

# **Institutional Resilience of Public Governance under Conditions of Sustainable Development**

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*Abstract:* Intensification of globalization processes, social-political and financial and economic instability, the desire of Eastern European countries to integrate into the European Union raise the issue of sustainable development, in which public governance is of great importance. Ensuring effective and sustainable public governance is one of the priority areas of sustainable development of the state. The purpose of the research lies in substantiating the theoretical and applied principles of studying the institutional resilience of public governance and assessing the impact of public governance on ensuring sustainable development. General and special methods of economic analysis have been used in the research, in particular as follows: analysis and synthesis, comparisons and analogies, generalization and systematization, grouping and cluster analysis based on the use of k-means method, and graphical method. The results of studying the impact of public governance stability on sustainable development have revealed that the institutional resilience of public governance significantly affects sustainable development. Exploring the impact of the institutional resilience of public governance on ensuring sustainable development of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, three groups of countries have been identified that have common features of public governance and sustainable development, namely: countries with a relatively high level of institutional resilience of public governance and sustainable development (Hungary (GSDGI: 75,00 - 78,78), Poland (GSDGI: 73,70 - 80,22), the Czech Republic (GSDGI: 78,70 - 81,39), Slovakia (GSDGI: 75,60 - 79,57), in which the basic principles of institutional resilience of public governance and sustainable development are implemented at a sufficiently high level; countries with a moderate (intermediate) level of institutional resilience of public governance and sustainable development (Moldova (GSDGI: 73,68 - 74,50), Ukraine (GSDGI: 72,30 - 75,51), Belarus (GSDGI: 76,00 - 78,82), which make significant efforts to ensure an effective system of public governance and sustainable development indicators; countries with a low level of institutional resilience of public governance and sustainable development (Azerbaijan (GSDGI: 70,50 - 73,68), Armenia (GSDGI: 68,80 - 71,79), Georgia (GSDGI: 68,90 - 72,23), in which significant destabilizing factors are revealed to ensure the institutional resilience of public governance and sustainable development.

*Key-Words:* resilience, public governance, sustainable development, Global Sustainable Development Index, Integrated Public Governance Indicator.

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## 1 Introduction

The challenges of globalization and European integration necessitate effective counteraction to the risks, threats and dangers of the external and internal environment, increasing the importance of public governance. Ensuring sustainable development in such conditions is considered as an indicator of improving standards and quality of life in the strategic perspective. In this context, the problem of the role of state structures, local governments and non-governmental organizations in the system of management decisions is relevant. After all, effective balancing of economic, social and environmental systems is not possible without practical public governance. At the present stage, the necessity arises to meet the mechanisms of the public governance system to the requirements of institutional resilience, which is seen as a property to resist destabilizing factors, to maintain its own order of organization and functioning. It should be noted that in the context of globalization, countries with different types of political regimes and, accordingly, with different stability of public governance functionate in parallel: from developed democracy to authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Therefore, public governance in these countries is also characterized by different features and methods of implementation.

## 2 Literature Review

The necessity to develop and deepen the publicity of the system of exercising power on the basis of combining public governance with local self-government and public involvement is due to the need to implement public policy in all spheres of economy and society. Public governance is considered as an activity aimed at ensuring the effective functioning of public authorities and local self-government, providing for the possibility of wide participation of various stakeholders in the formation and implementation of public policy. The system of studying the activities of civil servants, politicians and procedures of public authorities of Pollitt & Bouckaert (2017) is interpreted as public governance. At the same time, Bouckaert (2002) considers public governance activities the ones that are closely related to politics, law and civil society.

Along with this, Caldato et al. (2020) suggest understanding the concept of resilience of public governance, which is associated with ensuring sustainable development, while emphasizing that public governance should take into account the social dimension, and decision makers, accordingly, should comply with certain established standards. Institutional resilience of public governance involves ensuring the proper functioning of the system of public authorities and local self-government, security and safety of the society and their ability to withstand the challenges and threats of internal and external environment.

