

UDC 349.232

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MANAGING THE PROBLEMS OF LABOUR REMUNERATION AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR OF THE ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE OF THE COUNTRY

Abstract. The article reveals the feasibility of resolving the problems of labour remuneration for managing the economy of the country. It is proved that decent labour remuneration is one of the important factors that contributes to the social and economic development of the country.

The purpose of the research is to study the issue of labour remuneration, in particular, defining the optimum size of the wage for meeting the social needs of a worker and his/her family; to analyse the main problems of setting the minimum wage in national and foreign practice; to consider the features of setting the substantiated size of the subsistence minimum and its correspondence to constitutional norms. It is noted that the process of setting the substantiated size of the subsistence minimum in Ukraine is provided with the legal framework, but in practice legal provisions are ignored.

The authors analyse the current problems of labour remuneration that concern debts and strengthening inequality in the payments. Taking into account the fact that the reduction of the minimum wage growth causes the economic slowdown and the ineffective use of labour potential, the authors give proposals about the increase of minimum wage that should base on creating favorable conditions for development of country economy. Thus, the process of alignment of the wage growth and economic revitalization must have a systematic nature which includes the state support of national producers, has sound monetary policy and program of priority tasks that concern the development of industrial branches.

It is proved that the social and economic situation in the country improves if there is a high level of wages. If the minimum wage amount is optimum, the compromise between the social needs of population and economic opportunities of the society is reached. Based on the conducted research, the authors propose the measures for further regulating the labour remuneration as an important factor of managing the country economy in the modern world.

Keywords: labour remuneration, minimum wage, nominal and real wages, subsistence minimum, economy.

JEL Classification: E64, I31, J08, J31, N30

Formulas: 0; fig.: 1; tabl.: 3; bibl.: 24.

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РЕГУЛЮВАННЯ ПРОБЛЕМ ОПЛАТИ ПРАЦІ В УКРАЇНІ ЯК ВАЖЛИВИЙ ФАКТОР УПРАВЛІННЯ ЕКОНОМІКОЮ КРАЇНИ

Анотація. Визначено необхідність регулювання оплати праці для управління економікою країни. Метою дослідження було визначено доцільність аналізу проблем оплати праці щодо оптимального розміру заробітної плати для задоволення соціальних потреб працівника і його родини, установлення обґрунтованого розміру прожиткового мінімуму і його відповідність конституційним нормам. Зазначено, що розрахунок розміру прожиткового мінімуму в Україні повністю забезпечений нормативно-правовою базою, але на практиці законодавчі норми ігноруються.

У дослідженні було використано загальнонаукові методи для забезпечення вирішення поставлених наукових завдань, що дозволило визначити відповідність мінімальної заробітної плати в Україні як одного з головних стандартів, що гарантується державою, аналогічним стандартам, прийнятим в Європейському Союзі, і виконати порівняння рівня середньої заробітної плати в Україні з іншими країнами. Проведено дослідження основних здобутків у сфері оплати праці щодо зростання реальної середньомісячної зарплати, але зазначено, що підвищення заробітної плати в Україні не було обґрунтовано економічним розвитком у країні і викликало неоднозначні наслідки.

Було приділено увагу проблемам оплати праці щодо заборгованості та поглиблення нерівності при її виплаті, розповсюдженню тінізації виплат в усіх галузях економіки.

Доведено, що за наявності високого рівня заробітної плати в суспільстві поліпшується соціально-економічний стан країни, зменшується рівень бідності, зберігається людський капітал, поліпшується демографічна ситуація, скорочується міграційний вплив трудоактивного населення, а за умови досягнення оптимального розміру мінімальної заробітної плати досягається компроміс між соціальними потребами населення та економічними можливостями суспільства.

Відповідно до поставлених завдань доведено важливість гідної оплати праці як одного з обумовлювальних факторів, що забезпечує соціально-економічне зростання країни і гідний рівень життя населення. За результатами дослідження запропоновано комплекс заходів щодо подальшого регулювання оплати праці як важливого фактору управління економікою країни в сучасних умовах.

Ключові слова: оплата праці, мінімальна заробітна платня, номінальна і реальна заробітна платня, прожитковий мінімум, економіка.

Формул: 0; рис.: 1; табл.: 3; бібл.: 24.

