


Democratic Education in Ukraine: Specifics, Problems, and Ways to Solve Them



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Annotation

The relevance of the article is due to the development of civil society, the presence of democratization processes and the search for effective mechanisms for strengthening democratic institutions and values, globalization, which requires the active formation of cooperation skills, the emergence of which should be facilitated by democratic education, given its orientation to the formation of democratic values and beliefs, involvement in the adoption decisions, development of pluralism of opinions, dialogue between different groups, etc.

The article aims to highlight the specifics of democratic education in Ukraine, outline its problems, and propose ways to solve them.

Methodology. The descriptive method, the analysis, synthesis, generalization and systematization were used.

Research results. The article examines trends in democratic competencies in Ukrainian educational institutions and verbalizes risk zones that can inhibit the process.

Conclusions. Therefore, democratic education can be effective only under the condition of the existence of real democracy in Ukraine, the presence of a comprehensive approach to the implementation of democratic education and the formation of state policy in the field of youth education according to the principles: violation of rules, misdemeanors, crime – responsibility», observance of the balance of rights and obligations of the It is necessary to ensure real, not formal, equality of all participants in the educational process, by putting people-centrism as the basis of education , as specified in Ukrainian legislation, and not child-centrism, the active implementation of which can lead to the undermining of the foundations of a democratic society, in particular, it will contribute to the education of a free but selfish personality. unable to respect the rights of others.

Keywords : democratic education, Ukraine, student self-government, democracy.

Introduction

The relevance of the article is determined by the development of civil society, the presence of democratization processes and the search for effective mechanisms for strengthening democratic institutions and values, globalization, which requires the active formation of cooperation skills, the emergence of which, in our opinion, should be facilitated by democratic education, given its orientation to the formation of democratic values and beliefs, involvement in decision-making, development of pluralism of opinions, dialogue between different groups, etc. In the scientific information space, there are still not many articles devoted to the coverage of the above-mentioned topic, which prompts us to partially fill this lacuna by verbalizing some problems related to Ukrainian democratic education.

V. Opanasyuk in the article «Democratic education as an important function of the modern state (on the example of an integrated course on democracy for institutions of higher education)» (Опанасюк, 2021) substantiated the importance of teaching the integrated course «Democracy: values, principles, mechanisms» in higher education, highlighted specifics of providing information.

O. Ovcharuk's monograph «Theory and Practice of School Education for Democratic Citizenship in Council of Europe Member States» (Опанасюк, 2021) highlights the ideas of civic education and democratic citizenship, strategies for its implementation, development trends in Council of Europe countries, didactic approaches to the implementation of civic education in Ukraine.

In the article «Democracy in Education: ideal existence or pedagogical reality?» (Матусевич, Колесник, 2019) the authors highlight the difference between the «narrow» and «broad» understanding of democracy, verbalize the results of the activities of the Swiss-Ukrainian project «Development of civic competences in Ukraine», the European Vergeland Center, etc., «conceptual provisions of the domestic philosophical and educational and pedagogical science» (Матусевич, Колесник, 2019: 120), present the results of a survey of teachers and students of higher education regarding «the issue of democracy and the issue of education for democratic citizenship» (Матусевич, Колесник, 2019: 121).

The article aims to highlight the specifics of democratic education in Ukraine, outline its problems, and propose ways to solve them. The object of the article is democratic education in Ukraine. The subject of the article is specifics, problems of democratic education in Ukraine, and ways to solve these problems.

Research methods and techniques

The descriptive method, as well as the methods of analysis, synthesis, generalization and systematization, were used during the research. Thanks to the descriptive method, the information necessary for the coverage of the above topic was recorded. The method of analysis made it possible not only to study the literature, to rethink one's own experience of working in educational institutions of various levels, and the trends of modern democratic education, but also to single out the problems of its implementation. Thanks to the synthesis method, recommendations were formulated for solving real and potential problems of the introduction of democratic education in Ukraine. Conclusions were formulated using the method of generalization and systematization.

Research methodology.

1. We developed scientific articles in which the authors covered the topic of democratic education.

2. Ukrainian laws and by-laws dealing with education were analyzed. Based on their own experience and modern trends in education, they singled out the problems of democratic education and proposed ways to solve them.

