

ISSUES OF REMUNERATION FOR PATRONAGE SERVICE EMPLOYEES AS A CAUSE OF THE PERSONNEL CRISIS IN UKRAINE'S JUSTICE SYSTEM

Background. *Currently, the Ukrainian justice system faces numerous challenges, with a special emphasis on the personnel crisis, which is becoming increasingly systemic in nature. The study of remuneration issues for patronage service employees in Ukraine's justice system and the determination of the correlation between these problems and the ongoing personnel crisis are extremely relevant, especially in the context of increasing external threats caused by the full-scale war in Ukraine.*

Methods. *During the study, general scientific and special scientific methods of scientific inquiry were employed. With the help of the dialectical method, in particular, the peculiarities of the legal regulation of remuneration of patronage service employees of judicial bodies were determined. The method of analysis and synthesis enabled the identification of factors contributing to the personnel deficit, while the systemic-structural approach facilitated the determination of the impact of each factor on the state of ensuring working conditions and motivation among patronage service employees. The formal-logical method was used to identify shortcomings in the legal regulation of ensuring the working conditions of patronage service employees.*

Results. *It has been established that the absence of a consistent state policy leads to increased risks for the proper functioning of the justice system and a personnel crisis associated with the growing shortage of personnel in patronage service within the justice system. The circumstances contributing to this crisis have been analysed, including the transition of patronage service employees to the private sector, their withdrawal from the profession in general, the outflow of personnel abroad, and the complicated access to legal education resulting from its reform.*

Conclusions. *Given the critically low level of remuneration, unfavourable working conditions, and lack of career prospects, patronage service employees are increasingly leaving their positions, resulting in a decline in the efficiency of the justice system. The need for comprehensive measures to improve working conditions and create suitable opportunities for the professional development of patronage service employees has been substantiated. Resolution No. 1113 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine aims to partially address the issue of remuneration for patronage service employees; however, the established coefficients are not commensurate with the actual workload of these employees. Moreover, an unjustifiably formal approach to determining their amount has been preserved, taking into account the hierarchical affiliation of the service to a particular instance, rather than the actual workload.*

Keywords: *salary, personnel crisis, personnel policy, remuneration, patronage service, patronage employees, justice system, social security, welfare state.*

Background

Currently, the Ukrainian justice system is facing numerous challenges, with the personnel crisis occupying a particularly significant place. This phenomenon is becoming increasingly large-scale and systemic, resulting from a combination of factors that affect the functioning of the justice system and the implementation of the corresponding state function. As stated in the annual report "On the State of Ensuring the Independence of Judges in Ukraine" for 2024, the priority tasks for the coming periods include, in particular, "intensifying efforts to overcome the personnel crisis in the judicial system of Ukraine; resolving in 2025 the issue of predictability and fairness of the remuneration of court staff, which would provide for a system of incentives" (High Council of Justice, 2025, p. 60). Thus, attention is drawn not only to the problems of the shortage of judges, their excessive workload, low level of funding and threats to the independence of the judiciary (High Council of Justice, 2025, p. 6), but also to the need to resolve issues aimed at ensuring the proper functioning of the court staff as a whole. Therefore, addressing the staffing and material and technical support issues for patronage services, as well as the remuneration of their employees, is critically necessary to ensure the effective functioning of the justice system in Ukraine.

Despite the significance of the work of patronage service employees in Ukraine's justice system, they are often forced to work in difficult conditions, performing large volumes of work (often overtime), with limited career growth opportunities, and receiving insufficient remuneration for their efforts. The issue of working conditions of these employees has once again become relevant in the context of the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of December 29, 2023, № 1409 (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2023). It should be

noted that although the issue of remuneration for patronage service employees in Ukraine's justice system had been acknowledged for a long time, its level of urgency was unjustifiably underestimated. However, this very problem is one of the factors that contributed to the personnel crisis in our state's justice system.