Introduction. Nowadays Ukraine is in the situation of vicious circle when the economic decline results in job losses and reducing the wage amount. On the other hand, the migration of working-age population abroad contributes to a shortage of highly qualified specialists. Without them it is impossible to improve the labour productivity, intensify the development of industry and other branches of national economy.

The efficient economic governance in the country should include the improvement of labour productivity, modernization of manufacture, implementation of new technologies, introduction of innovations, and support of making competitive products. Only under such conditions the economic development causes the functioning of the labour market, involving highly qualified specialists with decent wages. In our case, focusing on the commodity economy leads to the fact that the main representatives of national labour market will be workers who do non-qualified activities and will be able to get only minimum wages, the rest will be forced to leave the country to seek for a new job.

Research analysis and setting goals. The need to manage the problem of labour remuneration has been studied by native and foreign scientists for a long time. The issues of deformation while forming material provisions are studied by a great number of national scientist, the

most essential achievements belong to O. Hrishnova [1], E. Libanova [2], A. Kolot [3], V. Novikov, H. Osovska, V. Petiukh, L. Cherenko and others. However, our country is considered to be one of the poorest and a level of labour remuneration is several times lower than in European countries.

Setting goals includes studying the present opportunities for managing the problem of labour remuneration in Ukraine as an important factor of the economic governance in the country that ensures social and economic growth of the country and the improvement of population life quality. Keeping a high level of wages in the society causes the improvement of social and economic situation in the country. The optimum level of minimum wage, which should take into account a real consumer basket, makes it possible to reach the compromise between the population social needs and economic opportunities of the society.

The purpose of the article is to study the problems of labour remuneration, in particular, defining the size of minimum wage for meeting the social needs of a worker and his/her family, to analyse the main problems of setting the minimum wage in foreign and national practice, as well as to consider the features of setting the substantiated size of the subsistence minimum. Based on the conducted research, it is necessary to substantiate the need of correcting the existing deformity in labour remuneration through the joint collaboration of the state, business, general public and to offer the activities for further regulation of labour remuneration as an important factor of managing the economy of the country in the current situation.

Research results. It is natural that the employment income includes certain economic relationships. The wage must be sufficient for encouraging a person to work. This level conditions the lowest limit of wage, whereas the highest limit is defined by needs that correspond to capital propositions. The amount of average wage is between these two limits and it can be defined only through discussions and bargains [3]. So A. Smith thinks that only a high wage can meet the requirements of economic growth [4].

For the majority of developed countries, the main criterion while defining the wage rate is an opportunity to meet the social needs of employees and their families, taking into account an amount and rates of increasing national incomes, the level of employment, and paying balance of the country. If the minimum wage is defined optimally, the social and economic situation in the country is improving due to increasing consumer demand which, in its turn, enhances the industrial development during the current period. In strategic prospects, the level of poverty in the country decreases, human capital is preserved, the demographic situation improves, and migratory outflow falls.

The important achievement in the sphere of labour remuneration within the last three years is the increase of real monthly average salary (after its decrease in 2014—2015) that has been caused by certain economic recovery of the country and the increase of minimum wage since January 1, 2017. Monthly average salary has increased two times over three years [6]. However, the increase of salaries in Ukraine didn't base on the economic development of the country and produced ambiguous effects, as the economy revitalization didn't take place in the country at the sufficient level in the present circumstances and inflation processes didn't ensure fast salary growth in comparison with increasing consumer prices.

Unfortunately, the positive dynamics of nominative salary, which grew by 37,1% in 2017 and by 24,8% in 2018 (in comparison with the previous year), couldn't ensure the essential improvement of life quality of work-age population. To a large extend, it is caused by increasing the prices of housing, municipal services, consumer goods and services. It is necessary to note that the significant cost increase of foodstuffs occurred after the abolition of state price regulation in 2017.

Before that the pricing of the social goods group was regulated in each region by local councils and the maximum amount couldn't exceed 15%. The abolition of state price regulation was envisaged to eliminate the administrative pressure on business and to contribute to developing the competitiveness and deregulation in the sphere of price formation. For large segments of the population in Ukraine, the absence of social prices has become one more additional reason for impoverishment.

Taking into account the fact that the constant increase of consumer goods prices and services in Ukraine is caused by permanent extensive crisis in the economy, the return of state cost regulation

can't halt rising of the tariffs, provide the stability of national currency and reduce the underground economy. Under such conditions, the existence of shadow salaries is an adequate reaction of market subjects. In fact, salaries «in envelopes» become the means of restoring the balance between assessed contributions and opportunities of economic subjects to pay them [1]. It is necessary to be aware that the present shadow labour remuneration not only results in the loss of taxation, but also in growing crisis of retirement provisions in the future.

