

THE INSTITUTIONAL COMPONENT IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TOTAL TRADE TURNOVER BETWEEN UKRAINE AND THE CZECH AND SLOVAK REPUBLICS

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Abstract. *An efficient public administration system is a key prerequisite for democratic governance. The development of international trade proceeds with the active participation of a state in general and its institutional and legal components in particular. The role of state institutions in the formation of international trade flows, using public administration mechanisms, and trying to combine either national or international interests is vitally important. In this article, an attempt is made to assess the effectiveness of public administration institutions in the sphere of international trade through a comparative analysis of the total turnover of trade between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics. The time frame under analysis is the 16-year period from 2004 to 2019. Data were collected from the official publications of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine. Comparative analysis between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics was conducted on the following: total trade turnover; differences in the amount of total trade turnover between these countries on a yearly basis; the five highest values of said trade turnover; descriptive statistics; distribution normality; and the structure of exported and imported goods. The research presented in this article can be used by public administration bodies, politicians and decision-makers, large and small companies involved in international trade, EU international trade bodies, and both beginners and specialists in statistics and data analysis.*

Keywords: *public administration, international trade, comparative analysis, total trade turnover.*

Reikšminiai žodžiai: *viešasis administravimas, tarptautinė prekyba, lyginamoji analizė, visos prekybos apyvarta.*

JEL Classification: C10, F13, H83

Introduction

An efficient public administration system is a key prerequisite for democratic governance based on the principles of the rule of law (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 2020). Public administration performance directly impacts the standard of life, the ease of doing business, GDP, and other economic figures (Reforms Delivery Office 2020). The quality of its institutions, both governmental and judicial, is a key determining factor for a country's well-being. Public authorities must be able to adjust to dynamic and often disruptive changes in the economy and society. The ability to reflect the needs of today while anticipating those of tomorrow by remaining agile enough to adapt have to become permanent features of the public sector. Most of all, administrations must build on a solid foundation: ethical, efficient, effective, and accountable (European Commission 2015). In addition, good public administration should be marked by the rational use of financial and human resources, the creation of conditions for people's self-realization, and the transformation of the state into an attractive and effective employer (Reforms Delivery Office 2020). In case either public administration institutions or the legislative framework do not meet these criteria, either part of said public administration system or, at least, some of its parts should be reformed to be able to provide citizens with the best possible civil services at the highest level of efficiency.

At present, the development of international trade occurs with the active participation of the state in general and its institutional and legal components in particular. The role of state institutions in the formation of international trade flows, using public administration mechanisms, and trying to combine either national or international interests cannot be overestimated. Much is discussed about the importance of effective public administration, but it is rather difficult to assess this effectiveness directly. Every researcher working in this field proposes their own set of indicators to measure the effectiveness of public administration in any given sphere of activity, but in reality none can directly determine the level of effectiveness of public administration. The purpose of this article is to assess the effectiveness of public administration institutions in the sphere of international trade through a comparative analysis of total turnover of trade between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics. The scientific hypothesis of the research conducted in this paper is that the more effective public administration institutions work in general, and in the sphere of international trade in particular, the better practical results are observed in said sphere, and the larger the total turnover of international trade is. The specific research questions answered in this article are presented and discussed in the following section.

Material and Methods

To follow the purpose of this research as well as answer its research questions, the institutional component of the public administration of international trade was analyzed in the countries under study. This was then continued with a comparative analysis of the total turnover of trade between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics, using a line graph for better visualization purposes. The analysis of the differences in the amount of total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics on a year-by-year basis followed afterwards with the use of bar charts. The research then proceeded with a comparative analysis of the five highest values of total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics, with the help of tabulation. Such issues of the descriptive statistics as the measures of location and variability of the variables under research were then compared. Preliminary conclusions about the normality of the data distributions under research were drawn based on the results of descriptive statistics analysis

as well as boxplots. The structures of the goods exported from Ukraine into the Czech and Slovak Republics and vice versa were compared with the help of pie charts and tabulation. The data under research were taken from the official publications of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, and the time frame under analysis is the 16-year period from 2004 to 2019.