An analysis of the scientific literature enables us to conclude that, to date, there has been no comprehensive study of the remuneration issues for patronage service employees in Ukraine's justice system, which is a factor exacerbating the personnel crisis in this system. At the same time, a number of scholars have studied the legal status of patronage service employees in the justice system, including A. Yu. Babkina (Babkina, 2022), I. V. Dashutin (Dashutin, 2023), A. O. Kubyshkina (Kubyshkina, 2016), V. V. Chorna (Chorna, 2019), and O. S. Sheremet (Sheremet, 2022). Certain studies also exist on problematic issues of human resources in the justice system of Ukraine in general, particularly the scholarly work of such researchers as S. I. Vihovsky (Vihovskyi, 2020, p. 112–114), O. V. Karpushova (Karpushova, 2019, p. 55), A. V. Popyk (Popyk, 2020, p. 105), K. O. Prydachuk (Prydachuk, 2023, p. 153), among others. Based on the scholarly achievements in this field, as well as considering the current legal regulation of remuneration relations for patronage service employees, we consider it appropriate to assess the impact of material support for patronage service employees in the Ukrainian justice system on the staffing potential in this sphere.

The purpose of this article is to examine the issues related to the remuneration of patronage service employees in Ukraine's justice system, specifically as a factor influencing the staffing potential of the judicial system, and to identify effective ways of addressing these issues.

Methods

In the course of the study, general scientific and special scientific methods of cognition were applied, in particular the dialectical, analytical and synthetic, systemic-structural, formal-logical, and others. With the help of the dialectical method, in particular, the peculiarities of the legal regulation of remuneration of patronage service employees of judicial bodies in Ukraine were determined. The method of analysis and synthesis enabled the identification of factors contributing to the personnel deficit in the judicial system, while the systemic-structural method allowed for determining the impact of each factor on the state of working conditions and motivation of the respective patronage service employees. The formal-logical method was employed to identify the shortcomings of the legal regulation of ensuring the working conditions of patronage service employees and to determine the ways of improving legislation, taking into account scientific developments and the practical problems identified by judicial system employees.

Results

The staffing problems in Ukraine's justice system are of a permanent nature and are caused by a set of factors, the influence of which was not significantly mitigated by previous judicial and legal reforms. This has already been emphasized by bodies within the justice system [for example (High Council of Justice, 2025; High Council of Justice, 2021) and by scholars [for example (Hultai, & Kulyk, 2022, p. 60–63)]. Despite the positive impact of these reforms on optimizing the functioning of the justice system, the socio-legal aspects of the justice system's operation, particularly those related to ensuring an adequate level of social security for judges and other judicial staff, were not fully covered. Thus, the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Legal Policy, D.V. Maslov, noted in May 2024 that only 37 % of positions in appellate courts were currently filled (for example, in the Sumy Court of Appeal there are difficulties even in forming panels to consider criminal proceedings). In addition, the Chairman of the Committee emphasized that Ukraine is currently experiencing a significant shortage of judges (about 40 % of the established staff) (Maslov, 2024). It should be noted that as of 2025 the trend of judges resigning continues, largely due to the low level of their remuneration and excessive workload.

I. B. Plakhtiy, a member of the High Council of Justice, states that under current conditions the profession of judge is becoming increasingly less attractive, which is due to a number of factors. Among these, she identifies in particular: (1) criticism of the judiciary by politicians, the media, and the public; (2) lack of prestige and status; (3) limited opportunities for career growth; (4) working conditions that do not comply with decent work standards; (5) excessive workload and lack of work-life balance; (6) insufficient social guarantees; (7) high job requirements and ethical standards, as well as the complexity and duration of procedures (Judicial institutions, 2024). We agree with both the factors named, which indeed prevail today, and with the conclusion that they have a direct impact on the attractiveness of the judicial profession.

Thus, it should be emphasized that personnel problems in the justice system are complex in nature, which is manifested in the fact that, first, they are caused by a number of factors that significantly reduce the motivation of judges and other court employees to continue working in the justice system, and discourage other professional lawyers from taking the relevant positions; second, the personnel crisis in the justice system does not exclusively concern judges, but it significantly affects judges in particular, and

ultimately the ability of the state to fulfil the function of justice by ensuring the right of legal subjects (individuals, citizens, groups of people, and the state) to effective judicial protection of their rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests.

