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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF E-DEMOCRACY TOOLS
AT LOCAL LEVEL: FOREIGN EXPERIENCE

Problem setting As ICTs are increasingly penetrating all spheres of social life, new opportunities for communication between citizens and power holders appear. Insufficient information about e-democracy entails a low level of citizen involvement in city management. In the light of e-democracy development in Ukraine, positive results of creating and implementing e-democracy tools around the world are of higher importance.

Recent research and publications analysis Problems and prospects for e-democracy development in Ukraine were investigated by S. Boichun, Yu. Vasylevych, N. Hrytsiak, O. Dubas, L. Malyshenko, V. Meshcheriakov, I. Salo, S. Soloviov and other scholars. The foreign experience in implementing e-democracy was studied by I. Lopushynskyi, A. Mytko, V. Trukhmanov etc.

Paper objective The aim of the article is to examine the implementation process of e-democracy tools at local level in foreign countries as a means for involving citizens in interaction with local authorities.

Paper main body In scientific literature, there is no unified approach defining ‘e-democracy’. According to Keas and his colleagues, depending on the aspect of democracy being promoted, e-democracy can employ different techniques: for increasing the transparency of the political process; for enhancing the direct involvement and participation of citizens; improving the quality of opinion formation.

Municipalities use a wide range of e-democracy tools to communicate with the population. Among successful examples of e-democracy implementation in foreign countries, is the introduction of online systems for electronic collection of signatures for citizens’ initiatives to municipal authorities in Norway and Finland; self-service functions and active debate forums on the Odder district council website in Denmark;
the Issy-les-Moulineaux Citizen Panel for e-consultations and the Interactive City Council that allows residents to actively participate in city council meetings online in France.

The National public opinion survey, conducted in 2015, showed that such e-democracy tools as e-chats, e-discussion forums, e-consultation do not fully work in Ukraine. It also revealed that the youth have a higher preference for engaging online in public discussions, for collaborating with others and for influencing decision and policy making at local level than any other age group.

**Conclusions and further research perspectives** The use of e-democracy tools: e-initiatives, e-consultations, e-discussion forums, online participation in council meetings enables citizens in an easy and suitable way to get involved in public discussions, and thus take part in co-development of local policies.

In comparison with foreign experience, the use of e-democracy tools at local level in Ukraine is rather low. To strengthen the development of e-democracy in Ukraine, it is necessary to increase public awareness of benefits of using e-democracy tools as a new form of dialogue between population and local authorities.