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**D. V. Luchenko**, Doctor of Juridical Science,  
Professor, Head of the Constitutional and  
Administrative Law Sector of the Scientific Research  
Institute of State Building and Local Government  
of the NALS of Ukraine  
ORCID 0000-0002-3832-0670

## **MODERN TENDENCIES IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF EUROPE AND THE EU**

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**Abstract.** *This article aimed to delineate and analyze the modern tendencies shaping public administration within Europe, with a particular focus on the influential role of the European Union. Through a rigorous examination of e-governance, decentralization, and participatory governance models, the author elucidated the transformative shifts in administrative practices. The European Union's directives, funding mechanisms, and strategic interventions were explored as pivotal drivers in molding these tendencies. By juxtaposing contemporary practices against historical antecedents and considering future trajectories, the article provided a comprehensive insight into the evolving dynamics of European public administration.*

**Keywords:** *E-governance, Decentralization, Participatory Governance, European Union, Public Administration, Administrative Transformation.*

**Introduction.** Public administration, as an integral facet of governance, has witnessed transformative shifts throughout Europe,

particularly in light of the European Union's (EU) evolving policies and directives. The complexity and dynamism of administrative trends in Europe have largely been influenced by socio-political changes, technological advancements, and a heightened emphasis on participatory governance.

In the historical context, Europe has been the cradle for myriad administrative models and theories that have shaped the very essence of public governance. With the establishment and gradual expansion of the European Union, a new dimension was added to this mix, necessitating an in-depth understanding of the subsequent shifts in public administration practices. This is vital not only for the sake of academic pursuit but also to discern the implications these trends have on the fabric of governance and policy-making.

The primary **aim of this article** is to provide a comprehensive examination of the current tendencies in public administration within Europe and the EU. By dissecting the nuances of these tendencies, we seek to highlight the symbiotic relationship between administrative practices and overarching governance objectives. Furthermore, understanding these trends is pivotal for nations and institutions navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by an increasingly interconnected European administrative landscape.

Public administration, as both a practice and an academic discipline, has been thoroughly examined over the years. With a rich tapestry of scholarship dedicated to its various facets, particularly in the European context, it becomes imperative to distill and examine seminal works that have shaped understanding and discourse.

**Materials and methods.** One cannot discuss the European administrative tradition without referencing Weber's [1] classic treatise on bureaucracy. This work, originally postulated as a part of his broader sociology of organizations, defined the contours of a 'rational' bureaucracy, with its emphasis on hierarchy, rules, and impersonality. Later, scholars such as Kaufmann [2] examined the historical trajectory of European administrative systems, highlighting the convergence and divergence in practices across countries.

The ascendancy of the European Union heralded a new chapter in the discourse on public administration. Hix [3] and Wallace, Wallace, and Pollack [4] have been foundational

in analyzing the administrative dynamics within the EU and its cascading influence on member states. Their works explore the institutional structures, policy processes, and administrative shifts induced by EU directives.

Modern administrative reforms have been extensively discussed by the likes of Pollitt and Bouckaert [5] in their exploration of public management reforms across Europe. Their comparative approach sheds light on the trajectories of reforms in diverse contexts. Olsen [6], on the other hand, critically evaluates the 'Europeanization' of public administration, emphasizing the interplay between national administrative traditions and European impulses.

While the aforementioned literature provides a robust understanding of European public administration's historical and contemporary realms, there exists a lacuna in terms of capturing real-time shifts, particularly in the wake of digital transformations and the post-COVID era. Furthermore, the role of citizen engagement and participatory governance in shaping administrative tendencies, while acknowledged, is yet to be explored comprehensively [7].

To accurately gauge the modern tendencies in public administration within Europe and the European Union, a rigorous methodological framework has been instituted. This section elucidates the methods employed, the data sources harnessed, and the analytical tools deployed to ensure the comprehensiveness and reliability of our findings.

Multiple data sources have been leveraged to derive a holistic view of the subject: 1) Official records: Documents, directives, and reports sourced from EU institutions, national governments, and relevant administrative bodies; 2) Scholarly articles: Peer-reviewed articles from established journals in the domain of public administration and governance to trace theoretical frameworks and empirical findings; 3) Government publications: National strategies, reform agendas, and policy papers from various European countries to understand country-specific nuances; 4) Surveys: Data from reputable institutions such as the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to glean insights into perceptions, practices, and challenges in the public administration domain.