Results and discussion

The goal of democratic education, which involves the creation of a democratic atmosphere, openness and cooperation, active participation of everyone, critical thinking, encouragement of leadership, constructive interaction with others, etc., is the preparation of a student, a student of higher education, for life and activity in a society characterized by democratic values. Its implementation is important and relevant given the crisis of democracy in the world, which is evidenced by the increase in cases of discrimination, violations of human rights, attempts on the lives of presidential candidates during the election campaign, etc. The democratic school is focused on the formation of democratic competencies recorded in the «Competence Framework for the Culture of Democracy» (Рамка компетентностей для культури демократії, 2018). In the mentioned document, the authors proposed a model that included 20 competencies (Рамка компетентностей для культури демократії, 2018: 38), placed in 4 blocks: values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and critical understanding (see Table 1).

Table 1. Model of twenty competencies

No s/p	Values	Attitude	Skill	Knowledge and critical understanding
1.	Respect for human dignity	Openness to other cultures, beliefs and worldviews of other people	Ability to learn independently	Self-knowledge and critical self-evaluation
2.	Recognition of the value of cultural diversity	Respect	Analytical and critical thinking	Knowledge and critical understanding of language and features of communication.
3.	Recognition of the value of democracy	Civic consciousness	Ability to listen and observe	Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, religion, history, mass media, economics, etc.
		Responsibility	Empathy	
		Self-confidence	Flexibility and ability to adapt	
		Acceptance of uncertainty and ambiguity	Language, communication skills and multilingualism	
			The ability to cooperate	
			The ability to resolve conflicts	

Source – Рамка компетентностей для культури демократії (2018: 38).

As stated in the Competency Framework for a Culture of Democracy,

«according to this model, a person is considered competent in a democratic culture if he responds effectively and appropriately to the demands, challenges, or opportunities that arise in democratic and intercultural situations by mobilizing and activating some or all of the 20 competencies» (Рамка компетентностей для культури демократії, 2018).

According to the authors of the practical manual «Democratic School» (Рафальська, Донець, Мельникевич-Чорна, Сабор, Чушак, 2017), three directions should be activated in order to form the above-mentioned competencies and democratic development of the school:

«teaching democracy and human rights as part of the educational process, building a democratic environment and governance in the school, as well as establishing a partnership with the local community and parents» (Рафальська, Донець, Мельникевич-Чорна, Сабор, Чушак, 2017: 10).

The reform of Ukrainian education at all levels should have contributed to the formation of the above-mentioned democratic competencies. The expected results of the reform (the creation of an innovative environment, the acquisition of key competencies by students and students of higher education, and the development of science) are necessary for the development of our state and the competitiveness of Ukraine on the world stage, but their achievement is possible under the condition of real, not formal implementation of reforms, a comprehensive approach and the absence of challenges faced by Ukraine during the implementation of the concept of the New Ukrainian School. It is about distance learning during the COVID-19 epidemic, insufficient funding, the lack of textbooks for students participating in the reform during the transition from primary school to fifth grade, learning during the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into the territory of Ukraine, a decrease in motivation to study in the in connection with systematic power outages, night alarms, bombings, personal problems caused by martial law (mobilization of family and friends, loss of housing, etc.), deterioration of mental and mental health, staffing problems caused by a shortage of teachers, etc. In our opinion, even in the absence of the above-mentioned factors, the implementation of the New Ukrainian School would not be ideal and would not achieve its goal, since the obstacles that prevent the education of an innovator were not removed at the state level. We are talking about a large number of students in the classes of the New Ukrainian School, which limits the opportunity for each child to express his point of view during the educational process, the presence of sites with completed tasks from any school subjects that students can use, mindlessly rewriting the answer. This leads to the absence of active processes of formation of independent and critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and responsibility, to the appearance of blocking of cognitive development, and inhibition of the formation of new neural connections. According to part of clause 6 of the Sanitary Regulations for General Secondary Education Institutions (Наказ МОН України № 2205 «Про затвердження Санітарного регламенту для закладів загальної середньої освіти», 2020) there is no provision for «performance of tasks for self-training of students during extracurricular hours» (Наказ МОН України № 2205 «Про затвердження Санітарного регламенту для закладів загальної середньої освіти», 2020) in grades 1–2, which can lead to a delay in the intellectual development of children due to the minimal formation of neural connections, because it is precisely in this period, the period of the «window of opportunity» (Інглмен, 2022: 201), the brain has a high level of plasticity

«The brain is most flexible early on, during a period known as the sensitive period. As it passes, the 'neuronal geography' becomes less conducive to change» (ІНГЛМЕН, 2022: 201).