In spite of the positive dynamics, Ukrainian wages didn't manage to reach the European level: monthly average salary in Ukraine in 2018 amounted 8865 UAH (276 EUR) and surpassed only the lowest minimal salary, paid in EU countries, 261 EUR in Bulgaria (*Fig. 1*).

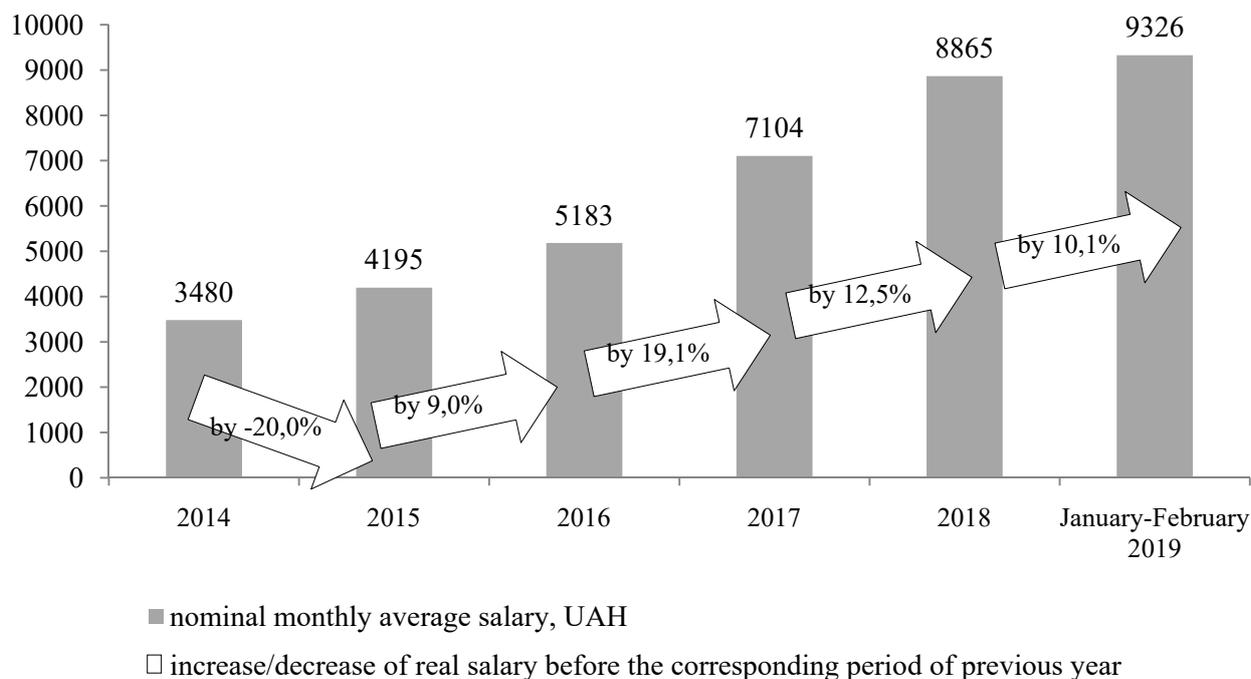


Fig. 1. Dynamics of real and nominal salaries in 2014—2019

Source: Compiled and calculated from the data of statistics [6].

Thus, nowadays Ukraine takes the last place in Europe in the level of labour incomes and every fifth worker is poor (the level of poverty among employees according to absolute criterion and calculations of Ministry of Social Policy in the first half-year of 2018 accounts 20,2%) [7].

At the same time, in the country the misbalance between employees and employers is preserved, which makes a failed economic model. According to this model, the concentration of some people's wealth causes extreme inequality to the others. Only 1% of Earth population controls the world wealth, 80% of the whole world incomes belong to 10% of companies; only 60% of employees have signed the official employment contracts and employment for them is not guaranteed, whereas 40% of employees lose their minimum wages and social protection.

This situation is inherent in Ukraine which has become one of the poorest countries in the world according to the life standards and takes the 7th place in the list of poorest countries in the world which is made by publishing company Bloomberg every year, according to the level of happiness the population takes the 132nd place among 155 world countries, about 60% of Ukrainians live below poverty line [8].

