

Updating the Civil Service Selection Procedure

In this article, we analyse the current state of one of the areas of public administration reform — the civil service selection procedure.

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The civil service selection procedure is being updated as a key element of the reboot of public administration under the [Public Administration Reform Strategy of Ukraine for 2022-2025](#) in the area of ‘Professional Public Service and Human Resources Management’.

The key tasks for implementing this area of the Strategy regarding competition and selection include:

- updating the selection procedure;
- modernising the work of the Commission on the Higher Civil Service Corps;
- introducing a personnel reserve for civil service positions;
- developing criteria and providing opportunities for career advancement;
- motivating women to participate in competitions for Category ‘A’ civil service positions;

- developing and implementing policies to ensure a balanced representation of women and men in various civil service positions;
- creating opportunities for internships to attract young, highly qualified professionals to the civil service;
- promotion of civil service.

Indicators of achieving these objectives of the Strategy are:

- › the average number of candidates for civil service positions: in 2022 — 10, in 2023 — 12, in 2024 — 13, and in 2025 — 15;
- › staff turnover in Category 'A' civil service positions: 17% in 2022, 15% in 2023, 13% in 2024, and 10% in 2025;
- › staff turnover in civil service positions of categories 'B' and 'C': 20% in 2022, 15% in 2023, 13% in 2024, and 10% in 2025.

Additionally, as part of the communication measures of the Strategy, the updated civil service selection procedure is being accompanied by an all-Ukrainian information campaign to promote the civil service.

The reform of the civil service selection procedure is driven by several factors. First, there is a need to ensure the selection of personnel through transparent and open competitions based on merit and to strengthen the institutional capacity of the civil service. Secondly, it aims to increase trust in the public administration system in the context of Ukraine's recovery. In addition, updating the civil service selection procedure is one of Ukraine's European integration commitments in terms of public administration reform, which is being implemented in line with the [European Principles of Public Administration developed by the OECD/SIGMA](#), and is also a requirement of [the Ukraine Facility programme](#), under which Ukraine receives up to €50 billion from the EU until 2027.

State of Play and Progress of Reform

In accordance with the [Law of Ukraine 'On Civil Service'](#), the selection of personnel for civil service positions is carried out through a mandatory competition. However, since May 2022, competitions for civil service positions have been temporarily [suspended](#) for security reasons. A similar practice was applied during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result, during the three years of hostilities, the selection of candidates for civil service positions has been carried out using non-transparent direct appointments, which leads to the risk of losing opportunities to attract professional specialists to civil service positions,

undermining the professionalism and stability of the civil service. This fact is also confirmed by the European Commission in its [Report on the 2024 EU Enlargement Package](#). Due to the termination of the competitive selection process, it is not possible to assess the level of implementation of the Strategy indicator on the average number of candidates for civil service positions.

[Experts](#) and [international partners](#) have repeatedly called for the resumption of competitive selection for civil service positions while maintaining security conditions. Thus, according to Nataliia Aliushyna, Head of the NAUCS, all necessary technical and organisational capacities are in place to restart [competitions for civil service positions even during martial law](#). Moreover, some state bodies with special status, such as [the NABU](#), have already resumed the procedure for appointing individuals based on the results of the competition. The issue of resuming competitive selection is essentially the first step — or even a prerequisite.

The analysis of the results of the competitive selection reform implementation shows that it has not 'moved forward, **and the key tasks of the competition and selection in this area of the Strategy have not been practically implemented, namely:**

1. The selection procedure for civil service positions has not been updated, and the mechanism for appointing civil servants to a higher position through career promotion has not been implemented. To improve the procedure for entering, completing, and terminating civil service, draft law [No. 6496](#) was developed and registered in 2021, but was never considered by the Parliament and withdrawn in September 2024. New amendments to the legislation to improve the procedure for entering, completing and leaving the civil service are currently being developed and are expected to come into force in the third quarter of 2025, according to the Ukraine Facility Plan.
2. The work format of the Commission on the Higher Civil Service Corps has not changed significantly, although the Strategy envisages modernisation of its work to ensure professionalisation. In addition, the composition of the Commission, approved by [Government Order No. 1006](#), does not ensure gender representation of the Commission members, contrary to the objectives of the Strategy.
3. The competitive selection procedure has not been restored, considering security conditions. Over time, the number of civil servants appointed without competition and working in temporary (fixed-term) positions is increasing. Delaying the timing of the competition may result in public authorities being unable to organise competitions for all necessary positions within a limited timeframe. For example, according to [media reports](#) citing information from the NAUCS, in 2022-2023, the number of civil servants

appointed without competitive selection was 49.9 thousand. Obviously, by the end of 2024, the number of such individuals will be much higher.