Results and Discussion

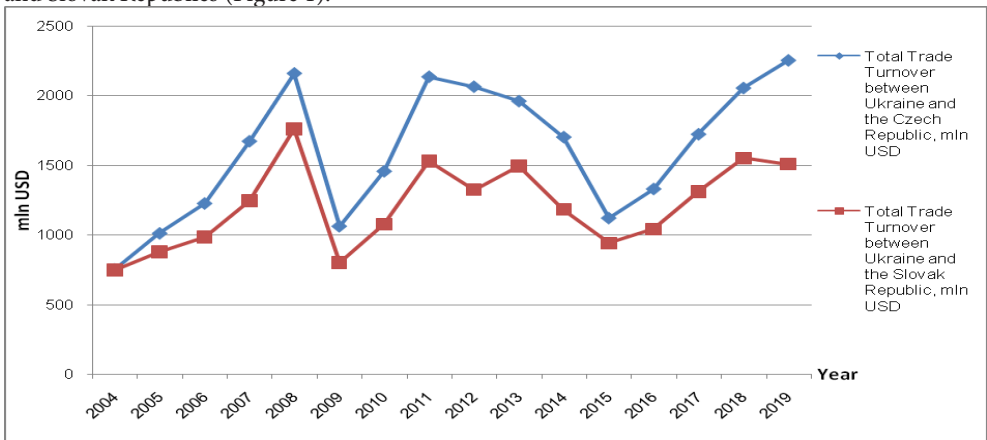
The institutional component of public administration is the set of state administration bodies, local governments, private sector representatives, and civil society institutions acting in the formation and implementation of public management decisions of public importance, state development policy, and its administrative-territorial units (based on Kuybida et al. 2018). As it would be too overwhelming to analyze the institutional component of all of the subjects of the public administration of international trade, here emphasis will be placed on the state administration bodies accountable for international trade in Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics. To give readers a general overview of the context of this research, it should be remembered that Ukraine is a country in Eastern Europe – the second-largest in Europe, after Russia. Ukraine's economy is based on a multi-sectoral model of industry, agriculture, and services (Nations Online, n.d.). All issues connected with international trade fall within the competence of the Ministry for Development of Economy, Trade, and Agriculture of Ukraine (2020). The competences of the Ministry for Development of Economy, Trade, and Agriculture of Ukraine include (among others): 1) Ukraine-EU economic cooperation; 2) Ukraine and the WTO; 3) trade protection; 4) trade development; 5) foreign economic activity; and 6) export development. The public administration of international trade in Ukraine, in terms of its institutional structure, is also represented by the Department for International Economic, Trade, and Agricultural Cooperation of the Ministry for Development of Economy, Trade, and Agriculture of Ukraine. A further institution that concerns international trade in Ukraine is the Export Promotion Office of Ukraine, a state institution which was established in 2018 under the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine (Export Promotion Office of Ukraine 2019).

The Czech Republic is a medium-sized, open economy with 78% of its GDP based on exports, mostly from the automotive and engineering industries (U.S. Department of State 2020a). The Czech economy continues to grow on the back of strong fundamentals: strong domestic demand, sustained job creation, and growing tax revenues and exports (Santander 2020). All issues connected with international trade fall within the competence of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic. The Ministry of Industry and Trade is a central government administration body responsible for commodity exchange, except those issues which concern the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Industry and Trade (among other competences): 1) coordinates the foreign trade policy of the Czech Republic in relation to individual states; 2) concludes bilateral and multilateral business and economic contracts including commodity contracts; 3) executes commercial and economic cooperation with EC, EFTA, OECD, WTO, and other international organizations and integration groups; and 4) controls and administers activities associated with license regime application within the sphere of economic relations abroad, investigates the dumping of double-use imported products, and takes measures to protect against the import of such products (Ministry of Industry and Trade 2016).

