

# ICPS newsletter

## Cogent party policy ensures support of electorate

***Robust political parties operating in the interests of different societal groups are a foundation of democracy. The Ukrainian electoral dialogue lacks an explanation of the relationship between party programs and actual changes in the life of citizens. Ukrainian political parties cannot transform the interests of their electors into public policy. In the next issue of ICPS's Policy Studies journal, which will be published next week, we analyse the mechanisms, which could help parties to conduct serious talks with their voters and compete to more effectively protect their interests. Thanks to an open process of working out a strategy for Ukrainian development, voters display more confidence in this or that party, because they have the opportunity of making a conscious choice and keeping track of the party's activities between elections***

### Why Ukrainians have no confidence in parties

Sociological opinion polls show that the majority of Ukrainians (63% in 2001) put no confidence in political parties. Parties consider their principal objective to be winning the elections, and they do not strain themselves to fulfil their pre-election programs afterwards. This means that citizens are neither able to assess the party's activity nor alter it. The lack of accountability and responsibility of a party towards its voters inspires people with mistrust to all political figures, without exception.

The dialogue between political parties and voters should not cease even for a day. Successful politicians launch a new election campaign already on the day following the elections.

### Parties can win confidence

Parties as well as the Ukrainian public-at-large have a stake in tackling the problem of mistrust towards political institutions. If there is political competition, then well-thoughtout and convincing party action programs will be able to dramatically simplify the task of winning numerous supporter, as shaping staunch confidence in a party that entails the conscious support by citizens of its actions is far more effective than millions spent on advertising.

Simultaneously, citizens will be able to use political parties to further their interests in government policy, which will thus be aimed at improving their welfare. Thanks to actions taken by political parties, Ukrainians will see their interests reflected in public policy, which will then be directed toward boosting their prosperity. It is the institute of political parties as well as the procedure of democratic elections that enable the population to partake actively in the country's destiny.

The activities of political parties will become more effective if the required efforts will be jointly applied, both by parties and the public-at-large. The mechanisms of open policymaking, considered to be the modern-day technology of implementing democratic principles, should be applied early, at the stage of preparation of party - election platforms. A democratic technology of adopting decisions differs from a totalitarian one by the following components :

- policy analysis, which envisages the evaluation of decision alternatives (presented by various interest groups) and of the consequences of implementing them for society;
- the practice of horizontal consultations and of public dialogue.

Open policymaking comprises the following stages:

- setting a strategic goal of a political party and working out a consistent outlook of the desired conditions in society;
- resource analysis (of competitive advantages and hurdles) on the way to achieving the goal;
- tracing pivotal problems (or non-utilised opportunities), which stand in the way of achieving the set target, via analysing the electorate's opinion;
- formulating party policy options regarding overcoming these problems;
- analysis of the probable implications of implementing each policy alternative;
- public discussions of policy alternatives with voters;
- defining assessment criteria for party activities.

The public, represented by the mass media, is to receive the reports of parties at each of these stages. This is the only way electors can obtain information which will enable them to make a conscious choice. The mass media will play a much more influential role in the public life, if instead of fighting between some politicians they will highlight parties' activities, from the viewpoint of proposed development strategies for Ukraine, specific tasks that they set before themselves, and ways to control the work of parties during inter-electoral periods.

### Transition strategy: our outlook

Ukraine is currently undergoing transformation of society from a totalitarian to a democratic one, and this process demands altering all aspects of life. These changes demand tremendous and meticulously planned technical work. Central European countries achieved solid successes in

this domain, as they were steered by strict EU integration plans. Ukrainians have to set before themselves objectives of achieving European standards, using them as milestones on its own accession path.

We accentuate the following tasks that Ukraine is facing during the transformation stage:

- taking into consideration the interests of all citizens in the process of elaborating and implementing government policy;
- observing human rights;
- effective work of public service;
- a well-deserved place for Ukraine in today's world of globalisation;
- developing the national economy.

### Individual participation

It is in the interests of any political party to ensure effective democracy in Ukraine by creating new public institutions, primarily through the implementation of democratic procedures of policymaking. The government should take a daily account of different interests, consider decision alternatives, and analyse the implications of implementing these decisions for the society. When the government predicts the consequences of its decisions and makes public its forecast, citizens become conscious of their personal responsibility for the actions of the government they elected. Every citizen then asks himself or herself, "What will this particular governmental decision mean to me?" Properly informed, active citizens are the guarantor of forming a stainless and effective government, and they make their democratic choices with full awareness. This kind of perception of personal responsibility creates feedback

and confidence between citizens and the government.

