environment, including aspects related to public health. It also emphasises the importance of sustainable agriculture and providing the population with safe and high-quality food, as high-quality nutrition directly affects the nation's health by reducing the risks of chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and by building a healthy and productive human potential. At the same time, the lack of quality food and water can lead to significant treatment costs, which will negatively affect the economic potential of the state. The practical implementation of the European Green Deal is carried out through the adoption of specific regulations, directives and decisions that are binding for EU member states, which must control food quality, promote local organic food production and ensure access to drinking water. EU governments, such as in Germany and Denmark, actively implement food safety programmes, including initiatives to reduce the content of trans fats in food up to a complete ban. Environmental education programmes for citizens that promote environmentally responsible behaviour are another important tool in this regard.

Investments in healthcare research and innovation play a key role in creating sustainable and innovative healthcare systems that can respond to the challenges of the modern world. As part of the official Horizon Europe framework programme (2021-2027), the European Commission, together with the Council of Europe, has prioritised the development of personalised medicine, research into rare diseases and the creation of new approaches to the treatment of chronic diseases (European Commission, 2021, 32). This is a legally binding document that regulates the funding of research and the implementation of innovative projects, and pays significant attention to the integration of bioengineering, artificial intelligence, and big data into medicine, which allows for more accurate diagnosis and more effective treatment. Horizon Europe also emphasises the role of interdisciplinary research that combines medicine, biotechnology, computer science and social sciences to develop innovative approaches to healthcare.

It is worth noting that at the institutional level, the EU closely cooperates with the World Health Organisation and strictly adheres to the WHO's regular guidelines. In particular, this applies to the Global Strategy on Research for Health framework, adopted in 2010 by the World Health Assembly's Research for Health. This strategy provides general guidelines for improving health research policy, aimed at improving coordination between countries, research institutions

and other stakeholders. In particular, it is noted that providing funding for research and investment in infrastructure for clinical trials, attracting young researchers and supporting academic-industry partnerships and ensuring their access to research results through open platforms are important steps towards the development of global health science (World Health Organization, 2013, p. 18).

The digitalisation of healthcare systems is a response to the requirements of the transition to a global information society, designed to increase the efficiency of healthcare services, improve access to healthcare and reduce healthcare costs. The European Health Data Space strategic initiative, presented by the European Commission in May 2022, aims to develop digitalisation in the healthcare sector, and creates mechanisms for the implementation of digital health records that provide doctors and patients with access to the necessary information at any time (World Health Organization, 2022, p. 14). Transformational processes in the global healthcare industry indicate the development of the latest technologies, including in the healthcare sector, which open up opportunities for radical improvement in identifying individual risk factors for diseases, their early diagnosis, and reducing the volume of inpatient care through the development of minimally invasive, outpatient surgery, telemedicine, remote monitoring of the patient's condition, etc. At the same time, as Mykhailo Makarenko notes, the global digital healthcare market will grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 27.9% from 2020 to 2027, reaching \$833.44 billion (Makarenko, 2023, p. 44).

The development of telemedicine, which is becoming especially relevant in remote regions where access to medical facilities is limited, is an important aspect of digitalisation. Much attention is also paid to the use of artificial intelligence to analyse medical data, which helps in the early detection of diseases and the prediction of disease development (World Health Organization, 2018, p. 21). At the same time, digitalisation requires a high level of data protection, and EU countries are implementing security standards to avoid leakage of confidential medical information. This process also includes training healthcare professionals to work with digital platforms, ensuring that they are ready to use new technologies in their daily work.

Developing and strengthening human resources capacity in the health system is a critical aspect of ensuring the quality of health services and the sustainability of health systems. The Global Framework Strategy on Human Resources for Health, adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2016, aims

to ensure the training, deployment and support of the health workforce for sustainable health systems and identifies as key objectives increasing the number of health workers, improving their skills and creating favourable working conditions (European Commission, 2020, p. 27). European countries are facing the problem of an ageing medical workforce, which is why the emphasis is on attracting young professionals to medicine, implementing retraining programmes and teaching modern technologies. In addition, an important aspect is to increase the mobility of medical personnel within the EU, which allows for a more even distribution of resources in regions with staff shortages (World Health Organization, 2016, p. 19). Particular attention is paid to combating burnout among healthcare workers through the introduction of mental health support programmes and salary increases.

The financial sustainability of healthcare systems is one of the most important areas of European policy, which is designed to ensure the availability and quality of healthcare services in the long term. Adopted by the European Commission in 2020, the comprehensive Health Systems Sustainability Strategy aims to optimise the healthcare costs of EU Member States through the introduction of new governance models, innovation, digitalisation and partnerships between public and private entities (European Commission, 2019, p. 11). Rising healthcare costs due to an ageing population require the introduction of innovative approaches, such as public-private partnerships, insurance programmes and differentiated funding. Much attention is also paid to transparency in the use of finances, which helps to increase public confidence in the healthcare system. At the same time, financial sustainability includes investing in preventive programmes that help reduce the burden on health systems in the long run (World Health Organization, 2010, 3p. 0).