The Slovak Republic is a small, open, export-oriented economy, with a population of 5.5 million. Slovakia is an attractive destination for foreign direct investment (FDI), with a favorable geographic location in the heart of Europe and an investment-friendly regulatory environment

(U.S. Department of State 2020b). Slovakia's strong industrial tradition, tax incentives, inexpensive and skilled workforce, rapidly developing infrastructure (boosted by an influx of EU funds), and fragile but real growth make the country a preferred base for trade (*Société Générale* 2020). All issues connected with international trade fall within the competence of the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic. The Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic is a central body of state administration of the Slovak Republic, responsible for (among other competences): domestic trade; foreign trade, including trade with military material and the creation external commercial policy; consumer protection, with the exception of consumer protection relating to return financial services; and coordination policy relating to the internal market of the European Union (Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic 2020).

It is rather difficult to assess the effectiveness of the public administration of any economic sphere in general, and of international trade in particular, directly. Instead, one can analyze the effectiveness of said administration indirectly; that is, through the assessment of the results of administrative activity by comparing the total turnover of trade between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics (Figure 1).

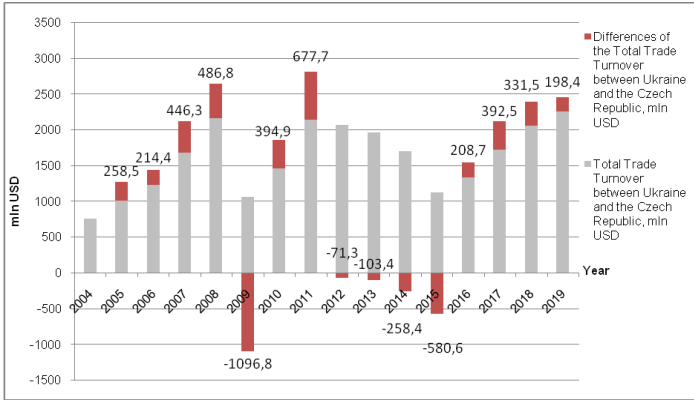


Source: author's own elaboration on the basis of data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (n.d.).

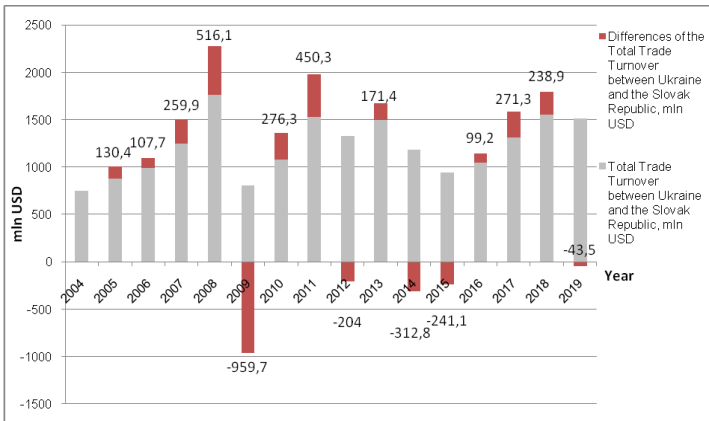
Figure 1. Total turnover of trade between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics, million USD

The general overview of the dynamics of these two relationships is very much alike; that is, they both display an upward tendency from 2004 to 2008, after which we see a sharp decrease in 2009 with the next increase in trade amount continuing until 2011. Then we see the first difference between these two trade dynamics: the downward trend in total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech Republic lasted continuously until 2015, while trade between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic decreased in 2012 but increased in 2013, before continuing its downward direction until 2015. After 2015, total trade turnover between Ukraine and both the Czech and Slovak Republics exhibits upward dynamics until 2018, after which we see another divergence: the Czech Republic continues its upward direction until the end of the time frame under analysis, while the Slovak Republic decreases in 2019. It should also be noted that overall total trade turn-

over between Ukraine and the Czech Republic is larger than with the Slovak Republic. Detailed analysis of the year-on-year differences in the total amount of trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics can be found in Figure 2.