Connection with the latest scientific research in the field of neuroplasticity of the brain, we consider it necessary to create in kindergartens and educational institutions, in particular elementary schools, all the conditions for the active formation of neural connections and the development of children's emotional intelligence during the «window of opportunity» period (ІНГЛМЕН, 2022: 201). First of all, we consider it necessary to introduce mandatory homework, which will help strengthen the neural connections formed during the educational process.

The active implementation of the concept of child-centrism (and not human-centrism, as specified in the Law of Ukraine «On Education» (Закон України «Про освіту», 2017); the difference, by the way, is significant (see Tabl. 2)), is aimed at ensuring comfort and satisfaction of children, in our opinion, will accustom students to permissiveness, which will hinder their further socialization, lead to a lack of responsibility and discipline, and promote infantilism.

Table 2. Differences between human-centeredness and child-centeredness in education

No	Human centrism	Child-centrism
1.	Human-centeredness is focused on the development of a comprehensively developed personality, ready for self-realization and self-development.	Child-centeredness focuses specifically on the child, on his needs and interests.
2.	People-centeredness takes into account the interests of any participant in the educational process.	Child-centeredness takes into account only the interests of the child.
3.	Human-centeredness involves the harmonious development of the intellectual, physical, spiritual, and emotional spheres of any personality.	Child-centeredness is focused on meeting the needs of a specific child.
4.	People-centeredness puts the interests of society first.	Child-centeredness gives priority to the interests of the child himself.

This can lead to the fact that any elementary problem will be hyperbolized by the child and become «impossible to solve». This process becomes particularly acute when the child is in adolescence, as a result of which he either falls under the influence of representatives of the criminal world or dares to shorten his age.

For example, «according to the operational data of the regional military administrations, in 2022, 127 suicide attempts were made by children, as of November 15, 2023, there were 116 cases of suicide among children in the incomplete year» (Моніторинг випадків суїцидів серед дітей, 2023).

Implementing the concept of child-centrism, mostly distorted on the ground, does not accustom children to responsibility for their actions, which is one of the signs of a democratic society. Such irresponsible upbringing of children is facilitated by the transfer of the teacher to the category of «provider of educational services» and the groundless interference of some parents in the educational process, which leads to the acquisition of the status of a teacher without rights. It

should be noted that such upbringing of the young generation with the philosophy «the universe revolves around me» could negatively influence the state's fate, especially during martial law or a state of war. In our opinion, a generation brought up in a distorted version of child-centrism, particularly in the format of an «incubator» of pleasures, impunity and irresponsibility, will not adequately respond to the need to defend its country in a crisis. Given this, to build and preserve democracy in Ukraine, we consider it necessary to take into account modern challenges in the education system, in particular, to actively implement democratic education in Ukrainian educational institutions not only at the level of «I have rights», but also at the level of «I have responsibilities», «I have a responsibility».

In our opinion, responsibility can be brought up only in the dyad «violation of rules, misdemeanors, crime – responsibility». It is in this way that Ukraine will be able to raise responsible youth capable of building a democratic system. At first glance, the concept of youth education proposed by us resembles education in authoritarian or totalitarian systems, however, as the experience of democratic countries in the field of education shows, this impression is false. In our opinion, the system of raising parents and children as responsible and disciplined citizens is powerful in the EU countries and Great Britain.

For example, in the Republic of Poland, according to the law «On support and resocialization of minors», anyone who learns about cases of demoralization is involved in preventing the demoralization of a minor

(«Who discovers circumstances that testify to the demoralization of a minor, in particular the commission of prohibited acts, violation of the principles of social coexistence, evasion of compulsory education or consumption of alcohol, narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or their precursors, narcotics or new psychoactive substances, hereinafter referred to as «psychoactive substances» involved in fornication has a social obligation to counteract it properly and, above all, to inform the parents or guardians of the minor, the school, the family court, the police or other competent authority about it» (Ustawa o wspieraniu i resocjalizacji nieletnic, 2022) .