In this study, we pay special attention to the staffing of patronage service employees in the justice system, because:

1) Patronage service employees in the justice system occupy a special place in the subsystem (internal system) that ensures the functioning of the judiciary. These employees constitute a category of workers with a specific labor-law status (Dashutin, 2023, p. 301; Babkina, 2021, p. 96; Dashutin, 2022, p. 25-26), which determines their special role and duties in ensuring the functioning of the judicial system. Although patronage service employees, by virtue of their legal status, are not vested with the authority to administer justice, their actual role in ensuring the functioning of the justice system is difficult to overestimate. In performing their job duties, they create the necessary conditions for the effective and uninterrupted exercise of judicial power. Patronage service employees perform a wide range of auxiliary functions, including organizational, administrative, and informational support for judges, thereby allowing them to focus on delivering well-grounded and fair decisions.

2) Patronage service employees in the justice system of Ukraine, like all other employed persons, must perform their official duties under conditions that are appropriate and comply with the standards of decent work. In particular, they must receive fair remuneration, work in safe and healthy conditions (including a healthy psychological climate), have the opportunity to realize their labour potential (including through professional development), as well as exercise other labor rights and satisfy legitimate interests in the sphere of labour and employment (and in related spheres). Therefore, decent work for patronage employees involves not only adequate material support but also respect for their professional status, social protection, opportunities for career growth, and the provision of physical and psychological comfort in the workplace. At the same time, it is important to understand that ensuring decent working conditions for such employees is an integral element of the functioning of the justice system (in particular, a judge cannot effectively perform his or her work without a judicial assistant, and thus cannot fully realize the state's function of administering justice).

Pointing out that patronage service employees of the courts must work under conditions as close as possible to decent working conditions, which include both material and non-material components, it should be borne in mind that today the material (financial) aspect of ensuring decent working conditions is the most problematic within the structure of factors that determine staffing in the justice system [for example (Ohnev'iuk, 2022; The working group..., 2024; Council of Judges of Ukraine, 2024)]. Thus, the Annual Report "On the State of Ensuring the Independence of Judges in Ukraine" for 2024 states that the remuneration system introduced by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of December 29, 2023, № 1409 "On the Remuneration of Civil Servants Based on the Classification of Positions in 2025" does not cover the numerous employees of state bodies within the justice system who are not civil servants-patronage service employees, in particular the advisor, assistant to the head of the court, deputy head of the court, secretary of the judicial chamber, secretary of the plenary session, as well as the judicial assistant. At the same time, patronage service employees, especially judicial assistants, are entrusted with one of the most crucial functions in supporting the

procedural activities of the courts. However, the official salary guaranteed by the state for them, within the remuneration structure, is disproportionate to the official salaries of civil servants of the court apparatus (High Council of Justice, 2025, p. 41). This issue was also raised by the European Commission in the "Ukraine Report 2023" (European Commission, 2023). It was noted that Ukraine's judicial system suffers from severe underfunding, which is further exacerbated by the ongoing aggressive war, as well as its impact on the size of the state budget and the prioritization of budget expenditures. Thus, in 2022, the financial resources allocated to the judicial system covered 63.4 % of the total financing needs of the judicial system, whereas in 2023, this figure decreased to 51.4%. At the same time, the greatest burden of underfunding is borne by "non-judicial staff in courts, which causes their outflow and disrupts the operation of the courts." The report also emphasized that during the mid-year review of 2022, significant changes occurred regarding budget expenditures for the judicial system: expenditures on all local and appellate courts were reduced by more than 10 %, and on other judicial institutions – by 15–20 % compared to the initial 2022 appropriations. Funding for appellate and specialized courts amounted to approximately EUR 491 million compared to approximately EUR 656 million in 2021 (at the exchange rate at the end of 2022). In this regard, the European Commission emphasized that once circumstances arise indicating that the state budget has stabilized, the government must restore funding for the judicial system (Ukraine Report, 2023, p. 26).