The Czech Republic



The Slovak Republic

Source: author's own elaboration on the basis of data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (n.d.).

Figure 2. Year-on-year differences in total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics, million USD

The amount of total trade turnover between Ukraine and both the Czech and Slovak Republics can be divided into four periods, but the borders of said periods differ. The first period, an upward trend, begins in 2004 and lasts until 2008 in both cases. The second period, another upward trend, lasts from 2009 until 2011, again in both cases. The third period of total trade turnover dynamics between Ukraine and the Czech Republic, a downward trend, lasts from 2012 until 2015. The third period of said dynamics between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic also lasts from 2012 until 2015, but excludes 2013 because of the increase in trade amount observed in this year.

It should also be added that the largest increase in the amount of total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech Republic can be observed in 2011, while between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic this is found in 2008. The most significant decrease in the amount of total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics can be seen in 2009 in both cases. To further analyze the data under research, it is necessary to consider the five highest observations of the variables under analysis.

Table 1. The five highest values of total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics, million USD

Highest observations					
Czechia			Slovakia		
Value	Year	Observation	Value	Year	Observation
2052.6	2018	15	1497.3	2013	10
2062.3	2012	9	1509.3	2019	16
2133.6	2011	8	1529.9	2011	8
2157.8	2008	5	1552.8	2018	15
2251.0	2019	16	1763.0	2008	5

Source: author's own elaboration on the basis of data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (n.d.).

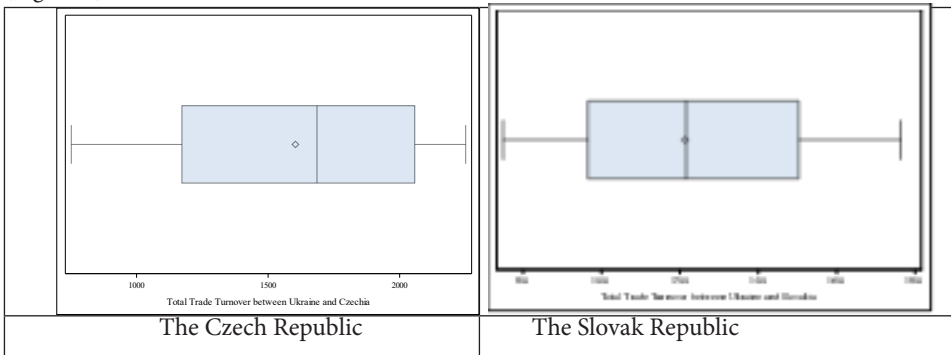
The years in which the highest values of total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics can be observed, as well as their sequence, are different. The only exception to this statement is 2011, in which we observe the third largest value of total trade turnover in both countries. The largest amount of total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech Republic was in 2019, while between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic this took place in 2008. The role of statistical analysis in the assessment of international trade data is extremely important, so it is pertinent to compare the basic statistical measures of the variables of total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics.

Table 2. Basic statistical measures of total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics

Basic statistical measures					
Location			Variability		
	Czechia	Slovakia		Czechia	Slovakia
Mean	1603.813	1212.975	Std deviation	477.50052	302.99494
Median	1685.750	1215.700	Variance	228007	91806
Mode	.	.	Range	1499	1014
			Interquartile range	885.15000	538.10000

Source: author's own elaboration on the basis of data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (n.d.).