Nowadays the minimum wage in Ukraine is determined according to the subsistence minimum, but the amount of state standards and guarantees (subsistence minimum, minimum salary, minimum retirement pension) are twice lower than they should be according to the current legislation. Thus, in Ukraine the inequality grows that is contrary to article 48 in the Constitution of Ukraine. In accordance with this article, all the citizens of Ukraine have the right to an adequate standard of living for them and their families [9]. The average level of economic well-being of population is extremely low, based on the analysis of its main indicators (*Table 1*) [10].

Table 1

Dynamics of main social standards and guarantees in Ukraine

Indicators	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Average annual amount of subsistence minimum (on average per a person a month, UAH)	843,2	914,1	1042,4	1113,7	1176,0	1227,3	1388,1	1603,7	1762
Monthly average salary	2239	2633	3000	3274	3470	4195	5183	7104	8865

Source: Compiled and calculated from the data of statistics [10].

In 2019 the minimum salary in Ukraine is twice as low as in EU countries. At the same time, the average income of employees in Europe, who work in the positions that require the middle level of qualification, exceeds more than 2,5 times the salary of Ukrainian employees (*Table 2*).

Table 2

The level of labour remuneration in European countries

Country	Minimum salary, EUR	Salary of middle-qualification employee, EUR
Germany	1557	2 015—2 514
Greece	684	728—899
Lithuania	555	450—585
Estonia	540	823—998
Poland	524	503—632
Czech Republic	521	727—924
Hungary	465	441—570
Latvia	430	569—731
Bulgaria	286	320—440
Ukraine	138	124—171

Source: Compiled and calculated from the data of statistics [11].

The reason of such a backlog is the determination of the amount of subsistence minimum and minimum wage mainly taking into account the budget opportunities.

In 2014—2016, in Ukraine the significant increase in the difference between law-based and actual level of the subsistence minimum takes place, which Ministry of Social Policy counts every month according to article 5 of Law of Ukraine «On Subsistence Minimum» [12] (*Table 3*).

Table 3

Minimum salary and actual value of the subsistence minimum for a working person, UAH

Year	Minimum salary	Actual subsistence minimum	MS / Actual SM
2008	605	794	0,762
2009	744	913	0,815
2010	922	1 062	0,868
2011	1 004	1 159	0,866
2012	1 134	1 177	0,963
2013	1 218	1 252	0,973
2014	1 218	1 552	0,785
2015	1 378	28 782	0,479
2016	1 600	33 262	0,481
2017	3 200	3 913	0,818

Source: Compiled and calculated from the data of statistics [13]

The minimum salary has increased twice since January 1, 2017 and reached the actual level of the subsistence minimum for working persons, which is counted by Ministry of Social Policy (3200 UAH). It has ensured the wage increase for 4 million employees, the increase of nominal population income by 24,4% and increase in tax payments and fees for the budgets of all levels and funds.

The legal framework for calculating, approving and implementing the subsistence minimum in Ukraine is based on the ratified international acts: European Social Charter [14], Conventions provided by International Labour Organisation on the main goals and norms of social policy #117 [15], on minimum norms of social provisions #102 [16], provisions of the Constitution of Ukraine, as well as the law norms of Ukraine «On the Subsistence Minimum» [12] and «On Social Standards and

State Social Guarantees» [17]. According to these acts, the subsistence minimum is a value of consumer basket and a minimum basket of non-food products that are enough for supporting the normal functioning of human organism, preserving the health, as well as it includes a minimum set of services for meeting main social and cultural needs of a person.

Thus, the process of determining the reasonable amount of the subsistence minimum in Ukraine is completely supported by legal and regulatory framework, but in practical terms legislative norms are ignored by both the government and the parliament.

The further increase of main state social guarantees causes the preservation of a tendency to increasing the labour incomes in 2018—2019, although the rates are lower than in 2017 because of setting the minimum wage lower than the actual subsistence minimum for able-bodied people (in March, 2019 the gap amounted to 9,5 per cent).

Unfortunately, the subsistence minimum in 2019, as in previous years, is set in the state budget at much lower level than its actual size, calculated by the Ministry of Social Policy (the legally established subsistence minimum for able-bodied people in March, 2019 was halved or reduced by 2688 UAH) [18].