### Human rights above all

Under the self-willed totalitarian state, individuals were deprived of their rights. The fear of the government did not permit people to enjoy the status of members of a unified society. The rule of law implies that individuals are valued higher than the state. This democratic framework urges Ukrainians to unite in order to build a common future.

Therefore, the priority observance of human rights should be assured in the first place through an independent and equitable justice system.

### The state for its citizens

In a democratic society, the government has no chance to exercise direct forceful control over the observance of public order and discipline. The authorities cannot impose decisions, therefore it has to work out mechanisms for their coordination. Everyday governmental activity should seek to meet public interests.

We believe that the priority objective of a party should be to create an effective democratic governmental machine, which sets out the game rules and secures their fulfillment.

### A place in the sun in today's world of globalisation

Building the country's policy while disregarding today's global processes is already impossible. Therefore, parties have to respond to questions concerning Ukraine's place in a globalised world, about their attitude towards integration processes, and also define exactly what ensures the success of foreign policy.

Ukraine has not created yet modern public infrastructures of management, education, finances, trade, transport, etc. The existence of such infrastructures gives the capacity to a country to participate in globalisation processes as a full-fledged member. Thus, developing the capacity for globalisation should be seen as a condition of independence and progress. An effective way and method of developing such a capacity is to participate in the European integration process. Observing integration terms, the state can secure for itself a place in the sun in today's world of globalisation.

### Economic growth for personal welfare

Under a planned economy, all resources belonged to the state. Any entrepreneurial initiative was illegitimate, and thus resources were quickly exhausted. Under a market economy, private entrepreneurial initiative turns into a major resource, and economic growth makes this resource inexhaustible. The process of enriching the whole nation contributes to the welfare of each individual through high-quality medical help, education, and social security. Thus, the party must perform the following tasks in the first place:

- create conditions for the development of entrepreneurial initiative and competition, as well as for protecting private ownership rights;
- reduce direct taxes;
- ensure careful and economic utilisation of budget funds;
- create an education system that will meet the needs of the population and the requirements of modern-day life;
- reform the healthcare system in order to secure high-quality and accessible medical help;
- guarantee social assistance to all those who need it, but with careful utilisation of budget funds.■

*Next week, the full version of the English-language issue of Policy Studies will be posted at the ICPS web-site: [www.icps.kiev.ua/projects/eng/political\\_parties](http://www.icps.kiev.ua/projects/eng/political_parties). Next week, ICPS will hold a presentation of this publication. For further information, please contact Hlib Vyshlinsky at tel. (38-044) 463-6337, e-mail: [hlib@icps.kiev.ua](mailto:hlib@icps.kiev.ua).*

### *What skills should an effective government have?*

- to set and maintain priorities among the many conflicting demands made upon them so that they are not overwhelmed and bankrupted;
- to coordinate conflicting objectives into a coherent whole;
- to be able to impose losses on powerful groups;
- to ensure policy stability so that policies have time to work;
- to innovate when old policies have failed;
- to manage political cleavages to ensure that the society does not degenerate into civil war.

ICPS Newsletter is a weekly publication of the International Centre for Policy Studies delivered by electronic mail. To be included in the distribution list mail to: [marketing@icps.kiev.ua](mailto:marketing@icps.kiev.ua).

ICPS Newsletter is published by the ICPS Publications Group. ICPS Newsletter editor Maksym Mashliakivsky ([mmax@icps.kiev.ua](mailto:mmax@icps.kiev.ua)). English text editor D. (Ksenia) Ovcharenko. Articles may be reprinted with ICPS consent.

The International Centre for Policy Studies is an independent non-profit research organisation whose mandate is to promote the introduction of public policy concepts and practices in Ukraine. This is achieved by increasing the know-how of key government officials for policy choices, formulation, and debate, and the awareness of the public-at-large of the benefits of policy. Address: 8/5 Voloska Street, Kyiv 04070, Ukraine. Web-site: <http://www.icps.kiev.ua>