Therefore, everyone who lives in the Republic of Poland has the aforementioned social obligation, which contributes to the formation of joint responsibility for the education of young people as active participants in a democratic society.

We observe a different approach in some Ukrainian educational institutions when they either try not to touch minors at all due to the fear of a potential scandal with parents or the fear of being accused of bullying, or limit themselves to conversations in the office of the director of the educational institution. It is this position that leads to the further demoralization of some students and creates conditions for the demoralization of some parents who were brought up in a similar atmosphere and try to transfer the gaps in the education of their children to educational institutions. We believe that if the integration of Ukraine into the EU takes place, it should take place at all levels, in particular at the level of education of future citizens, implementation of those educational measures that exist in the EU countries for the education of responsibility and discipline, and therefore law-abiding. For Ukraine, given the neighbourhood of the aggressor country, these changes are welcome and necessary. It is not about preparing for a permanent war with it, but about the formation of such a state policy of peacekeeping, according to which everyone must feel responsible for every word and deed and calculate the potential consequences of their actions and words. This should be taught from childhood not only in educational institutions but also in the family. All participants in the educational process should strive for the same result, to promote the realization of students' democratic competencies not only in the centre of education but everywhere they are (family, street, etc.). In the media space, students should also see models of behavior

related to the implementation of democratic competencies. We believe that the state should take care of ensuring such a comprehensive approach; otherwise, there is a risk of raising hypocrites and conformists who, under various circumstances, will implement contrary models of behavior.

In our opinion, the experience of the Republic of Poland regarding the introduction of the zone of responsibility of minors at the legislative level is interesting. The law of the Republic of Poland provides for educational measures for minors, such as: prevention, full or partial compensation for damage, performance of community service, apology to the injured party, starting education or work, participation in appropriate educational and therapeutic measures (addiction therapy, psychotherapy, psychoeducation, training, abstinence from being in certain environments or places, abstinence from contact with the affected party or other people, abstinence from the use of psychoactive substances, responsible supervision of the parents or guardian of the minor, supervision of a public organization whose purpose is to work with minors, supervision by probation officer, referral to a probation center where they work with minors, prohibition to drive any vehicles or vehicles of a certain type, confiscation, placement in a professional foster family, a youth center, district educational institution (Ustawa o wspieraniu i resocjalizacji nieletnich, 2022)). In addition to educational ones measures, medical measures are provided, in particular, placement in a medical institution, correctional measures, i.e. placement in a correctional colony, a system of substantial fines for parents. It is worth noting that in the Republic of Poland special attention is paid to compliance with mandatory requirements for education, there must be a valid reason for not attending school.

In Ukrainian schools, in our opinion, the monitoring of children's attendance at school needs improvement, as mostly explanatory notes from parents are provided to educational institutions, although parents should feel more responsible before the state disciplines children regarding attendance at educational institutions. It is worth taking into account fines, which are an effective mechanism for influencing the discipline of parents and children abroad. It is worth noting that the penalties for students not attending educational institutions in EU countries and Great Britain are significant (see Table 3) (Штрафи та ув'язнення за прогули..., 2023).

Table 3. Penalties for not attending school

No s/p	Country	Penalties for not attending school
1.	Republic of Poland	From PLN 10,000 to PLN 50,000
2.	Federal Republic of Germany	From 1000 euros to 2500 euros
3.	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	60 pounds. If the fine is not paid within 21 days, the fine «increases to £120». «If the money is not paid within 28 days, the parents will be prosecuted. The fine can then rise to £2,500. The court can also sentence parents to community service or even to imprisonment for 3 months» (Штрафи та ув'язнення за прогули..., 2023).

The annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, ATO (anti-terrorist operation in the East of Ukraine), OOS (operation of united forces), a full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine, as well as an aggravation of the related language issue. Given this, in our opinion, the authorities should develop a well-thought-out information policy.