It should be stated that in 2024 and 2025 the issue of ensuring decent remuneration for employees in the system of public service bodies has not been removed from the agenda. In order to address this problem, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, by Resolution № 1409 of December 29, 2023, approved the Scheme of Official Salaries for Civil Service Positions, taking into account the families and levels of positions, jurisdictions, and types of state bodies in 2024 (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2023). The main purpose of developing and approving this Scheme was to create conditions for attracting and retaining the most qualified personnel in the professional public service. Thus, this document ensures transparency, predictability, and fairness of the legal mechanism of remuneration for the relevant category of employees, as well as strengthens the importance of the fixed part of the salary and limits the variable part (which can be adjusted by the manager) within the structure of remuneration at the individual level and within the wage fund of each public service body. Under such circumstances, the Government sought to reduce (if possible, eliminate) the existing disproportion in the remuneration of civil servants, stipulating that the fixed part of a civil servant's salary should account for at least 70 %, and the variable part no more than 30 %.

At the same time, the outlined law-making measures of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine regarding the optimization of the remuneration system did not cover employees of all state bodies (in particular, the bodies of the justice system of Ukraine) who are patronage service employees. Thus, on April 8, 2024, following a meeting at the Supreme Court (with the participation of the members of the Working Group on the Basic Principles of Supreme Court Management, the leadership of the Supreme Court Apparatus, the Head of the Apparatus of the High Anti-Corruption Court, the Heads of the Secretariats of the Constitutional Court and the High Council of Justice, the Acting Head of the State Judicial Administration, a member

of the Council of Judges of Ukraine, and others), it was rightly stated that such patronage service employees as judicial assistants perform one of the key functions in ensuring the organization of the courts' procedural activities, yet the existing gap in remuneration (compared to other court staff) had not been reduced or eliminated for such employees, and the "official salary guaranteed by the state for judicial assistants in the remuneration structure is disproportionate to the official salaries of civil servants of the court apparatus" (Attention was drawn to..., 2024).

In addition, it is important to note that the situation that arose as a result of the approval of the 2024 Salary Scheme (Resolution № 1409 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of December 29, 2023) (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2023) also deepened the disparity in the remuneration of patronage service employees at different levels (instances) of the judicial system. Although this document was aimed at streamlining the remuneration of civil servants, as a result of its adoption, the problems of ensuring decent remuneration for patronage employees of higher instances, as well as for the relevant staff of the High Council of Justice, the High Qualifications Commission of Judges, and the State Judicial Administration, were addressed. At the same time, the need to increase the salaries of patronage service employees of the first and second instances remained without proper attention. In view of this, *there are grounds to state that a significant gap in the level of remuneration has formed in the justice system of Ukraine not only between patronage and civil servants within one instance, but also between patronage service employees of different instances (as well as relevant specialists of judicial governance bodies)*. It is quite obvious that this disparity in remuneration is a manifestation of injustice, especially given that the qualification, education, and workload requirements for patronage service employees and court staff at different instances are practically identical.

It is essential to note that, under current conditions, the workload of employees in local and appellate courts often significantly exceeds that of their counterparts in the cassation instance and judicial governance bodies. This is explained by the large number of cases considered precisely at the level of the first two instances, as well as responsibilities for the initial generalization of judicial practice, among others. However, despite the significant volume of work and the high level of responsibility for their duties, their work remains unfairly undervalued and is paid at a lower level compared to their colleagues.

The situation in which patronage service employees of the first and second instances receive substantially lower wages (compared to civil servants and patronage service employees in the justice system of higher instances), despite having access to strategically important information with which they work, as well as being forced to responsibly perform a significant amount of work (often disregarding the fundamental labour-law principle of work–life balance), inevitably leads to staff outflow, which is indeed currently being observed in the justice system. This situation is further aggravated by the fact that patronage service employees in the first and second instances are effectively deprived of opportunities for career advancement and cannot influence increases in their wages.