Spangenberg (2002) emphasizes the necessity to explore the institutional dimension of sustainable development in terms of such components as institutions, mechanisms and orientations, and evaluate the effectiveness of public governance based on determining the relationship of progress to the goals set. In addition, the scholar argues that political institutions use the rules of political decision-making from the standpoint of both social subjects in political processes and subjects of the rule system of political behaviour.

The idea of sustainable development of public governance is substantiated at a high level by Bartle & Leunenberger (2006), who consider sustainable development to be an important fresh angle at public policy and public governance, the essence of the concept of which lies in predicting the possible consequences of current behaviour.

Lavrus (2021) pays considerable attention to the issue of ensuring the institutional resilience of public governance; he believes that countries of a democratic type have more sustainable public governance than countries of other types.

At the same time, Al-Atti (2018) substantiates the viewpoint according to which there is a fairly high level of development of civil society in democratic countries, and state power turns into public governance, and it is significantly dependent on the society.

Saburova (2021) sees the essence of public governance in the management of people in the system of democracy development and on the basis of the consciousness of a progressive civil society. Concurrently, the scientist distinguishes two types of public governance, namely: (1) indirect - the activities of executive authorities at all levels and (2) direct - the activities of legislative authorities

and local self-government, highlighting elements of public governance and the activities of non-governmental organizations, as well as business structures.

The 2021 World Public Sector Report “National Institutional Arrangements for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: A Five-Year Stocktaking: 2021” recognizes that national institutions are crucial in the system of sustainable development, and strengthening the resilience of public governance in the context of globalization and intensifying the COVID-19 pandemic contributes to inclusive policy responses to challenges and threats. At the same time, the premium is placed on measuring the institutional resilience of public governance in the context of sustainable development, namely, on the institutional mechanisms of public governance, determining its strengths and weaknesses and effectiveness, as well as assessing the ability of public authorities to ensure sustainable development.

In this context, the assessment of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals proclaimed by the UN General Assembly (United Nations General Assembly, 2015), gains newfound relevance, in particular those, relating to various governance structures, taking into account their national realities, capabilities, the level of development of the country, the effectiveness of state policy and defined priorities. It should be noted that it is supposed to fulfil eleven principles for the consistent and effective achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, which apply to all government institutions, including the management of legislative and executive bodies, the security and defence sector, constitutional bodies and state corporations. Along with this, efficiency, transparency, accountability of public administration entities, crackdown on corruption, inclusive management decision-making, free access to information and counteraction to discrimination of laws and policies is also expected to be achieved.

Meuleman (2021) insists that the coherence of the quality of public governance with the goals of sustainable development is of great importance for the formation and implementation of strategic policy. At the same time, the scholar proves that a quick response and resistance to crisis influences significantly depends on the effectiveness of public governance and cooperation between public authorities and the society.

A similar viewpoint is shared by Bornemann & Christen (2018), who argue that the institutional resilience of public governance is interrelated with

the management of sustainable development. The scientists confirm this standpoint by their investigations on the public governance system, which is characterized by four types of sustainable development management, and focus on identifying practical mechanisms for managing institutional resilience.

The viewpoint that the institutional resilience of public governance is aimed at ensuring sustainable development is supported by Zeijl-Rozema et al. (2008). The scholars insist on the necessity and importance of measuring the effectiveness of public governance and creating a methodological framework for conducting an empirical analysis of resilience of public governance in the context of sustainable development. The standpoint of Fiorino (2010) on determining the focus of public governance in terms of sustainable development is characterized by absolute similarity. Along with this, Lubell & Morrison (2021) argue that sustainable development requires an appropriate level of social cooperation based on the implementation of the principles of public governance, and institutional resilience in their understanding is interpreted as a tool for public participation in sustainable development management.

Concurrently, Pomaza-Ponomarenko et al. (2021) emphasize the difficulties of assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the institutional resilience of public governance and convince that the achievement of a positive effect depends on the optimal choice of criteria, tools and methodology for conducting assessments, which has not been clearly defined and regulated yet. Moreover, Shumska & Melnyk (2021) focus on the need for a large-scale, rapid and timely update of the content of public governance based on innovative development when conducting research in the field of sustainable development.