One of the forms of democratic education in educational institutions of Ukraine, in particular schools, lyceums, and gymnasiums, is student self-government. According to the Law of Ukraine «On Education»

«public self-government in an educational institution is the right of participants in the educational process, both directly and through public self-government bodies, to collectively resolve issues of organization and provision of the educational process in an educational institution, protection of their rights and interests, organization of leisure and recreation, and participation in public supervision (control) and the management of the educational institution within the limits of the powers defined by the law and the founding documents of the educational institution» (Закон України «Про освіту», 2017).

Among the list are self-governing bodies of education seekers, in particular students. On the one hand, such practice forms the skills of democratic management and self-organization involves students in making decisions that concern them, increases their activity, and contributes to the development of leadership qualities, and organizational abilities. On the other hand, decision-making is not supported by responsibility for the consequences of the decision, since the responsibility for the actions of minors is borne by their legal representatives. Therefore, there is no complete cycle of «decision – consequences of the decision – responsibility», which educates responsibility for the decisions made, which forms in students a wrong idea about the specifics of social relations. In addition, there is a risk of transformation of self-government bodies into formal structures that have no real influence. This accustoms children to the idea that they do not decide anything and can lead to a decrease in active citizenship, which is necessary for building a democratic society in Ukraine. It is also necessary to take into account the lack of experience in making complex collegial decisions.

On March 13, 2019, the Order of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Ukraine No. 340 was issued «On the implementation of an innovative educational project at the all-Ukrainian level on the topic «Formation and assessment of civic competencies in the educational process at the level of basic secondary education» in 2018–2021» (Наказ МОН України «Про реалізацію інноваційного освітнього проекту...», 2019) to eliminate the gap between the declaration of democratization of the educational process and the real state of affairs, avoiding a formal approach to the organization of student self-government etc.

To implement the above-mentioned project, teachers had to «create and test educational and methodological support for the formation of civic competences of students of grades 5–9», «develop a toolkit for evaluating civic competences and test it based on 10 secondary education institutions» (Наказ МОН України «Про реалізацію інноваційного освітнього проекту...», 2019: 2), etc. The above-mentioned materials developed by the teachers are posted on the website «Program for supporting educational reforms in Ukraine «Democratic School» in the «Toolbox» – «a collection of exercises and materials for the formation and assessment of civic competencies in various subjects at school and within extracurricular and extracurricular programs» (Програма підтримки освітніх реформ в Україні «Демократична школа», н.д.).

If student self-government is real and there is systematic work with its members, it can be expected that it will be effective and contribute to the formation of active citizenship and leadership qualities. Such forms of student self-government contribute to this, such as days of student self-government, when students perform the duties of members of the teaching staff (administration, teachers), holding elections for the head of student self-government, team formation, distribution of responsibilities among team members, work planning, reports on the completed works etc.

An important and logical continuation is the presence of student self-government in Ukrainian higher education institutions, which operate at different levels. It is about a student group, institute,

branch, higher educational institution, or dormitory. In addition, student self-government takes different forms: senate, starost, student rectorate, student deanship, and student council – and has a wide range of functions, including the introduction of proposals regarding the content of curricula and programs, the right to announce protest actions, disposal of funds, which are on bank accounts of student self-government bodies, etc. The activity of student self-government is important for the formation of an active personality, but its effectiveness depends on the desire of students to participate in organizational activities. Over time, this becomes increasingly difficult, as those seeking higher education tend to either focus on studies or work due to difficult economic circumstances and try to avoid unpaid responsibilities as much as possible.

Since 2018, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems has been implementing a project to introduce the training course for active citizenship «Democracy: from Theory to Practice» into the educational programs of Ukrainian institutions of higher education (HEIs). This integrated course was initially taught in 8 universities in Ukraine, then in 39 universities in 19 regions of Ukraine.

A feature of Ukrainian alternative democratic and European schools is the joint formation of rules by students and teacher.

«At the general meeting, teachers and schoolchildren plan a week: excursions, groups, projects and even topics of classes. For example, in a democratic school in the Czech city of Opava, there is an «intention board» where students write down goals for the week and offer ideas for workshops, and activities for other children. In the Polish school of Bulerby, students make requests for knowledge: for example, knives need to be sharpened, and for this, they should be held at a certain angle to the sharpener - therefore, everything related to angles is taught from geometry» (Мірошнікова, n.d.).