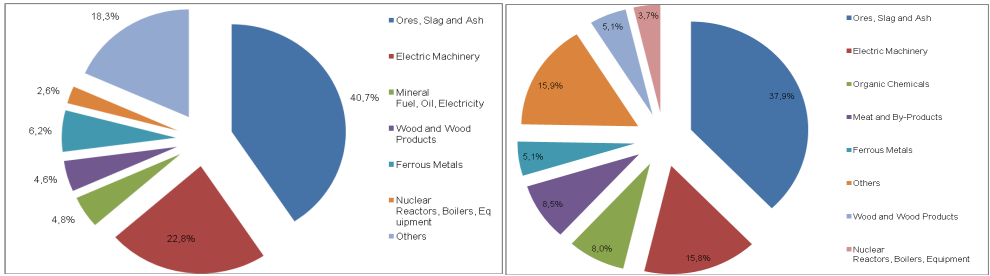
As can be seen from Table 2, the mean total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech Republic is around 400 million USD larger than between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic. The difference between the medians of said variables is even larger – around 470 million USD. This testifies to the fact that total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech Republic is larger and therefore more intensive than between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic. The difference between the highest and lowest values of the variable of total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech Republic is 50% higher than between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic. The range of the middle half of the distribution of total trade turnover data between Ukraine and the Czech Republic is around 65% larger than between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic. The average distance from the mean total trade turnover data between Ukraine and the Czech Republic is around 58% larger than between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic. The average of squared distances from the mean total trade turnover data between Ukraine and the Czech Republic is around 148% larger than between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic. Boxplots are used to visualize this data analysis and to further analyze the data sets of total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics (Figure 3).



Source: author's own elaboration on the basis of data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (n.d.).

Figure 3. Box plots for the values of total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics

The main similarity in both data distributions under analysis is that there are no outliers. According to the boxplots, the data set of the total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech Republic cannot be called normally distributed as the mean and median have different values and are situated far apart from each other. The left whisker is longer than the right, which is further proof of the non-normality of the data set, meaning the data set is left-skewed. A completely different situation is observed in the boxplot of the data set of the total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic: the mean and median of said data set are very similar, and are practically at the same point in the boxplot. This alone is a good indicator that the data is normally distributed, but the longer right whisker of the boxplot testifies to the opposite, suggesting that the data are right-skewed and thus not normally distributed. To continue the research, it is necessary to compare the breakdown of commodities in total trade turnover between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics. The goods that are exported from Ukraine into the Czech and Slovak Republics and the share of total turnover of trade in goods that they represent are outlined in Figure 4.



The Czech Republic

The Slovak Republic

Source: author’s own elaboration on the basis of data from the Embassies of Ukraine in the Czech and Slovak Republics (2020).

Figure 4. The structure of goods exports from Ukraine into the Czech and Slovak Republics in 2019, %

The goods exported from Ukraine to the Czech Republic can be divided into three groups: goods that exceed 22% of total goods exports; goods that comprise 2–5% of total goods exports; and goods that comprise less than 2% of total goods exports, or “others.”

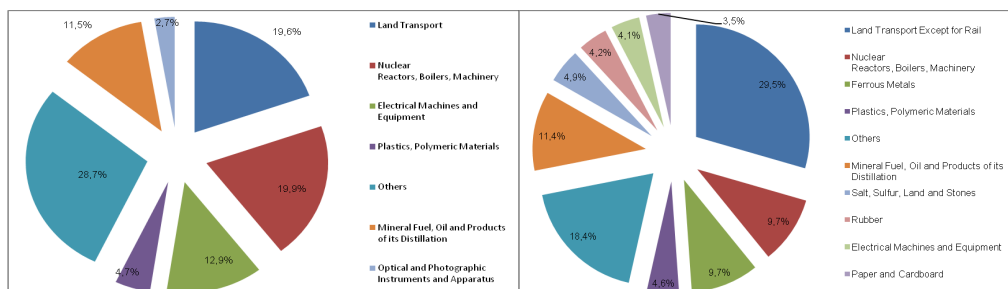
The goods exported from Ukraine to the Slovak Republic can be divided into the following three groups: goods that exceed 15% of total goods exports; goods that comprise 3–9% of total goods exports; and goods that comprise less than 3% of total goods exports, or “others.” The three goods items most commonly exported from Ukraine to the Czech and Slovak Republics are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Most commonly exported goods from Ukraine into the Czech and Slovak Republics in 2019

Most commonly exported goods from Ukraine			
into the Czech Republic		into the Slovak Republic	
Ores, slag, and ash	40.7%	Ores, slag, and ash	37.9%
Electric machinery	22.8%	Electric machinery	15.8%
Ferrous metals	6.2%	Meat and by-products	8.5%

Source: author’s own elaboration on the basis of data from the Embassies of Ukraine in the Czech (2020) and Slovak Republics (2020).