In light of these circumstances, it becomes evident that a review of the foundations of the remuneration system for patronage service employees (primarily in courts of the first and second instances) is urgently needed. It should take into account, first, the actual workload and responsibility borne by these employees (while the currently applied unjustifiably

formal (discriminatory) approach to determining the level of remuneration of patronage service employees solely based on the hierarchical affiliation of the service to a certain instance should not be used); second, it is important to consider the actual contribution of these employees to ensuring the functioning of the justice system. The level of remuneration should align with modern standards of decent work and reflect the trend of gradual salary increases in the justice system and public service bodies in general. The level of remuneration must correspond to modern standards of decent work and to the trend of gradually increasing wages in the justice system and in public service bodies in general. In addition, a stable, transparent, and predictable mechanism for wage formation will contribute to ensuring staff continuity in patronage services, which in turn will ensure that highly qualified employees with sufficient work experience continue to work in the patronage services of the first and second instances.

Given the existing problems, the High Council of Justice, with the aim of ensuring its participation in the budgetary process in accordance with the requirements of the Budget Code of Ukraine, by decision of February 13, 2024, № 415/0/15-2439, adopted an appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine with proposals regarding the priority tasks of financial support for the judiciary and its independence for 2025–2027. Among these tasks were identified, in particular: ensuring in full the expenditures for payment of judicial remuneration to judges in the manner and amounts defined by legislation, as well as expenditures for wages of court staff, bodies, and institutions of the justice system at the expense of the general state budget fund, in an amount that would make it possible to form and maintain a highly qualified staff capable of organizing and providing public services in the field of justice at a level that meets public expectations; forming unified approaches and standards for the remuneration of civil servants; forming unified approaches to the remuneration of patronage service employees in the High Council of Justice, the Supreme Court, the High Anti-Corruption Court, the High Court on Intellectual Property, the State Judicial Administration of Ukraine, local and appellate courts, which would correspond to the high standards of the work they perform, ensure a decent level of remuneration, and prevent the shortage of experienced staff in the judicial system; and ensuring expenditures for payroll charges in the amount defined by law (High Council of Justice, 2025, p. 43).

On September 1, 2025, according to a statement by the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Legal Policy, Denys Maslov, the Government adopted draft resolutions developed by the State Judicial Administration concerning the application of increasing coefficients to the salaries of court staff and judicial assistants (Cabinet adopted resolutions, 2025).

Thus, according to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "Certain Issues of Remuneration of Patronage Service Employees in the Justice System During Martial Law" of September 10, 2025, № 1113, an additional salary increase coefficient was established for the period of martial law for patronage service employees in the justice system, as defined in Annex 6 to the Conditions of Remuneration of Patronage Service Employees in State Bodies (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of December 24, 2019, № 1112 "On Conditions of Remuneration of Employees of State Bodies Not Covered by the Law of Ukraine 'On Civil Service'"). According to Resolution № 1113, such an additional coefficient is set at the following levels: for patronage service employees of the

Supreme Court, higher specialized courts, the High Council of Justice, and the High Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine – 1.45; for patronage service employees of appellate courts, district administrative and commercial courts – 1.3; for patronage service employees of local general courts – 1.25 (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2025).

Therefore, it is worth noting that the existing system for determining the remuneration of patronage service employees in judicial bodies has been revised and increased. At the same time, Resolution № 1113 still preserves an unjustifiably formal (and discriminatory) approach to determining the level of remuneration of patronage service employees, based on the hierarchical affiliation of the service to a certain instance, rather than on the workload and the actual contribution of these employees to ensuring the functioning of the justice system.

It should once again be emphasized that ignoring the problem of inadequately low remuneration of patronage service employees, as it appears, leads to: first, the state's neglect of its obligation to ensure an adequate level of social security for employees (considering the disproportion between the significance of the role of judicial assistants, the amount of their work, and the financial compensation for their work, compared to employees of certain courts (State Administration, 2024) and employees of certain other state bodies (The average salary of civil servants, 2024); second, increased risks for the effective functioning of the justice system of Ukraine; third, the predictable outflow of personnel from the justice system and low motivation of professional lawyers to take positions as employees in the justice system of Ukraine.