Exploring the problems of public governance, Parkhomenko-Kutsevil (2020) pays considerable attention to the issue of information protection in the public governance system. The scholar believes that information openness of public governance authorities is one of the tools to combat corruption in the political sphere, which is manifested through the formation of mechanisms to provide information to public governance bodies in order to establish their dialogue with the public and society and form effective management decisions.

### 3 Research Goals

The purpose of the research lies in substantiating the theoretical and applied principles of studying the institutional resilience of public governance and assessing the impact of public governance on ensuring sustainable development.

#### 4 Materials and Methods

A variety of general and special methods of economic analysis have been used in the research, in particular as follows: analysis and synthesis in order to determine the essence of the institutional resilience of public governance and sustainable development; comparisons and analogies for conducting analytical assessments of the state and trends of institutional resilience of public governance and determining its impact on sustainable development of the country; generalization and systematization in order to formulate hypotheses and conclusions, as well as to summarize the results of the research; grouping a cluster analysis based on the use of k-means method for grouping Central and Eastern European countries according to the Global Sustainable Development Index (Global SDG Index), the integrated indicator of public governance (Governance Research Indicator Country Snapshot (GRICS), Disinformation Resilience Index; graphical method for visual display of research results.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe (10 countries: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Ukraine, the Czech Republic) have been selected for conducting the research.

The information base of the research is based on the reports for 2018-2021, namely: Sustainable Development Report 2018-2021 according to the Global SDG Index; Worldwide Governance Indicators according to the Governance Research Indicator Country Snapshot (GRICS); Disinformation Resilience Index in Central and Eastern Europe in 2021 according to the Disinformation Resilience Index.

#### 5 Results

The issues of social-economic development of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are related to the incompleteness of the transformation process of national economies and the increasing influence of globalization and European integration, entailing significant challenges and threats to the national interests of these countries, which should be countered at the diplomatic level, ensuring high indicators of sustainable development. In view of

the tendencies outlined, the study of the institutional resilience of public governance in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and its impact on sustainable development is of great importance.

The state of change in the functioning of the financial, economic and social-political sphere is sufficiently fully characterized on the basis of the assessment of certain indicators that allow drawing conclusions about development trends, implementation efficiency and the dynamics of processes and phenomena. The most complete analysis of the country's sustainable development is possible on the basis of the Global SDG Index, which is based on a comprehensive assessment of countries on indicators such as security, human development and quality of life. Empirical calculations of the Global Index of Sustainable Development (Global SDG Index) and studies of its dynamics during 2018-2021 (Figure 1) testify to the ambiguity of its significance in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The highest value of the Global SDG Index has been recorded in such countries as Hungary (75,00 – 78,78), Poland (73,70 – 80,22) and the Czech Republic (78,70 -81,39). Slightly lower values of the analysed indicator are revealed in Slovakia (75,60 – 79,57) and Belarus (76,00 – 78,82), and the lowest values - in Armenia (68,80 – 71,79), Georgia (68,90 - 72,23) and Azerbaijan (70,50 - 73,68).

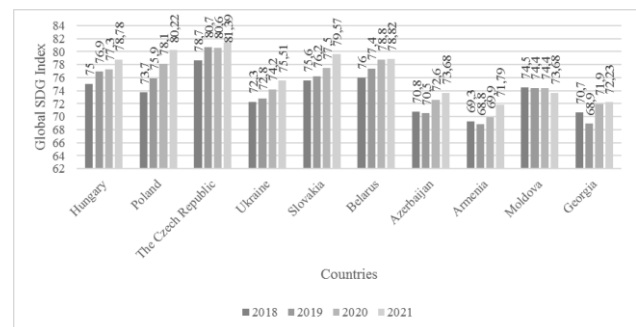


Fig. 1: Dynamics of the Global SDG Index in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in 2018-2021

Source: it has been compiled based on Sustainable Development Report, 2018–2021.