The minimum wage is set by law in 90% of countries in the world. Nevertheless, the mechanism of its calculation from the standpoint of both the approach and its effectiveness has its own unique features in different world countries. In most developed countries the minimum wage doesn't depend on the subsistence minimum, but on the average wage. This interrelation is called index Keits. This relationship proves the degree of approaching the social and labour relations to the desired level. Nowadays, the value of Keitz index recommended by International Labour Organisation is 50% and the value set by European Union is 60% [19]. Committee on Social Rights of European Union, commenting article 4 of European Social Charter (which Ukraine ratified), emphasizes that relationship between minimum wage and average wage (excluding taxes) shouldn't be lower than 60%. In Ukraine in 2015 Keitz index was 30,1%, but after the increase of the wage to 3200 UAH Keitz index was 53% in January in 2017. Even after increasing the minimum wage, the average wage doesn't ensure the reproductive function in social and economic development of the country.

Despite the ratification of International Labour Organisation Convention on the goals and norms of social policy, Ukraine must take into account the population needs while setting the subsistence minimum. They are providing housing, health care, and education. Currently these expenses in the subsistence minimum are not completely taken into account (educational and medical services are completely excluded). We should pay attention to the fact that qualitative and quantitative content of the consumer basket speaks of the level of development of the country economy. So the more items there are in the consumer basket, the higher the living standards are, the better the economic, social, and civil state of population is developed — and vice versa.

When comparing the consumer baskets of Ukraine and European countries, it is necessary to emphasize that they are different not only in the content, but also in the consumption structure. Thus, according to European standards the structure of consumption budget is the following: foodstuff shouldn't exceed 30%, non-food items — 47%, and services — 23%. The actual consumption structure of Ukrainian population is far from rational. According to the data of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in Ukraine, in consumer basket of able-bodied people the food products take 54,9%, services — 25,1%, non-food products — 16,5%. The inhabitants of Iceland, France and Germany, in accordance with statistics, spend on food products not more than 13% [20].

As a result of failure to follow the law norms, the subsistence minimum, approved by state budget in 2019, is reduced to half in comparison with its actual size. This means that it can't meet all the basic needs of a person of every social and demographic group at physiological and social levels. If legally approved size of the subsistence minimum doesn't meet the real minimum needs of people, in Ukraine the constitutional right to have an adequate standard of living for them and their families continues to be violated. The adequate standard of living includes adequate food, clothes and housing (article 48 of the Constitution of Ukraine). The reduced size of state social assistance is socially unfair and can't fulfil the function of effective protection of the poverty.

The other indicators, which are calculated based on the subsistence minimum, are also reduced. They are the amount of employees' remuneration and category of the Unified Wage scale, the size of state social assistance for some categories of vulnerable groups and low-income families, the size of tax social relief, payments for children, and the size of minimum retirement pension.

Nowadays the size of minimum wage is 4 173 UAH and is almost 9% lower than the real subsistence minimum for able-bodied people, calculated by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine in accordance with the prices in February, 2019 (4 566,21 UAH) and it is only 44 per cent of an average wage in Ukraine that is much lower than the ratio 50—60 per cent recommended by International Labour Organisation and World Bank [7].

Such an artificial reduction of the growth of minimum wages results in economic slowdown, causes declining terms of development, restoration and the use of labour potential, as well as it increases the amount of transfers from the budget for the assistance and subsidy for disadvantaged population. Thus, approved economy policy and limitation of expenditure to the increase of labour incomes of population cause the reduction of population incomes, constrain the increase of purchasing power of population and expanding domestic demand that results in economic stagnation, reduction of volumes of manufactures in its real sector and reduction of investment activities.

It is necessary to note that the average monthly wages increase, so the debts in wages has risen by half since 2015 and as of March, 1 in 2015 they are 2,45 billion UAH [21]. About 87 thousand of workers of economically active enterprises haven't been paid 1 267,7 million UAH, including debts of state enterprises — 233,2 million UAH. Industry workers are owed 1908,9 million UAH of 78% of total debt.

The serious problem is reinforcing inequality in labour remuneration in different types of economic activities and regions, between enterprises and within the same organisation. The situation with inequality in labour remuneration at self-financing enterprises is even worse. When growing the tendency to make the wages for qualified and unqualified work, the managers' wages at some state enterprises are higher than the workers' wages at basic enterprises by 200 times. At the same time, the levelling of an attitude to the education takes place when a person who has a higher education degree can get the same minimum wages as a person without education.