In this regard, in particular, the Chairman of the Council of Judges of Ukraine, B. S. Monich, stated that the problem of low wages for court staff (especially compared to civil servants of other public service bodies) is one of the most pressing problems of the functioning of the justice system, which has become especially acute during the full-scale war in Ukraine. This very problem has led to a critical reduction in staff, and therefore overcoming this crisis should be carried out primarily through the material form of ensuring the social security of patronage service employees in the justice system of Ukraine. At the same time, as B. S. Monich notes, solving the outlined problem for court staff should consist of establishing a proportional dependence (in percentage terms) of the salaries of such employees relative to judicial remuneration (Monich, 2024).

Comprehensively analyzing the problem of the staffing crisis in the justice system of Ukraine with regard to patronage service employees of this system, we can conclude that such a crisis has the potential to deepen further (in the event that this problem is not properly addressed in the short term). This is evidenced by the following circumstances:

1) the transition of court patronage service employees to other sectors of the economy. One of the key factors contributing to the deepening of the staffing crisis in the justice system is the trend of resignations and the transition of patronage service employees to the private sector. Under the current conditions, when wages in the justice system do not meet the expectations of these employees (while the state applies a disproportionate approach to assessing the significance of the work of judicial assistants as compared to other civil servants working in courts, whose wages are gradually increasing), and working conditions remain far from standards that ensure a decent standard of living and professional fulfilment, specialists naturally strive to seek more promising opportunities to realize their labor potential

in the private sector. It is essential to recognize that the private sector provides significantly more competitive conditions, including career advancement opportunities, gradual wage increases, and other benefits that enable employees not only to achieve their professional goals but also to enhance their standard of living while enjoying financial stability. Furthermore, private companies (considering competition in the market in general and the labor and employment market in particular) often provide employees with more modern and comfortable working conditions: from modern offices and technical equipment to the creation of a favorable psychological climate that supports professional development and personal well-being;

2) the exit of court patronage service employees from the profession. A significant factor contributing to the deepening of the staffing crisis in Ukraine's justice system is the risk that experienced court employees will not only move to the private sector but also leave the profession altogether. The current working conditions faced by court employees are often perceived as objectively unfair and do not correspond to the level of responsibility and workload placed upon them. Predictably, the lack of adequate (both material and psychological) support for employees in the justice system today leads to increased professional burnout, which negatively affects overall motivation and internal attitudes toward the profession, as well as toward the state as an employer. This circumstance is particularly dangerous now, in the context of an already existing staffing shortage – when the workload on employees who remain in the justice system inevitably increases due to the reduction of human resources. Under such conditions, the remaining employees face an increasing volume of work, which heightens stress and raises the likelihood of further resignations, which in turn increases the workload for the remaining employees and judges in particular. Thus, this situation effectively creates a vicious cycle: employee resignations further worsen working conditions for those who remain, which in turn provokes additional staff turnover;

3) the outflow of personnel abroad and the further aggravation of the demographic crisis in Ukraine, which affects labour market and employment trends. An extremely significant factor exacerbating the staffing crisis in the justice system of Ukraine is the outflow of qualified employees abroad, which is directly related to the current demographic crisis and profound changes in the labor market of our state. The full-scale war, which since 2022 has forced millions of Ukrainians to leave their homes in search of safety abroad, has led to a sharp decline in the working-age population. As a result (together with a combination of other factors), a significant staffing shortage and structural unemployment have arisen in the labour market of Ukraine, complicating the prompt filling of vacancies, especially in professional public service bodies (including the justice system). According to statistics, the share of employees in Ukraine decreased from 49 % to 41 % compared to 2021, while the share of the unemployed increased from 37 % to 44 % (Staffing shortage, 2024). Even more alarming is the fact that a significant portion of unemployed citizens are not seeking to return to the labor market. Based on the results of a sociological survey (conducted by the Razumkov Center's sociological service from June 6 to 12, 2024, with the support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Ukraine), for those unemployed citizens who do consider employment, the key requirements for jobs they would accept are decent wages (89 %) and additional social benefits, including exemptions from mobilization (24 % each) (Razumkov Center, 2024). These high demands for working conditions