4. The trend of staff turnover in all categories of positions and the overall outflow of personnel from the civil service is increasing. In 2023, [the staff turnover rates](#) were not achieved and were quite high, in particular for positions of categories 'A' — 29%, 'B' — 20%, and 'C' — 27%. However, in 2022, the staff turnover rate was significantly lower: 24% for Category 'A', 14% for Category 'B', and 20% for Category 'C'. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, 82.7 thousand people have been [appointed](#) to positions, and 93.7 thousand people have been dismissed.¹ The situation is further [aggravated](#) by the fact that the [number](#) of civil servants and the actual of employees, as well as the [number](#) of vacant positions, is steadily decreasing every year.² This threatens to lose the institutional memory of the civil service, the state as a competitive employer, and trust in the public administration system as a whole. Thus, according to the results of [a nationwide survey](#), interest in [joining the civil service](#) in 2023 [decreased](#) from 20% to 16% compared to 2021. By contrast, public perception of the public administration system in 2023 increased to 30% compared to 2021 (8%).
5. Conditions for balanced representation of women and men in various civil service positions have not been created. Eliminating the gender imbalance requires, first of all, appropriate legislative changes, including improving the gender-sensitive approach in the budget process. In addition, it is urgent to take measures to motivate women to participate in competitions for Category 'A' civil service positions. Consequently, as of the third quarter of 2024, 75.5% of women³ work in civil service positions, including [29.5% in Category 'A', 66.3% in Category 'B', and 78.6% in Category 'C'](#). This trend of gender imbalance has been maintained over the past few years.
6. As part of the communication measures of the Civil Service Recruitment Strategy, the NAUCS conducts an annual communication campaign to promote civil service, entitled [the Civil Service Promotion Day](#). In 2024, the event gathered over 100 young people offline.

¹ From 24 February 2022 to 1 October 2024, 82.7 thousand individuals were appointed to civil service positions, including 20.3 thousand in 2022, 36.2 thousand in 2023, and 26.2 thousand in the first 9 months of 2024. Over the same period, 93.7 thousand people were dismissed, including 25.6 thousand in 2022, 40.2 thousand in 2023, and 27.9 thousand in the first 9 months of 2024.

² The number of full-time positions in 2022 is 207,140; in 2023 — 206,151; in 2024 (as of 01.10.2024) — 196,696. The actual number of civil servants in 2022 was 165,422, in 2023 — 159,904, in 2024 (as of 01.10.2024) — 157,719. The vacant positions were 34,891 in 2022, 39,102 in 2023, and 33,318 in 2024 (as of 01.10.2024).

³ The share of women in civil service positions as of the third quarter of 2024 is 75.5%, calculated as the ratio of the number of women (119,089) to the actual number of civil servants (157,719).

› Personnel reserve for civil service positions

Since 3 July 2023, [a personnel reserve](#) for civil service positions has been established and launched, with its formation and utilisation managed through [an automated information and communication system](#). As of 8 November 2024, [the reserve included](#) 2,721 people out of 2,935 registered candidates, 56% of whom were men. The most in-demand area of work is administrative management (49.7%), while the most prioritised region for employment is the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (75.5%). The introduction of the personnel reserve will facilitate the rapid restoration of normal life in territories after their de-occupation and ensure the proper functioning of state bodies in the liberated communities.

› State service for women and men veterans

[The number](#) of civil [servants](#) serving in the Armed Forces is [increasing](#) every year, with 4,244 civil servants in service as of 1 October 2024.⁴ The reintegration of veterans into civilian life requires the creation of inclusive conditions within public authorities, the implementation of retraining programs, and employment support. To attract veterans to the civil service, [an e-Map of vacancies in the civil service and local self-government bodies for veterans](#) was introduced, providing direct communication with employers. As of 10 October 2024, the e-Map [offered 359 vacancies](#) for veterans, including 138 vacancies in civil service, 202 vacancies in local self-government bodies and 19 vacancies in military administrations.

Thus, as of August 2024, [more than 17% of staff positions](#) in the Ministry of Veterans Affairs alone were held by veterans, their family members and the families of fallen soldiers, active military personnel, and former prisoners of war.

Recommendations for reforming the civil service selection procedure

On the way to reforming the competitive selection procedure for civil service positions, only certain steps have been taken to implement the objectives of the Strategy. The successful implementation of the reform requires the following key measures:

- 1) Develop and implement a legislative framework for restoring the competitive selection of individuals to civil service positions, improving the procedure for entering, completing and terminating civil service, including the appointment of civil servants to a higher position as part of career advancement and the integration of a gender-sensitive approach in civil service.

⁴ In 2022, 3,637 people served in the Armed Forces; in 2023 – 4,138 people, and as of 01.10.2024 – 4,244 people.

- 2) Restore competitive selection for all categories of civil servants in the government-controlled territory, considering security conditions. This will avoid non-transparency in appointing individuals to civil service positions, ensure fairness in the selection of personnel and increase the state's competitiveness as an employer.
- 3) Restore and modernise the Unified Civil Service Vacancies Portal (career.gov.ua), to streamline the competitive selection procedure.
- 4) Conduct awareness-raising campaigns on the resumption of competitions for civil service positions and methodological support for entry, service and dismissal from the civil service.
- 5) Ensure monitoring of the announcement of competitions for civil service positions that were appointed without competitive selection. This will allow for timely competition for civil service positions, appointment of specialists on a permanent basis, preservation of institutional memory and strengthening of state bodies' institutional capacity.
- 6) Modernise the work of the Commission on the Higher Civil Service Corps, particularly by taking measures to ensure gender representation of commission members. Provide training for selection commission members on assessing candidates' professional competence.