The first two places in total trade in the amount of goods exported from Ukraine into the Czech and Slovak Republics are occupied by the same items in the same sequence in both cases – the only difference is with the goods items in third place. Meat and by-products is the only agricultural production item, and represents a significant share in goods exports from Ukraine into both the Czech and Slovak Republics – an interesting fact worthy of further research in itself. The goods imported into Ukraine from the Czech and Slovak Republics and their share of total trade in goods turnover is presented in Figure 5.



The Czech Republic

The Slovak Republic

Source: author's own elaboration on the basis of data from the Embassies of Ukraine in the Czech (2020) and Slovak Republics (2020)

Figure 5. The structure of goods imports into Ukraine from the Czech and Slovak Republics in 2019, %

The structure of the goods imported into Ukraine from the Czech Republic can also be subdivided into three groups, as in the case with the goods exports: goods that exceed 11% of total goods imports; goods that comprise 2–5% of total goods imports; and goods that comprise less than 2% of total goods imports, or “others.” The structure of the goods imported into Ukraine from the Slovak Republic looks rather similar to that of imports from the Czech Republic. The goods imported into Ukraine from the Slovak Republic can be also subdivided into three groups: goods that exceed 11% of total goods imports; goods that comprise 3–10% of total goods imports; and goods that comprise less than 3% of total goods imports, or “others.” To better understand the most popular goods imports into Ukraine from the Czech and Slovak Republics, this analysis continues with the presentation of the three goods items most commonly imported into Ukraine from the Czech and the Slovak Republics.

Table 4. The goods most commonly imported into Ukraine from the Czech and Slovak Republics in 2019

The most commonly imported goods into Ukraine			
from the Czech Republic		from the Slovak Republic	
Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery	19.9%	Land transport except for rail	29.5%
Land transport	19.6%	Mineral fuel, oil, and products of its distillation	11.4%
Electrical machines and equipment	12.9%	a) Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery	9.7%
		b) Ferrous metals	9.7%

Source: author's own elaboration on the basis of data from the Embassies of Ukraine in the Czech (2020) and Slovak Republics (2020).

Comparing the goods most commonly imported into Ukraine from the Czech and the Slovak Republics, it can be observed that two goods items are present in both cases, but that their shares in the total goods imports, and hence the places that they occupy in the rankings, differ. The other three goods items are present only in the list of goods imported into Ukraine from one

of these countries. One observation which might warrant further research is that there are no agricultural products in the list of goods imported into Ukraine from either the Czech or Slovak Republics, or at least not among those goods with a significant share in total goods imports.

Conclusions

1. A well-functioning public administration is a prerequisite for transparent and effective democratic governance (Sigma 2014). The institutional component for the public administration of international trade in Ukraine is represented by the Ministry for Development of Economy, Trade, and Agriculture of Ukraine, having in its structure the Department for International Economic, Trade, and Agricultural Cooperation. There is also the Export Promotion Office of Ukraine, a state institution which works independently. In the Czech Republic, all issues connected with international trade fall within the competence of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic, while in Slovakia, international trade issues fall to the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic.

2. The general dynamics of the total trade turnover of Ukraine with the Czech and Slovak Republics look largely similar, with two key differences in the years 2013 and 2019. The dynamics of total turnover of trade between Ukraine and both the Czech and Slovak Republics can be divided into four periods, but the borders of these periods differ. The largest amount of total turnover of trade between Ukraine and the Czech Republic was in 2019, while between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic this took place in 2008. The lowest values of total turnover of trade between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Republics were observed in 2004 in both cases.