complicate the problem of staff shortages, especially in the justice system, where, as we have already noted, working conditions generally do not meet the expectations of potential employees who are professionals in the field of law. At the same time, it is important to note that according to forecasts of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, the labor market deficit over the next ten years may reach about 4.5 million people, while the International Labour Organization predicts an even more pessimistic scenario – a deficit of 8.6 million people (Zhyrij, 2024).

Thus, under conditions where a significant portion of qualified specialists, including employees of the judicial system, are leaving the country in search of a safer life and better working conditions abroad, the staffing crisis in the justice system will only deepen. Moreover, this process is further exacerbated by the demographic crisis in the state. According to estimates by the Institute of Demography, about 31 million people live in the territory of Ukraine under government control, while 4.9 million have already left the country, and 4.1 million remain in temporarily occupied territories (Prasad, 2024). The population of Ukraine, according to the Institute of Demography and Quality of Life Problems of the National Academy of Sciences, may decrease to 28.9 million by 2041, and to 25.2 million by 2051 (Hirnyk, 2024). Under such conditions, the state is already facing serious challenges related to ensuring the staffing potential necessary to maintain the stable functioning of the justice system. Failure to address this problem regarding patronage service employees in the justice system now will create an issue that cannot be solved in the future overall;

4) complicated access to legal education, caused by the reform of legal education. Another significant factor that may exacerbate the staffing crisis in the justice system of Ukraine is the complication of access to legal education, resulting from reforms in this area. First of all, it is essential to emphasize that, within the framework of its commitments regarding European integration, Ukraine has undertaken to optimize the number of higher education institutions, which has become particularly relevant in the context of current demographic changes. In particular, since 2007 the average number of students in higher education institutions has more than halved (Honcharova, & Novykova, 2024), which is linked both to population depopulation and the growing trend among the younger generation of perceiving higher education as unnecessary, as well as to young people's desire to study abroad in the context of the ongoing war. Nevertheless, legal education in Ukraine remains one of the most popular specializations among applicants. Even during the war in 2022 and 2023, law faculties (institutes) continued to receive a large number of applications from applicants, which, according to experts, indicates that in the coming years the number of law school graduates, while it may decrease, will not do so significantly (Horodyskyi, 2023). However, it is also necessary to consider that a reform of legal education is currently underway in Ukraine (Committee on Legal Policy, 2023), which involves revising programs, revising accreditation requirements, and optimizing the number of institutions offering legal education. In this regard, it should be noted that these transformations in the legal education system (in combination with the process of optimizing the number of educational institutions) may create additional barriers both for admission and for the successful completion of studies at law faculties (institutes). As a result, the state may face a future shortage of young professionals capable of meeting the justice system's staffing needs. Thus, it is quite obvious that the lack of sufficient inflow of new qualified personnel may lead to a

further aggravation of the staffing crisis, which will negatively affect the functioning of the justice system and, more broadly, the administration of justice in Ukraine.

Discussion and conclusions

Summarizing the above, it is worth noting that under current conditions, the problem of remuneration of patronage service employees in the justice system of Ukraine has become particularly acute and is a key factor aggravating the staffing crisis in this system. Considering the critically low wages, unfavorable working conditions, lack of adequate social protection, and limited career growth prospects, court employees leave their positions, and these vacancies remain unfilled for an extended period due to competition in the labour market. This leads to a decline in the efficiency of the justice system, particularly due to the increased workload on judges and the growing risks of judicial errors in their work. At the same time, the staffing problem is exacerbated by the growing demand for such employees in the private sector, which offers more attractive working conditions and salaries that significantly exceed the wages currently offered for such employees in the justice system of Ukraine.

