

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PUBLIC COUNCIL

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E-mail: tuychi_axmedov@mail.ru**Abstract**

In this article the role of consultative bodies in executive branch will be discussed. In Uzbekistan public councils are viewed as a assistive institute to the activities of executive branch. The functional responsibilities of public councils and its implementation appears to help this structure to increase the effectiveness of executive branch. Meanwhile, the role of public councils, such as, improving the relationship between people and the government, increasing productivity in organizations, helping to satisfy citizen's requests, and establishing effective public control, introducing useful proposals to improve sectors at the same time exerts positive influence on public councils.

Keywords: public councils, executive branch, assembly, law, decision-making, council, tax committee, expert groups.

Introduction

Advisory council bodies under executive authorities in CIS countries operate under the name "public councils." This concept became widespread in the last decade of the previous century. The public council performs several functions within the executive authority: it serves as a "bridge" between the state and the people, ensures that citizens' rights and freedoms are considered in the development of normative legal documents and decisions, exercises public oversight over the activities of the executive authority, and ensures the transparency of state bodies.

We can distinguish three main characteristics of the public council:

Firstly, the public council holds a special place as an advisory body. To understand its essence, we can consider the requirements set for the composition of the public council. The public council includes retired employees and experts from the state body. These individuals, who have extensive knowledge of the state body's area of expertise, work within the public council. Members of the public council, who are specialists in the field, participate in the development and implementation of socio-economic programs, normative legal documents, and other decisions, offering their suggestions.

Representatives of non-governmental non-profit organizations develop proposals based on public opinion. In our view, it is advisable for the state body to invite non-governmental non-profit organizations involved in activities related to the state body's field to join the public council. For example, if a ministry focused on environmental protection includes representatives from non-governmental organizations working in the field of ecology within the public council, it enhances mutual understanding regarding relevant programs and issues. This approach ensures that well-founded proposals are consistently submitted regarding the executive authority's activities.

The legislation of foreign countries concerning public councils indicates that the proposals of public councils are advisory in nature. The executive body selects the most appropriate proposals from among the many submitted. Even if only a few proposals are taken into account, it demonstrates the effectiveness of the public council's activities. It should also be noted that there is no clear line distinguishing effective consultations from ineffective ones. We believe that the criteria for ensuring the effectiveness of advice are more likely to be reflected in the consultation process itself. The greater the effectiveness, the more influence non-elite actors will have in shaping the agenda and implementing policies. Additionally, consultations between elite and non-elite actors are based on mutual cooperation [4]. In this sense, we suggest that the effectiveness of the public council's activities is related to the level of activity of the interested parties.

In many cases, stakeholders are better prepared and more experienced in collective consultation processes than officials. This increases the need for skills that are not traditionally present in public administration. Therefore, leaders are required to identify relevant stakeholder groups and their legitimate demands; develop communication opportunities such as focus groups and public meetings; resolve conflicts; and manage consultation processes and their outcomes [5; 188].

Secondly, part of the public council's activities is related to public oversight. In states where the social control model is in effect, public councils under executive authorities are inconceivable without the function of public oversight. Therefore, when elucidating the categorical content of the public council, we analyze its capabilities in organizing public oversight.

Legally, the public council is a structure empowered to exercise public oversight. In Uzbekistan, any citizens and self-governing bodies can conduct public oversight. Non-governmental non-profit organizations registered with the state and the mass media can also carry out public oversight. Public councils, commissions, and other structures in public form can establish public oversight in accordance with the legislation. Based on the functional responsibilities of public councils, they can conduct public oversight in compliance with normative legal documents. This is because public monitoring or public hearings, which are part of the public council's activities, are considered active forms of public oversight.

What processes related to the activities of state bodies are emphasized in public oversight? Firstly, the consideration of public interests and opinions in the normative legal documents and other programs being adopted; secondly, the enforcement of legislation related to the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of individuals and legal entities; thirdly, the extent to which the state body and its officials fulfill their socially significant duties related to the interests of society; and fourthly, public oversight is carried out over the implementation of agreements, projects, contracts, and programs signed as a result of social partnership between the state and civil society institutions [1].

Thirdly, one of the distinctive characteristics of public councils is their function of ensuring the transparency of state authority.

As an integral part of political modernization processes, increasing the transparency of executive authority activities is essential. In this regard, the policy of ensuring the transparency of executive authority also applies to councils. This is because providing public access to meetings of executive authorities, board meetings, and other councils, organizing open discussions, and increasing the transparency of the decision-making process are integral parts of the governance

process. Consequently, ensuring the transparency of executive authority activities also influences the effectiveness of councils. When transparency is ensured, council members' approach to the issues under discussion changes, each proposal is made from a public perspective, and opportunities are created for the public to become familiar with draft decisions.

The activity of citizens and society as a whole defines the democratic nature of the political system [6; 18]. As the Russian scholar M. Lukov rightly pointed out, the audience, that is, the people, becoming the "fifth power" is dependent on the media [7]. The media constantly engage in debates over the decisions of state bodies and prevent the development of documents that contradict the law and the interests of society. "Mass media, as well as other structures of mass communication, act as the main intermediaries in the system of expressing civil interests and have a decisive influence on government decision-making" [8; 226]. Therefore, the most effective means of conveying the public's attitude to the authorities is through the mass media.

Consultation increases the level of transparency and improves the quality of governance. It helps to express the knowledge, perspectives, and ideas of interested parties, balance conflicting interests among stakeholders, identify unforeseen consequences, and recognize practical problems. Using early warnings to foresee the consequences of some planned political decisions becomes one of the most effective ways to outline administrative concerns. It ensures a high-quality examination of the administrative assessment of costs and benefits and helps define interagency relations at different levels of government [3].

Public discussions organized by the public council are held transparently and openly. Information about public discussions is announced in advance through the mass media. The results of the discussions are also made public. All processes such as public monitoring, public expertise, and public hearings are conducted openly. The public council regularly posts information about its activities on the official websites of state bodies and in the mass media. It collaborates directly with the mass media within its authority. This is because the actions being implemented, the issues discussed at meetings, and the measures being developed are conveyed to the broader public.

The 35th President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, once emphasized the importance of open communication between the government and the people by stating: "No administration and no country can succeed without debate and criticism, and no republic can survive without them. That is why the Athenian lawmaker Solon considered any citizen who shrank from controversy to be a criminal. Our press was protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution, not primarily to amuse, entertain, or merely cater to public desire, but to inform, alert, reflect, state our dangers and opportunities, indicate our crises and choices, and to guide, shape, educate, and even sometimes anger public opinion" [2].

This approach never becomes outdated. Increasing public awareness awakens them, encourages reflection, and brings forth their ability to offer suggestions. If there is indifference toward information about the activities of state bodies, it is pointless to disclose such information to the public council. In conclusion, the public council emerged as one type of collegial body. Its formation is associated with the expansion of the functions of executive authority and the organization of effective public oversight. The public council was supported to ensure dialogue between state bodies and all citizens, to protect the interests of the population, and to ensure that citizens' legal rights and freedoms are considered in the decisions being made. Furthermore, it

was viewed as an effective mechanism for developing social partnership relations between civil society institutions and state organizations.

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