The results of the investigations conducted show that in the countries - members of the European Union, there is a higher level of sustainable development; however, in the countries of the transitive type - rather low indicators of security, human development and living standards are revealed. It should be noted that the analysis of sustainable development indicators in the analysed group of countries showed an interesting position of

Ukraine, which according to the Global SDG Index occupies much higher positions than Moldova, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, but lags far behind such countries as Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Belarus. Therefore, we consider it expedient to deepen our research and

group Central and Eastern European countries according to the Global SDG Index in 2018-2021 (Table 1) using cluster analysis technology based on the k-means method in order to clarify the common features of sustainable development and determine the reasons for changes in established trends.

Table 1. Grouping of Central and Eastern European countries according to the Global SDG Index in 2018-2021

Global SDG Index							
2018		2019		2020		2021	
Country	Cluster number	Country	Cluster number	Country	Cluster number	Country	Cluster number
The Czech Republic	1	Hungary	1	The Czech Republic	1	Hungary	1
Hungary	2	Poland		Hungary	2	Poland	
Poland		The Czech Republic		The Czech Republic			
Slovakia		Slovakia		Slovakia			
Belarus		Belarus		Belarus			
Moldova	3	Ukraine	2	Ukraine	3	Ukraine	2
Ukraine		Moldova	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan			
Azerbaijan		Azerbaijan	Armenia	Armenia			
Armenia		Armenia	Moldova	Moldova			
Georgia		Georgia	Georgia	Georgia			

Source: It has been compiled based on Sustainable Development Report, 2018–2021.

Based on the data obtained, it can be stated that the clustering of selected countries has made it possible to distinguish three groups of countries, namely: (1) countries with a relatively high level of sustainable development (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Belarus); (2) countries with a moderate level of sustainable development (Moldova and Ukraine); (3) countries with a very low level of sustainable development (Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia).

Forasmuch as it has been established that sustainable development to a large extent depends on the effectiveness of public governance, it can be assumed that in countries with the highest level of social-economic development (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Belarus), the public governance system is more efficient, and its institutional resilience is ensured at the highest level. By contrast, in developing countries (Moldova, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia) the system of public governance does not take into account the state and trends of key indicators of development and factors influencing it, leading to inefficient state regulation and indicating the presence of problems of a social-political nature in such countries.

In this context, it is reasonable to study the indicators of public governance efficiency, which

will be conducted on the basis of assessing the value of the Governance Research Indicator Country Snapshot (GRICS) during 2018-2020 using the same cluster analysis based on the k – means method (Table 2). It should be noted that the calculation of the Integral Indicator of Public Governance is based on an international assessment methodology that allows conducting interstate comparisons and identifying common and distinctive features based on assessments of the indicators as follows: (1) the right to vote and accountability – it measures the extent to which citizens can participate in the choice of public authorities, features of political processes, civil liberties and political rights; (2) political stability and absence of violence – it assesses the likelihood of destabilizing the government and the possibility of forced resignation due to violence, as well as the degree of quality of public governance authorities to adapt to abrupt changes, change course and counter the risks of disrupting the peaceful election process; (3) government efficiency – it reflects the quality of services provided by public authorities and local governments, the competencies of civil servants, the level of their independence from political pressure and the level of confidence in public policy; (4) the quality of legislation – it establishes compliance of the effectiveness of economic, political and social

measures with current legislation, in particular, control of price levels, control of banks, excessive regulation of business development and international trade; (5) rule of law – it measures the level of citizens’ trust in the law, the effectiveness

of the legislative system, the extent to which laws are enforced by the society, and citizens’ attitudes towards crime; (6) control of corruption – it determines the level of perception of corruption in the society and the existence of political corruption.