According to the report of International Labour Organisation «Wages in the World in 2016—2017» on the inequality in labour remuneration at enterprises, the maximum difference in average wages of workers and enterprise managers in EU is 60 times, but at most enterprises the difference doesn't exceed 15 times [22].

The transition of Ukraine to the model of development, where the main source of economic growth should become the development of human capital, needs a major revision of methods and mechanisms of labour market interventions for ensuring the redistribution of employment according to the occupations and economy sectors. Not only the level and quality of specialist training has a great importance, but also they must have the skills required by labour market, that means the balance between staff supply and demand [23].

The experience of the development of some countries, for example, Portugal, proves that the essential saving only deepens recession, but for economy development it is necessary to stimulate the growth of wages and creating new working places. Ukraine could use this experience for supporting inner demand and activating the economy development. However, it is necessary to understand that the increase of wages in Ukraine without sound policies can result in a new wave of price growth and in most cases it concerns products made in Ukraine. Thus, the process of correlating the wage growth and economy revitalization should have systematic nature which implies the state support of national manufacturer, have sound monetary policy and program of priority tasks of developing the economic areas, so the development of economy requires its revitalization, but not vice versa — impeding through the reduction of payment for population.

For further economic growth of the country it is necessary to improve the payment system through the differentiation of minimum wage scale at regional and industrial levels, taking into account the special nature of the work in these industrial spheres, workers' education, making the balance between the minimum wage and the real subsistence minimum, a consumer basket;

introducing fair intersectional relationships in labour remuneration for eliminating the influence on the essential difference in its size; preventing getting the extra incomes through reducing the labour prices in remuneration, intensifying the state control over the labour remuneration in small and medium businesses, including while violating the law on employment and payment of minimum remuneration; improving the system of wage taxation; strengthening the responsibility of employers for following the norms of current laws and sectional guarantees on calculations and timely payment of employees' wages [24].

For further managing the labour remuneration as an important factor of governing the country economy in current conditions, it is necessary to implement the state policy of economy development and solve a number of the tasks:

- to set the amount of the subsistence minimum not lower than its actual size, taking into account the real expenditure that is necessary for meeting the basic social and cultural needs of a person;

- to set the size of minimum wage not lower than the size of reasonable subsistence minimum for able-bodied persons;

- to envisage the salary level (pay scales) of an employer of the first wage category of Single Wage Grid at the level of actual size of the subsistence minimum for able-bodied people, but not lower than the minimum wage;

- to enlarge the part of remuneration in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to the level not lower than 60 per cent, the part of wages in the structure of population incomes to 65 per cent, the part of wages in cost price at least by half for ensuring the fair distribution of the labour results;

- to strengthen the protection of the right for timely and complete payment of wages;

- to ensure the reasonable relationship of interprofessional, interqualificational, interpositional, and intersectional differentiation of wages;

- to cause consistency to European practice between the positional wage scales of workers and managers at enterprises through setting the reasonable positional rate.

Conclusions. To summarize what is mentioned above, it is necessary to intensify the consideration of the issues of managing the problems of labour remuneration, using the foreign experience in the search for progressive systems of labour remuneration, as in the current situation its artificial slowing causes the slowing of both the national economy and the national production, reverses the productive employment that results in the outflow of effective human capital. However, an unjustified increase of wage without having sound state policy, support of national producers and defining the priorities for developing the spheres of economy can also cause negative consequences: rise in food commodities, inflation expectations etc.

For ensuring the sustainable development of the country, the state policy of regulating in the sphere of labour remuneration should be focused on:

- improving the law on labour remuneration, including strengthening the control over following the law and timely wage payment, reforming the system of labour remuneration in the sphere of the wage growth, increasing the labour costs (price);

- implementing a number of laws and organizational-economic events, aimed at legalization of population hidden incomes, increasing the purchasing power of the population through the rise of the minimum wage and indexation of population incomes.

Thus, the change of current deformations in the labour remuneration requires the joint collaboration at state, business and public levels. The management of income policy, employment, and social protection are possible due to reforms that should be aimed at involving the human capital of the country into economic processes, making the connection between economic and social results of development of population and effective economic management.

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Статтю рекомендовано до друку 31.08.2020

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The article is recommended for printing 31.08.2020

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