5. European benchmarks for modern Ukraine

The European experience of formulating and implementing the healthcare policy is extremely important for modern Ukraine. As noted by Maryna Bilynska and Yevhen Kulhinskyi, based on the example of democratic Europe, Ukraine needs to form a new social paradigm in public healthcare administration based on the principles of humanism – the paradigm of responsible partnership and anthropocentrism (Bilynska, Kulhinskyi, 2014, 104). It is the European experience of forming a healthy human potential, the European integration course that the Ukrainian

state has firmly chosen and which the Ukrainian people are heroically defending in the fight against Putin's aggressive regime, that is the main guideline for us in the formation and implementation of the state healthcare policy at the present stage of state-building.

First of all, it should be noted that in Western European scientific and public discourse, with the tolerance and political correctness inherent in Western civilisation, the term "public health" is usually used in the same sense as the term "nation's health", which is widely used in Ukraine. In particular, the WHO strategic document "Health 2020: A European Policy Framework and Strategy for the 21st Century" defines public health as the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organised efforts of society (World Health Organization, 2016). In a broader sense, the WHO defines public health as a system of organised activities (both public and private, with an emphasis on collective action) aimed at preventing disease, promoting health and prolonging life in the general population and focusing on the whole population rather than on individual patients or diseases (World Health Organization, 2036). We believe that in the Ukrainian scientific discourse it is necessary to abandon the term "health of the nation" and move to the use of European terminology and use the phrase "public health".

In our opinion, the key elements of the European healthcare policy that need to be implemented in modern Ukraine are the following:

1. In the context of the implementation of the EU health policy area of «disease prevention and promotion of a healthy lifestyle» in the current conditions and in the process of post-war recovery in Ukraine, it is important to develop national programmes to promote a healthy lifestyle, including large-scale campaigns on healthy eating, limiting the content of harmful substances in food and introducing a system of free vaccination. The successful implementation of such initiatives requires partnerships between government institutions, educational institutions and the media. It is in this context that Maria Dyha notes that in Ukraine

“to ensure human health as a basic, fundamental component of human potential formation and development and in the context of maintaining good health as one of the global goals of sustainable development, attention should be focused on the following aspects:

- 1) culture of healthy eating (steps in its organisation at the state level to regulate quality standards, ban the content of components in food harmful to the human body);

2) culture of healthy lifestyle (combating bad habits, including through a system of preventive measures, changing public consciousness, and a reasonable attitude to health);

3) healthcare system (reforming the system to ensure proper provision of medical services to patients, restoration and preservation of their health as the most valuable potential, including for the implementation of productive activities in various fields)” (Dykha, 2020, p. 24).

2. In the context of the implementation of the EU health policy area of “ensuring access to healthcare services”, it is important for Ukraine to improve its healthcare system in accordance with the recommendations for governments, politicians, researchers and other stakeholders in assessing and developing national healthcare strategies contained in the above document. In particular, the integration of telemedicine, especially in remote regions, should be a priority after the war, including the creation of a digital platform for medical consultations, the development of a network of mobile clinics, and the provision of subsidies for healthcare services to the poor.

3. Such an area of the EU health policy as «protection of citizens’ mental health» is especially relevant for modern Ukraine, where the Putin regime has been waging a full-scale war against the young Ukrainian democracy for three years now. The war has resulted in millions of refugees and IDPs, among whom, according to foreign researchers, 40–70% suffer from acute clinical depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Post-traumatic stress disorder is also one of the most common problems among combat survivors (Kvasnii, Mural, Balanda, 2024, p. 33).

In our opinion, comprehensive rehabilitation programmes, such as psychological support, individual counselling and therapy groups, are extremely important for the return of Ukrainian citizens to a full life, so post-war rehabilitation is not just a medical task, but a matter of national security, shaping the future gene pool of our nation. In this regard, the experience of other countries, such as Germany or Japan after World War II, and the United States after the Vietnam War, where rehabilitation programmes facilitated the rapid integration of veterans into society, can be a very useful example for Ukraine. The development of systemic mental health support is an important tool for preserving human capital and economic sustainability of the state.

4. In the context of the implementation of the EU health policy area “fighting pandemics and infectious diseases”, Ukraine should take the necessary measures to create a national integrated system for

monitoring infectious diseases, expanding access to laboratory facilities and creating a system of training for medical personnel to respond to emergencies.

5. In the context of the implementation of such an area of the EU health policy as “environment and health interaction” in the period of post-war reconstruction of Ukraine, the priority measures should be environmental rehabilitation of the affected areas, control over the quality of water and food, and development of national eco-education programmes.