A two-pronged approach was adopted for data analysis:

1. Comparative analysis of key indicators: Quantitative data across countries was juxtaposed to discern patterns, variations, and commonalities in administrative practices and reforms.

2. Qualitative analysis of policy documents: Policy documents, directives, and strategic papers were subjected to a content analysis. This was instrumental in gauging the underlying motivations, objectives, and mechanisms that steer modern administrative tendencies.

While efforts have been made to ensure the robustness of our methodology, certain limitations merit mention: 1) Temporal constraints: Given the rapidly evolving nature of public administration, especially in the wake of unforeseen events like pandemics, some findings might be representative of a specific time frame and may require periodic updates; 2) Generalizability: While the EU offers a cohesive framework, the variations in administrative traditions across member states can sometimes limit the broad generalizability of specific insights; 3) Subjectivity in qualitative analysis: While content analysis is grounded in rigorous criteria, the interpretation of policy documents might introduce a degree of subjectivity.

In light of these challenges, the results and interpretations presented in the subsequent sections are approached with due diligence and are contextualized appropriately.

**Research and discussion.** The realm of public administration in Europe has experienced multifaceted changes in recent decades. Understanding these developments is instrumental for comprehending the dynamics of governance, both at the national and supranational levels. This section elucidates some of the predominant tendencies that define contemporary public administration in the European context.

The digital turn has transformed administrative operations across Europe. Underpinned by the European Commission's Digital Single Market strategy [8], there has been a concerted push towards leveraging technology to streamline governance processes. E-governance platforms, such as Estonia's X-Road, exemplify the integration of services across sectors, from tax filings to health records. Moreover, the EU's eIDAS regulation [9] has promoted secure electronic

identification and trust services, facilitating cross-border digital transactions. Despite these advancements, the challenge lies in ensuring digital inclusivity, especially among the older population and those in remote areas.

The principle of subsidiarity, enshrined in the Treaty on European Union (Article 5(3)) [10], posits that decisions should be made as closely as possible to the citizen. Countries like Spain and Italy have witnessed a surge in regional autonomy, affecting fiscal policies, education, and healthcare. This decentralization seeks to promote local governance, but it also raises concerns regarding consistency in administrative practices and potential disparities in service delivery across regions.

In alignment with the Open Government Partnership initiatives, many European countries are championing participatory governance models. These models emphasize transparency, citizen engagement, and collaborative policy-making. Platforms like «Better Reykjavik» in Iceland facilitate citizen proposals for city improvements. Such endeavors underscore the shift from a top-down bureaucratic approach to a more collaborative and inclusive governance paradigm.

Given the interconnectedness of European countries, especially within the Schengen Area, administrative practices increasingly emphasize cross-border collaboration. This is evident in domains like environmental policies, where transboundary effects necessitate joint efforts, as seen in the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) [11]. Similarly, the European Arrest Warrant [12] underscores judicial cooperation, streamlining extradition processes across member states.

The European consensus on development [13] firmly anchors administrative practices within the ambit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This shift is marked by an emphasis on policies that cater to environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and economic growth in tandem. Additionally, there's a pronounced focus on inclusivity, ensuring that public administration caters to diverse demographics, including minorities, migrants, and persons with disabilities.

In summation, the modern tendencies in public administration in Europe reflect a confluence of technological advancements, participatory ethos, and a commitment to sustainable and inclusive

governance. These developments, while promising, also present challenges that necessitate adaptive strategies and continuous introspection.

The European Union, as a unique political and economic union, has exerted considerable influence on the trajectory of public administration within its member states. Its directives, regulations, and policies, often adopted and internalized by individual nations, signify its role as a crucial driver in molding administrative systems. This section delves into the ways the EU has shaped, and continues to shape, the contours of public administration in Europe.

The European Union's legal framework, consisting of directives, regulations, and decisions, has been instrumental in harmonizing administrative practices across member states. Directives such as the Public Procurement Directive (2014/24/EU) have standardized procedures and introduced transparency mandates across the bloc. Regulations, with their direct applicability, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2016/679), have steered administrative practices towards safeguarding individual rights, affecting data handling and protection standards across public sectors.