Table 2. Grouping of Central and Eastern European countries according to Governance Research Indicator Country Snapshot (GRICS) in 2018–2020

Governance Research Indicator Country Snapshot (GRICS)					
2018		2019		2020	
Country	Cluster number	Country	Cluster number	Country	Cluster number
Hungary	1	Hungary	1	Hungary	1
Poland		Poland			
The Czech Republic		The Czech Republic			
Slovakia		Slovakia			
Georgia		Georgia			
Belarus	2	Belarus	2	Belarus	2
Azerbaijan		Azerbaijan			
Ukraine	3	Ukraine	3	Ukraine	3
Armenia		Armenia			
Moldova		Moldova			

Source: It has been compiled based on Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2018–2020.

Based on the results of the calculations conducted, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe according to the Governance Research Indicator Country Snapshot (GRICS) in 2018-2020 were stably divided into three groups as follows: (1) countries with relatively efficient level of public governance (Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Georgia), where the society can freely participate in the electoral process; there is a fairly high level of political stability and the absence of violence; effective operation of public authorities in the field of public governance is ensured; legislation is observed, and enhanced control measures are implemented to ensure effective prevention and counteraction of corruption; (2) countries with a moderate level of public governance efficiency (Belarus, Azerbaijan), where there are significant problems in ensuring the right to vote and political stability, the facts of falsification of election results to public authorities, low level of confidence in the law and the presence of corruption; (3) countries with a low level of public governance efficiency (Ukraine, Armenia, Moldova), where significant destructive changes in all indicators of the Integrated Indicator of Public Governance are observed, and the institutional stability of public governance is ensured inadequately.

In addition, the conditions of uncertainty, instability and globalization cause significant legal and institutional changes towards ensuring the

sustainability of public governance related to the functioning of the information space, which plays an important role in the public administration system. It should be noted that, at the present stage, the issue of ensuring the resilience of countries to disinformation is exacerbated, which, in turn, requires a study of countries’ ability to withstand threats and challenges in this area and effectively manage information flows. According to the results of calculations on the Disinformation Resilience Index in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, conducted for the first time in 2021, a stable trend in the analysed group of countries has not been recorded yet (Figure 2). By the way, Belarus and Moldova demonstrated the lowest level of resistance to misinformation.

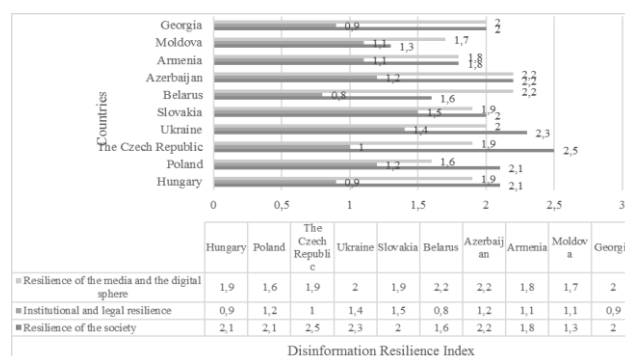


Fig. 2: Dynamics of the Disinformation Resilience Index in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in 2021

Source: it has been compiled based on *Disinformation Resilience Index in Central and Eastern Europe in 2021*.

An in-depth analysis of the Disinformation Resistance Index in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe on such indicators as societal resilience, institutional and legal resilience, media resilience and digital technology has revealed the completely different positions of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe on ensuring resilience.

Consequently, we consider it expedient to conduct the research in this area by grouping the countries of a certain group separately for each indicator, using cluster analysis technologies. The results of the calculations, systematized in Table 3, make it possible to draw certain conclusions, namely: firstly, for each indicator, three groups of countries have been formed that have common signs of ensuring resistance to disinformation; secondly, it was not possible to identify a stable trend among countries.

Table 3. Grouping of Central and Eastern European countries according to the Disinformation Resilience Index in 2018-2020

Disinformation Resilience Index					
Resilience of the society		Institutional and legal resilience		Resilience of the media and the digital sphere	
The Czech Republic	1	Ukraine	1	Belarus	1
Ukraine		Slovakia		Azerbaijan	
Azerbaijan		Poland		Hungary	
Hungary	2	Azerbaijan	2	The Czech Republic	2
Poland		Armenia		Ukraine	
Slovakia		Moldova		Slovakia	
Armenia		Hungary		Georgia	
Georgia		The Czech Republic		Poland	
Belarus	3	Belarus	3	Armenia	3
Moldova		Georgia		Moldova	

Source: It has been compiled based on *Disinformation Resilience Index in Central and Eastern Europe in 2021*.