3. According to descriptive statistics analysis of the values of total trade turnover between said countries, the differences between the measures of location of these data sets are around 25%, with an advantage on the Czech side. The differences between the measures of variability of the data sets under research are approximately 50% to 65%, with an advantage for the Czech Republic. The data set of the total turnover of trade between Ukraine and the Czech Republic is not normally distributed and left-skewed, while trade between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic cannot be called either normally or non-normally distributed as there are indicators of both.

4. As for the structure of the goods exported from Ukraine into the Czech and Slovak Republics, the first two places in terms of the most commonly exported goods are occupied by similar goods items in a similar sequence in both cases. The goods most commonly imported into Ukraine from the Czech and Slovak Republics include two goods items that are present in both cases, but because of their shares in total goods imports the places that they occupy differ.

5. Public administration institutions managing international trade work better in the case of Ukraine and the Czech Republic than in the case of Ukraine and the Slovak Republic. It cannot be said that the public administration institutions of only one country should be praised or blamed for the total amount of trade turnover between two countries. Rather, common readiness for cooperation and effectiveness in the work of public administration bodies should increase to help these countries to overcome modern challenges, as will surely be the case in future. Effective public administration in general, and in managing international trade issues in particular, is especially important for Ukraine. Progress in this area can help the country to increase its total trade turnover, enhance its status as a European or global trading partner, derive economic or political advantages from this enhanced status, and ultimately strengthen its geo-economic and geopolitical situation.

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Tarptautinės prekybos viešojo administravimo institucinis komponentas: bendros Ukrainos prekybos su Čekijos ir Slovakijos respublikomis apyvartos lyginamoji analizė

Oksana Kiforenko

Gerai veikiantis viešasis administravimas yra būtina skaidraus ir veiksmingo demokratinio valdymo sąlyga. Visos trys tiriamos šalys negali būti vadinamos „tobulomis“ viešojo administravimo sistemos funkcionavimo požiūriu. Ukraina per pastaruosius šešerius metus patyrė aštrių politinių, saugumo ir ekonominių iššūkių, kurie turėjo įtakos visoms šalies funkcionavimo sferoms. Čekijos Respublika susiduria su iššūkiais, susijusiais su bendru nepasitikėjimu ar mažu pasitikėjimu Čekijos valdžios institucijomis / administracija. Tai vyksta dėl įvairių priežasčių. Slovakijoje viešasis sektorius atsilieka e. valdžios ir e. viešųjų pirkimų taikymo srityse, nepakankamai nustato išlaidų prioritetus, kenčia nuo biudžeto susiskaidymo, ministerijų veiklos koordinavimo stokos ir korupcijos. Instituciniam tarptautinės prekybos viešojo administravimo komponentui tiriamose šalyse atstovauja Ukrainos ekonomikos, prekybos ir žemės ūkio plėtros ministerija, Čekijos Respublikos pramonės ir prekybos ministerija bei Slovakijos Respublikos ūkio ministerija. Bendros prekybos apyvartos tarp Ukrainos ir Čekijos bei Slovakijos dydžiai gali būti skirstomi į keturis laikotarpius, tačiau šių laikotarpių ribos skiriasi. Didžiausia bendros prekybos apyvarta – tarp Ukrainos ir Čekijos bei tarp Ukrainos ir Slovakijos – stebima skirtingais metais, o mažiausia – tais pačiais metais. Ukrainos ir Čekijos bendros prekybos apyvartos duomenys yra iš dalies iškreipti, o Ukrainos ir Slovakijos Respublikos prekybos apyvartos duomenys labai sunkiai palyginami. Pirmąsias dvi vietas pagal dalis bendroje prekių apyvartoje užima panašios prekės, abiem atvejais jos pateiktos panašia seka. Darytina išvada, kad tarptautinę prekybą kuruojančios viešojo administravimo institucijos Ukrainos ir Čekijos atveju veikia geriau nei Ukrainos ir Slovakijos Respublikos atveju.

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