The EU's Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), especially the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund, have been pivotal in promoting administrative reforms. By conditioning the disbursement of funds on administrative capacity-building and adherence to good governance principles, the EU has induced a plethora of reforms, especially in newer member states striving to align their administrative machineries with established EU norms.

Several member states, especially those that acceded to the EU in the 21st century, offer illuminating case studies of administrative transformation. For instance, Poland's post-accession journey reflects a thorough overhaul of its administrative structures, driven in part by EU requirements. Similarly, Romania, post-accession, undertook significant anti-corruption measures, aided by EU guidance and oversight through the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM).

While the EU's past and present influence is discernible, its future role in public administration remains a topic of academic and policy deliberation. With challenges such as the digital transition, climate

change, and socio-political shifts, the EU's administrative directives will inevitably need to evolve. The European Commission's New European Bauhaus initiative, aiming to merge sustainability, inclusivity, and aesthetics in the public realm, exemplifies the forward-looking vision that might influence future administrative practices.

In synthesis, the European Union's influence on public administration within its member states is multifaceted and profound. By virtue of its legal instruments, funding mechanisms, and continuous engagement, the EU plays a cardinal role in both shaping and reflecting the administrative zeitgeist of Europe.

The delineated tendencies in public administration, while being indicative of the current European administrative landscape, also beckon a broader contemplation regarding their implications, challenges, and future trajectory. This section engages in a discourse that situates these tendencies within the larger gamut of historical practices, potential repercussions, and emerging paradigms.

European public administration has its roots in diverse historical traditions, from the Weberian bureaucratic model to the Napoleonic centralized systems. Modern tendencies, particularly e-governance and participatory governance, mark a departure from traditional top-down, rule-bound practices. While digitalization facilitates efficiency, it also raises questions about data security and the digital divide. Participatory models, while democratizing, challenge the conventional balance of power in administrative structures.

The modern tendencies, especially when viewed through the lens of decentralization and cross-border collaboration, underscore a more integrated yet diverse European administrative landscape. While decentralization fosters local governance, the emphasis on cross-border collaboration hints at a deeper European integration. This duality – of local autonomy and collective European identity – will be pivotal in navigating challenges like migration, climate change, and regional disparities.

While the enumerated tendencies reflect the evolving ethos of public administration, they are not without critiques. E-governance, for instance, while transformative, raises concerns about data privacy, surveillance, and potential marginalization of non-digital natives. Similarly, while decentralization empowers local entities, it risks

fragmenting administrative practices and can sometimes lead to parochialism. Participatory governance, hailed for its inclusivity, can sometimes become a tokenistic exercise without genuine power devolution.

For nations contemplating the adoption or adaptation of these modern tendencies, several considerations emerge:

1. Digital Transition: While e-governance is promising, a phased approach, prioritizing digital infrastructure and literacy, is crucial. Safeguards must be instituted to protect citizen data and ensure digital equity.

2. Decentralization: A calibrated approach, balancing local autonomy with overarching national or supranational objectives, can mitigate the risks of extreme parochialism or administrative fragmentation.

3. Participatory Governance: Genuine engagement necessitates not just platforms for citizen inputs but also mechanisms to integrate these into policy-making. Training public servants in participatory methods can enhance the effectiveness of such endeavors.

In essence, the modern tendencies in public administration, while reflective of the contemporary European ethos, are nuanced and multi-dimensional. They offer immense potential for transformative governance but also warrant introspection, critique, and continuous refinement.

**Conclusions.** The exploration of modern tendencies in public administration within Europe and the influencing role of the European Union provides valuable insights into the evolving nature of governance in the region. As we culminate this discourse, several salient conclusions emerge that encapsulate the essence of contemporary administrative practices and their implications for the broader European administrative landscape.

The confluence of technology, participatory ethos, and the EU's guiding influence has ushered in a transformative era in public administration. E-governance and digitalization have revolutionized service delivery, bridging the gap between citizens and administrative bodies. However, they also introduce challenges related to data security and digital inclusivity. The principle of decentralization reaffirms the EU's commitment to subsidiarity, empowering local governance



structures while also presenting complexities in ensuring cohesive administrative practices. Meanwhile, participatory governance, with its emphasis on citizen engagement, heralds a democratized approach to policy-making, challenging traditional bureaucratic hierarchies. The European Union, through its directives, funding mechanisms, and strategic interventions, has indelibly influenced these tendencies, reinforcing certain practices while also steering nations towards newer paradigms.