For this reason, it is already clear today that immediate adoption of comprehensive measures aimed at improving working conditions (primarily, increasing wages by linking them proportionally to judicial remuneration), as well as creating proper conditions for the professional development of patronage service employees, is necessary. Only in this way can the staff of the judicial system be stabilized and its effective functioning ensured in the interests of further development of Ukraine as a legal, democratic, and social state implementing its European integration strategy.

Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1113 of 2025 aims to partially address the issue of decent remuneration for patronage service employees in the justice system by establishing, for the period of martial law, an additional coefficient of salary increase. At the same time, this is only the first step toward solving the staffing problem in the justice system, since the size of these coefficients still does not correspond to the actual workload of patronage service employees in the justice system compared to judicial remuneration, as well as to the salaries of civil servants in other public authorities. Moreover, Resolution No. 1113 retains an unjustifiably formal approach to determining the level of remuneration for patronage service employees based solely on the hierarchical affiliation of the service to a certain instance, rather than on the workload and the actual contribution of these employees to ensuring the functioning of the justice system.

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Марина БАРСУК, канд. юрид. наук, суддя
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6560-1024
e-mail: barsukmaryna@gmail.com
Північний апеляційний господарський суд, Київ, Україна

ПРОБЛЕМИ ОПЛАТИ ПРАЦІ ПРАЦІВНИКІВ ПАТРОНАТНИХ СЛУЖБ ЯК ФАКТОР КАДРОВОЇ КРИЗИ В СИСТЕМІ ПРАВОСУДДЯ УКРАЇНИ

Вступ. В умовах сьогодення система правосуддя України стикається із численними викликами, серед яких особливе місце займає кадрова криза, що набуває системного характеру. Дослідження проблематики оплати праці працівників патронатних служб у системі правосуддя України, визначення кореляції цих проблем із триваючим поглибленням кадрової кризи є надзвичайно актуальним, особливо в умовах зростаючих зовнішніх загроз, викликаних повномасштабною війною в Україні.

Методи. У процесі дослідження застосовано загальнонаукові та спеціально-наукові методи пізнання. За допомогою діалектичного методу, зокрема, визначено особливості правового регулювання оплати праці працівників патронатних служб органів правосуддя. Метод аналізу та синтезу дає змогу виявити фактори, які сприяють кадровому дефіциту, а системно-структурний – визначити вплив кожного з факторів на стан забезпечення умов праці та мотивацію працівників патронатних служб. Формально-логічний метод використовувався для виявлення недоліків правового регулювання забезпечення умов праці працівників патронатних служб.

Результати. Установлено, що відсутність послідовної державної політики призводить до посилення ризиків належного функціонування системи правосуддя, кадрової кризи, яка пов'язана зі зростаючим дефіцитом працівників патронатних служб системи правосуддя. Проаналізовано обставини, що сприяють цій кризі: перехід працівників патронатних служб у приватний сектор, їхній вихід із професії загалом, відплив кадрів за кордон, ускладнений доступ до юридичної освіти, обумовлений її реформою.

Висновки. Зважаючи на критично низький рівень оплати праці, несприятливі умови роботи, відсутність перспектив кар'єрного зростання, працівники патронатних служб усе частіше полишають свої посади, що призводить до зниження ефективності функціонування системи правосуддя. Обґрунтовано необхідність прийняття комплексних заходів, спрямованих на поліпшення умов праці, створення належних умов для професійного розвитку працівників патронатних служб. Постановою Кабінету Міністрів України № 1113 направлена на часткове розв'язання проблеми оплати праці працівників патронатної служби, водночас розміри встановлених коефіцієнтів не є співмірними з реальним робочим навантаженням працівників цієї служби, до того ж залишено невикористаною формальний підхід до визначення їх розміру з огляду на ієрархічну належність служби до певної інстанції, а не реальною навантаженням.

Ключові слова: заробітна плата, кадрова криза, кадрова політика, оплата праці, патронатна служба, патронатні працівники, система правосуддя, соціальна безпека, соціальна держава.

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