

Zealand, Estonia, the US, the UK) and efforts to move towards predictability and proactivity, moving away from reactivity, which ultimately saves money and, conversely, benefits a number of areas of the state. Its implementation will facilitate the transition to a service-oriented, people-centred state that is capable not only of supporting but also of unlocking the potential of its citizens.

Veronika DOVGA

*Student of the educational and scientific program
"Public Policy and Governance"*

**HOW TO VERIFY THE SINCERITY OF BELIEFS TO CONFIRM
THE RIGHT TO PERFORM ALTERNATIVE (NON-MILITARY)
SERVICE DURING WAR TIME IN UKRAINE**

This policy analysis examines the systemic failure to ensure access to alternative (non-military) service in Ukraine under martial law, identifying the absence of a legitimate mechanism to verify the sincerity of conscientious beliefs as the cornerstone of this problem. The client for the analysis is defined as the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience (DESS), the central executive body with the expertise to develop and coordinate a legally sound verification procedure. The ultimate decision-making authority for implementing the proposed policy rests with the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

The problem stems from a significant legal gap: while Article 35 of the Constitution of Ukraine guarantees the right to alternative service, the legislative framework for its implementation during mobilisation is absent. This has led to the de facto criminalisation of conscientious objection, with hundreds of citizens facing prosecution under Article 336 of the Criminal Code for draft evasion. This practice contradicts Ukraine's international obligations, particularly under Article 9 of the ECHR, as interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights, and under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The urgency of state intervention is underscored by the Supreme Court of Ukraine's jurisprudence, which places the burden of proving the sincerity of beliefs on the individual, and by the Venice Commission's March 2025 Amicus Curiae brief, which explicitly states that a fair and transparent verification mechanism is a positive obligation of the state, even during wartime. Thus, creating a reliable procedure for verifying sincerity is not merely a technical issue but a precondition for resolving the broader human rights and national security dilemma.

The analysis compares four policy options:

- 1) maintaining the status quo (de facto criminalisation);
- 2) adopting a new comprehensive law on alternative service;
- 3) mechanically extending the obsolete peacetime law to wartime conditions;
- 4) making targeted amendments to the current law with the subsequent adopting a detailed Temporary Procedure for Consideration of Applications for Alternative (non-military) Service during martial law.

The latter is recommended as the most balanced and feasible option. Unlike a new law, this approach is faster and politically more viable in the current context. Unlike a simple extension of the old law, it allows the creation of a specialised and secure mechanism tailored to the challenges of wartime.

To implement the recommended policy, it is proposed that DESS initiate the resumption of an inter-agency working group comprising the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defence, General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Ministry of Economy, Environment and Agriculture of Ukraine, Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity of Ukraine, and provide public consultation with experts and civil society representatives, including the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (UCCRO). The group's primary task will be to draft the Temporary Procedure. DESS, on its part, should be responsible for developing the draft of the part of the Temporary Procedure that specifies the procedure for verifying the sincerity of beliefs. The core of this Procedure should be the creation of independent, civilian-led regional commissions responsible for reviewing applications. This model is based on best practices from European states and the modern Armenian approach, and is designed to shift the verification process from the criminal justice system to an administrative one. The Procedure must detail the application process, evidentiary standards, and transparent criteria for assessing the sincerity of beliefs, based on consistency and the central role of the belief in a person's life, rather than on formal religious affiliation.

The expected results of implementing this policy are multifaceted. Primarily, it will establish legal certainty for citizens and state bodies, thereby creating a clear and predictable administrative path for exercising their constitutional rights. This will lead to a significant decline in criminal prosecutions against conscientious objectors, thereby reducing the burden on the justice system and rectifying a systemic human rights issue. Furthermore, the policy will enable the effective utilisation of human capital, redirecting citizens who cannot bear arms towards vital work in social, medical, and infrastructural recovery sectors, thereby contributing to the nation's resilience. The transparent and fair nature of the proposed mechanism is also expected to reduce social tension and strengthen trust between citizens and the state.

Addressing this problem is directly linked to Ukraine's international commitments. Implementing a fair verification procedure is a direct response to EU integration and aligns Ukraine's domestic legislation with its obligations. A proactive, step-by-step policy on alternative service will strengthen Ukraine's reputation as a state governed by the rule of law, demonstrating its commitment to democratic values and human rights even amid a full-scale war, which is crucial for its European integration process.

Taras DYSHLIUK

*Student of the educational and scientific program
"Public Policy and Governance"*

PECULIARITIES OF THE INTRODUCTION OF ELECTRONIC VOTING IN UKRAINE IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD

This policy analysis is devoted to analysing the specific features of implementing electronic voting in Ukraine in the post-war period. The problem is that, amid large-scale population displacement, infrastructure destruction, and persistently high security risks, Ukraine is not sufficiently prepared – in institutional, technological, or communication terms – for the safe and legitimate introduction of electronic voting. The client of the analysis is the Central Election Commission of Ukraine, which is interested in maintaining trust in the electoral process and ensuring that citizens can participate in elections in the post-war period.

The problem stems from war-related destruction, large-scale internal and external displacement, high cyber threats, a fragmented legal framework and low trust in public institutions. The traditional paper-based model does not adequately secure participation of internally displaced persons, citizens abroad and people with limited mobility. At the same time, there is no coherent state policy for gradual and secure introduction of electronic voting. Now, in the context of planning post-war recovery and European integration, the state needs a clear strategy in this area in order to prevent ad hoc decisions that could undermine the legitimacy of elections.

The paper considers three policy options:

- 1) maintaining the current policy of exclusively paper-based voting;
- 2) introducing a pilot electronic voting project in selected territorial communities in the post-war period;
- 3) introduce a hybrid voting model (paper + e-voting) at the national level.