The highlighted tendencies offer a rich tapestry for academic exploration, examining the interplay between historical antecedents, contemporary practices, and future trajectories. Practically, understanding these tendencies is pivotal for policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders to navigate the challenges and harness the opportunities they present. The interplay between national administrative traditions and EU-induced practices necessitates a nuanced understanding for effective policy formulation and implementation.

While this study provides a comprehensive overview of contemporary tendencies, it also underscores the need for continuous research. Future academic endeavors can delve deeper into the socio-political underpinnings of these tendencies, examining their manifestation across diverse European contexts. The role of technology in shaping administrative futures, especially in the wake of rapid advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning, merits in-depth exploration. Additionally, as the European Union evolves, understanding its shifting influence on member states' administrative practices will remain a topic of paramount significance.

In summation, European public administration, under the aegis of national impulses and EU directives, is at a transformative juncture. The outlined tendencies, while indicative of the present, also offer a lens to envision the future. As Europe strides into this future, its administrative practices, rooted in history yet looking forward, will continue to shape its governance narrative, with repercussions not just for the continent but for global administrative thought and practice.

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**Д. В. Лученко**

**Сучасні тенденції в публічному адмініструванні: поглиблений аналіз практик країн Європи та ЄС**

*Анотація. Ця стаття має на меті окреслити та проаналізувати сучасні тенденції, що формують державне управління в Європі, з особливим*

акцентом на впливову роль Європейського Союзу. Завдяки ретельному вивченню моделей електронного врядування, децентралізації та врядування за участі громадськості автором встановлені трансформаційні зрушення в адміністративних практиках. Директиви, механізми фінансування та стратегічні втручання Європейського Союзу розглядаються як ключові чинники формування цих тенденцій. Зіставляючи сучасні практики з історичними попередниками та розглядаючи майбутні траєкторії, стаття дає комплексне уявлення про динаміку розвитку європейського державного управління.

У цій статті здійснено комплексне дослідження сучасних тенденцій, що характеризують європейське державне управління. Електронне врядування та діджиталізація стали ключовими факторами, що революціонізували надання послуг, водночас викликаючи занепокоєння щодо безпеки даних та інклюзивності. Принцип децентралізації акцентує увагу на місцевому управлінні на тлі викликів, пов'язаних із забезпеченням узгоджених адміністративних практик у різних регіонах. Крім того, модель партисипативного врядування підкреслює демократичний підхід, кидаючи виклик традиційним бюрократичним ієрархіям і сприяючи формуванню політики, орієнтованої на громадян.

Відмічено, що Європейський Союз з його численними директивами, механізмами фінансування та стратегічними інтервенціями відіграв важливу роль у формуванні цих тенденцій, спрямовуючи країни через встановлені норми та нові парадигми. Хоча ці сучасні практики відображають систему сьогодення, вони також дають уявлення про майбутні траєкторії розвитку європейського державного управління, що вимагає безперервного академічного дослідження та практичного самоаналізу.

Еволюція державного управління в Європі характеризується складним ландшафтом трансформаційних практик управління, що відображають вплив технологічного прогресу, партисипативного духу та директив Європейського Союзу. В якості ключових, в роботі досліджено наступні тенденції: 1) електронне врядування та діджиталізація, що революціонізували надання послуг, але викликають занепокоєння щодо безпеки даних та інклюзивності; 2) принцип децентралізації, що акцентує увагу на місцевому управлінні на тлі викликів, пов'язаних із забезпеченням узгоджених адміністративних практик у різних регіонах; 3) модель партисипативного врядування, що підкреслює демократичний підхід, кидаючи виклик

*традиційним бюрократичним ієрархіям і сприяючи формуванню політики, орієнтованої на громадян.*

*Зазначено, що саме Європейський Союз відіграв важливу роль у формуванні цих тенденцій, спрямовуючи країни через встановлені норми та нові парадигми. Зроблено підсумок, що майбутні траєкторії розвитку європейського державного управління потребують безперервного академічного дослідження та практичного самоаналізу.*

**Ключові слова:** *електронне урядування, децентралізація, партисипативне урядування, Європейський Союз, публічне адміністрування, адміністративна трансформація.*