6. Such an area of the EU health policy as «investment in research and innovation in health care» seems to be the most difficult because of Ukraine’s extremely high national debt, which was formed due to the multibillion-dollar loans that our country took out for military needs. In addition, in this context, it is important for post-war Ukraine to focus on scientists returning to the country and strengthening the national scientific potential in general, ensuring open access to research results. We believe that, in this regard, Ukraine can cooperate with the EU in the field of research funding, biotechnology development and the creation of platforms for open data exchange.

7. In the context of the implementation of the EU healthcare policy area “digitalisation of healthcare systems”, we believe that the introduction of digital medical platforms in Ukraine will significantly contribute to the optimisation of medical services, while at the same time it will involve the development of an appropriate system of e-learning for medical professionals and data privacy protection.

8. In the context of the implementation of such an area of EU health policy as “development and strengthening of human resources in the healthcare system», the priority tasks in post-war Ukraine include the return of medical specialists from abroad and the training and attraction of young personnel by ensuring decent wages and introducing programmes to protect against professional burnout.

9. In the context of the implementation of the EU healthcare policy area of financial sustainability of healthcare systems, given the widespread corruption, the key for Ukraine will be the creation of transparent financing mechanisms, investment incentives and the development of insurance programmes that will be able to ensure the stability of the healthcare system. In addition, investing in healthcare is strategically important and should become one of the main areas of government policy. The introduction of insurance-based healthcare, as has been successfully done in Germany and other European countries, will create conditions for equal access to quality medical services regardless of the level of income.

In our opinion, the Comprehensive Strategy for Public Health and Human Development as a

component of the state healthcare policy of Ukraine should be built around the following four main areas: 1) disease prevention and increasing access to healthcare services; 2) investing in education and healthcare infrastructure; 3) rehabilitation and support for socially vulnerable groups; 4) a set of measures to create and promote a culture of healthy lifestyles, healthy eating and responsible attitudes to the environment. An integrated approach to these issues will ensure sustainable development of the society. Only by relying on the European benchmarks for strengthening the human potential of the state, improving the health of the nation, using European mechanisms and best practices in the development and implementation of economic, social and healthcare policies will Ukraine have a real chance of successful post-war recovery and European integration.

6. Summary

Thus, the review of the World Health Organization's health strategy and the European Union's key policy areas indicates the completion of the institutionalisation of a new human-centred paradigm of public health management designed to improve the health of the population and ensure the formation of high-quality human potential necessary for the sustainable development of the state. As Vira Kutsenko notes in this regard,

the development of the healthcare system should become an integral part of the overall processes of state-building, as public health is a strategic resource for the socio-economic development of Ukraine». Therefore, «further strengthening of the nation's health, i.e. the main strategic resource of the state, prolongation of life expectancy, increase in the number of years people live without diseases, requires a change in the very paradigm of the health care system development, ensuring the transition from clinical medicine to health maintenance and promotion, from individual treatment of mostly neglected chronic diseases to mass health improvement (Kutsenko, 2009, p. 50).

In general, public health is a key indicator of the effectiveness of public policy and a major factor influencing the country's socio-economic development. In today's environment, when the demographic crisis, environmental threats, war and globalisation challenges are becoming the determining factors in the development of society, the role of public health is becoming particularly important. Numerous studies show that a healthy population is the basis for economic productivity, national security and social stability.

The importance of integrating innovative approaches to preserving the health of citizens is to create a systemic mechanism capable of taking into account all aspects – from disease prevention to effective rehabilitation. The health of a nation, as a multifaceted phenomenon, encompasses physical, mental and social well-being, which requires an interdisciplinary approach to its study and provision. The war in Ukraine has demonstrated the importance of psychological rehabilitation and social integration programmes for affected citizens. The need for rehabilitation programmes adapted to Ukrainian realities is one of the priorities of the national policy.

The economic development of a country is closely linked to the health of its citizens. Reducing the burden of chronic diseases, increasing the availability of medical services and introducing digital technologies can reduce treatment costs and improve the quality of life.

Special attention should be paid to environmental aspects. Environmental pollution remains one of the main factors that negatively affect public health. Governments of developed countries are actively implementing environmental monitoring programmes, which, if implemented in Ukraine, would significantly improve the overall health of the nation.

In addition, education and promotion of healthy lifestyles are important components of building quality human potential. Programmes targeting young people help to establish a culture of health from an early age, which has a long-term impact on all aspects of social life.

Based on the study, it can be argued that sustainable development of the state is possible only with a priority approach to human health protection, sustainable development of the state's human potential and improvement of the nation's health. A comprehensive approach, including prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and promotion of a healthy lifestyle, will ensure a qualitative improvement in the health of the population and its socio-economic activity. Improvement of the state policy in this area should be based on the adaptation of international experience, consideration of national peculiarities and use of modern innovative approaches.

Thus, public health is a key resource for ensuring the competitiveness of the state, its economic stability and social cohesion. Only the integration of efforts at the national, regional and local levels will create conditions for the realisation of human potential as the basis for sustainable development of the state and society as a whole.

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