Schools (alternative type of education) are organized in Kyiv, which do not have desks, lessons, homework, assessment, teachers, or classrooms, use the following forms of work: experiments, creativity, play, travel, research, project activities, contemplation and observation, children about are united by interests, not by age. On the one hand, the appearance of such schools allows parents and children to choose education and development, on the other hand, there may be problems with the competitiveness of graduates of the above-mentioned schools during participation in the national multi-subject test (NMT) due to nuances regarding the systematicity of acquired knowledge, further integration the traditional education system, in particular the higher education institutions of Ukraine. In our opinion, for the formation of democratic competencies of students of traditional and alternative schools, there should be uniform requirements to ensure harmonious participation in democratic processes and avoid risks of misunderstanding during communicative activities between graduates of the above-mentioned educational institutions.

In our opinion, democratic education will be effective only under the condition of real and not formal democracy in Ukraine, when the personality formed in educational institutions will not face manifestations of pressure from pro-government structures and will be able not only to voice their civic position but also to implement it. The idea of democracy formed in schools and institutions of higher education mustn't fall into cognitive dissonance with reality, as this will have negative consequences for both the individual and the state.

Conclusions

Therefore, democratic education can be effective only under the condition of the existence of real democracy in Ukraine, the presence of a comprehensive approach to the implementation of democratic education and the formation of state policy in the field of youth education according to

the principles: «violation of rules, misdemeanours, crime – responsibility», observance of the balance of rights and obligations of the It is necessary to ensure real, not formal, equality of all participants in the educational process, by putting people-centrism as the basis of education, as specified in Ukrainian legislation, and not child-centrism, the active implementation of which can lead to the undermining of the foundations of a democratic society, in particular, it will contribute to the education of a free but selfish personality unable to respect the rights of others.

Statement

Financing

This research was not funded by any organization and was carried out at the author's expense.

Conflict of interest

None.

Ethics

The material presented in this article meets all the points and requirements put forward by the Ethics Commission of the Editorial and Publishing Department of the public organization «Scientific and Educational Center «SUCCESSFUL».

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Демократична освіта в Україні: специфіка, проблеми, шляхи їх вирішення

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Анотація

Актуальність статті зумовлена розвитком громадянського суспільства, наявністю процесів демократизації й пошуком ефективних механізмів зміцнення демократичних інститутів і цінностей, глобалізацією, що вимагає активного формування навичок співпраці, появи яких повинна сприяти демократична освіта з огляду на її орієнтацію на формування демократичних цінностей і переконань, залучення до прийняття рішень, розвиток плюралізму думок, діалог між різними групами тощо.

Мета статті – висвітлити специфіку демократичної освіти в Україні, окреслити її проблеми, запропонувати шляхи розв'язання цих проблем.

Методологія. Під час дослідження використано описовий метод, метод аналізу, синтезу, узагальнення й систематизації.

Результати дослідження. У статті досліджено тенденції щодо формування демократичних компетентностей в українських навчальних закладах, вербалізовано зони ризику, що можуть гальмувати вищезазначений процес.

Висновки. Отже, демократична освіта може бути ефективною лише за умови існування реальної демократії в Україні, наявності комплексного підходу до впровадження демократичної освіти й формування державної політики у сфері виховання молоді за принципами: «порушення правил, проступок, злочин – відповідальність», дотримання балансу прав та обов'язків. Треба забезпечити реальну, а не формальну рівноправність усіх учасників освітнього процесу, поклавши в основу освіти людиноцентризм, як це зазначено в українському законодавстві, а не дитиноцентризм, активне впровадження якого може призвести до підриву основ демократичного суспільства, зокрема сприятиме вихованню вільної, але егоїстичної особистості, не здатної поважати права інших.

Ключові слова: демократична освіта, Україна, учнівське самоврядування, демократія.

Submitted to the editor – 04.05.2024

Review 1 – 04.22.2024

Review 2 – 04.29.2024

Accepted for printing – 03.06.2024

Подано до редакції – 04.05.2024

Рецензія 1 – 04.22.2024

Рецензія 2 – 04.29.2024

Прийнято до друку – 03.06.2024

