

The Active Suffrage of Minors

Nataly Ortynska

Administrative and Information Law Department,
Lviv Polytechnic National University, UKRAINE, Lviv,
S. Bandery street 12, E-mail: natalius2008@ukr.net

Abstract – The questions on the possibility of reducing the age for the implementation of active suffrage till full age are considered. Arguments on the need to reduce the voting age for local elections and the referendum are shown. The arguments concerning the failure of a minor to independently implement the specified political right are rejected.

Key words – Minor, voting rights, elections.

I. Introduction

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in June 23, 2011 has appealed to member states, to consider the reducing the age, from which is allowed to vote in an election, to 16 years. The document, in particular, calls the EU member states to create the necessary conditions for the participation of young people in public life through education; to examine the possibility of reducing the minimum age, which is allowed to vote in elections, to 16 years; and to explore the possibility of the reducing the voting age to 16 years for the different elections: parliamentary, presidential, regional and local. Thus, according to the rapporteur on this issue will be an opportunity to "expand democracy and avoid the marginalization of young people in this process" [1].

II. The reducing of age limit to 16 years

Some countries are reducing the age limit to 16 years in local elections (Austria, some states of Germany, some states in the United States, Argentina, Hungary on condition of marriage and Slovenia on condition of employment) and referendums. In the summer 2015 the electoral Scotland Bill reduced the election age from 18 to 16 years. But minors were allowed to vote in a referendum on independence in Scotland in 2014. From now on teenagers have the right to vote in elections to the Scottish Parliament in 2016 and local elections. However, to vote in parliamentary elections and in elections to the European Parliament you must be 18 years [2].

In Britain has broken considerable debate about this. The organized youth movement "Vote at 16", that received significant support (72% of respondents). The initiators apply with the appeal: "it's right to include us in our society and show us the trust and respect that society expects from us, giving us the right to vote, the right to influence the key decisions that affect the lives and to ensure the represented youth questions" [3].

Last year, the lower house of Russian parliament considered the initiative to ensure the implementation of active electoral rights of citizens of the Russian Federation who have reached the age of 16 years. A subject of legislative initiative motivated the initiative by

the following argument: "more mobile generation" can choose authorities at all levels - from local councils to the president because the current rate of youth development is ahead of those who are 10 or 20 years older; the need to equalize the age of suffrage, the right to marry and to do business; this age of citizens could increase turnout at elections; create a real opportunity to participate in democratic electoral processes, and not radical, according to the designer, events that influence the authorities [4]. Although the bill did not receive support, though the precedent was created in the former Soviet space. In Ukraine, a similar petition to the President has not gained the required number of votes [5].

III. The debatable aspects of active suffrage possibility for persons from 16 years

Firstly, the minor has not formed social and legal position, thus cannot make decisions in the political sphere, so there is no social competence. Thus, L. Slinchenko believes that the latter describes such a state of political education of the citizen, his beliefs and motivation for action, which is sufficient to protect his rights and freedoms to meet the interests, to make common cause, enforce public order and security. Because a citizen - is not only the legal status of a person, but its essential characteristic, that provides a certain level of competence and civic participation in politics and public life. The defining features of civic competence are justice, political education, patriotism, morality, labor activity. Their formation can be implemented with the active participation of the state, its relevant bodies and institutions, society as a whole [6, p. 860-861].

We have carried out research concerning the views of minors. Thus 87% consider it necessary to reduce the age limit, so that they can take the necessary decisions. Also, 54% of respondents indicated that they are interested in politics. Also according to the minors, the question "If your political views or sympathy for the candidate were different from those of your family and the environment - would you vote for your favorite candidate or party, political position?" 92% of respondents have given a positive answer. In other words, the surveyed minors are confident that they will be able to implement active suffrage.

Secondly, this age group is prone to suggestion, is emotional, has a tendency to spontaneous decision making, so it can be an easy target for political manipulation. The latter should be understood as a suggestion in the guise of objective information, desired information to a group of persons, acting on the sensitive point of the human mind (fear, anxiety, and uncertainty) to implement relevant policy objectives. It's difficult to argue with this provision, because certainly minors have no sustainable political views. But perhaps for updating of the political elite, its circulation, activation of reforms and transformation processes - lack of stable positions is more positive factor than disadvantage.

Thirdly, the low political activity of minors. It is believed that young people are not interested in politics, so the majority of active electorate is an older age group. Russian scientists believe that particular level of education has a direct impact on the improvement of the electoral activity [7, p.112], it is provided statistics that 62% of young people had been never interested in politics. We believe that at the national perspective some adjustments to this position can be brought. The younger generation has always been progressive and driving force of political change. On voting then we define such thing. Juveniles have access to alternative, diverse sources of information compared to older generation, that most of the information is receiving from the central newspapers and television. During transitional democracy the recent may be biased in nature, as well as the older generation is more influential to the possible use of "administrative resources". The fact that young people do not actively vote is due not only to the political and legal nihilism, but the need to change the voting mechanism, the introduction of "electronic elections". Still returning to influence in political manipulation, we note that almost every person, regardless of age can become an object. Adult citizens in our country also often make their choice after which comes disappointment.

Juveniles tend to radical expression of their views. In the stable social development their social activity is due to the transitional status and access to social roles naturally associated with the process of growing up. During the social upheavals there is a change of the youth role. Marginality, transitivity, lack of rootedness in life leads them to activity, aggressiveness, emotional affective perception of reality, extremism and radicalism in thought and behavior. Juveniles and young people who cannot legitimately influence public authorities choose radical ways. We do not point out that this is the main cause of terrorism, but one of the reasons.

Conclusion

The modern globalized society determines the extension of political rights of minors. The primary component is the possibility of reducing the age of voters in local elections and the referendum to 16 years. This kind of proposal is put forward at the international level and is possible for the implementation in domestic legislation.

References

- [1] PARYE zaklykaye znyztyti vik dlya holosuvannya do 16 rokiv [PACE calls for lower voting age to 16 years] Available at: <http://eunews.unian.ua/510880>
- [2] Mistsevi vybory u svitu: holosuyut' inozemtsi ta ti, komu 16 [Local elections in the world: vote, foreigners and those who 16] Available at: rada.oporaua.org/analitika/
- [3] Molodizhnyy rukh «Holosuvaty u 16» [Youth movement "Vote 16] Available at: <http://www.votesat16.org/about/>
- [4] Novyny. Novyy rehion [News. New Region] Available at: http://nr2.com.ua/News/politics_and_society
- [5] Elektronni petytsiyi. Ofitsiyne internet-predstavnytstvo Prezydenta Ukrayiny [Electronic petition. The official website of the President of Ukraine] Available at: <https://petition.president.gov.ua/petition/22671>
- [6] Slinchenko L. V. Derzhavna polityka formuvannya hromadyans'koyi kompetentnosti v konteksti intehratsiyi Ukrayiny u yevropeys'kyy osvitniy prostir [Public policy development of civic competencies in the context of Ukraine's integration into the European educational space] - Hileya. Istorychni nauky. Filosofov'ki nauky. Politychni nauky, 2013, Vol. 72 (5), pp. 856—861.
- [7] Gudana Ju. V. Aktivnost' rossijskih izbiratelej : teoreticheskie modeli i praktika [Russian voters' Activity: Theoretical Models and Practices]– Polis, 2009, Vol. 1. – p. 112.