In particular, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Azerbaijan have taken the highest position in terms of society’s resistance to misinformation, forming a reliable basis for combating false information. The societies of such countries as Belarus and Moldova are considered to be the least protected. Other countries (Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Armenia and Georgia) are placed in the second cluster, indicating a moderate level of resilience to misinformation.

As for the resistance to misinformation in terms of institutional and legal resilience, Ukraine and Slovakia are the most protected states, however, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Belarus and Georgia are the least protected countries. Along with this, the moderate level of protection is observed in Poland, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Moldova.

The investigations of countries on the resilience of the media and digital technologies to misinformation have revealed the best positions of Belarus and Azerbaijan, and the worst ones of Poland, Armenia and Moldova. Other countries

(Hungary, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Slovakia, Georgia) have provided a moderate level of protection.

Taking into consideration the conducted studies, there is such a tendency that Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia significantly exceed the values of the other two indicators in terms of the resilience of the society. It must be admitted that Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova are more stable in terms of media and digital resilience compared to the value of the other two indicators in these countries.

Thus, the assessments of the institutional resilience of public governance make it possible to determine the degree of impact on sustainable development of the country. If we conduct a comparative analysis, then there is a tendency that countries with a higher level of institutional resilience of public governance have higher indicators of sustainable development (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary), and

developing countries are unable to adequately ensure the growth of either the institutional resilience of public governance or sustainable development.

## 6 Discussion

The results of the studies of the institutional resilience of public governance in the context of sustainable development in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe make it possible to distinguish three groups of countries that can be characterized by common features and characteristics of resilience of public governance or sustainable development.

Group 1. Countries with a relatively high level of institutional resilience of public governance and sustainable development (Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia), where appropriate conditions and opportunities for the right to vote are provided; political stability is observed; state and local self-government bodies function effectively and opportunities for the public to influence their activities are provided; legislation is characterized by the quality, effectiveness and rule of law, appropriate measures are taken to combat corruption offences and prevent political corruption.

Group 2. Countries with a moderate level of institutional resilience of public governance and sustainable development (Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus), where an insufficient level of sustainable development is observed, however, there are significant distortions in ensuring the institutional resilience of public governance, problems with the functioning of public authorities, incomplete reform of decentralization of power, existing problems of political stability, imperfect legislation and a significant level of corruption.

Group 3. Countries with a low level of institutional resilience of public governance and sustainable development (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia), where the optimal level of institutional resilience of public governance is not provided and low values of sustainable development indicators are recorded.

Taking into consideration the outlined tendencies and identified problems in ensuring sustainable development, due to the inefficiency and imperfection of public governance, it is advisable to strengthen the interaction of public authorities and local self-government with the public; to promote the involvement of the society in the social-economic and social-political process; to constantly improve the quality of public governance and ensure the rule of law.

## 7 Conclusions

Therefore, studies of the institutional resilience of public governance in terms of sustainable development in Central and Eastern European countries give grounds to conclude that public governance significantly affects the sustainable development of the country; consequently, it is important to ensure institutional sustainability of public governance. It has been established that in countries where a high level of efficiency of public governance is ensured, a higher level of sustainable development is observed, and developing countries of the so-called transitive type, under the present conditions, are not able to provide appropriate conditions for public governance and have significant problems in the mechanism of interaction between public authorities, local government and the society. The results of the research conducted have revealed that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are divided into three groups in terms of ensuring the institutional resilience of public governance in the context of their sustainable development, namely: the countries that are member states of the European Union (Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia) are characterized as those where a higher level of sustainable development is observed, and respectively, the sustainability indicators of public governance are much higher, and the countries of Eastern Europe, which have not completed the processes of economic transformation yet (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia), they are on the periphery of social-economic development and need to strengthen the system of public governance.

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