

# ICPS newsletter<sup>®</sup>

## The new Government: What happens to Ukraine's foreign policy?

***Ukraine's foreign partners and its citizens alike are impatient to see a new Government formed. In the latest issue of Political Commentary, ICPS analysts try to predict how the new coalition is likely to adjust the country's foreign policy and how Ukraine's main strategic partners—Russia, the European Union, the US, and NATO—might change their policies towards Ukraine. ICPS specialists say that a new Government consisting of the Party of the Regions, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party will push Ukraine's foreign policy to be more in sync with Russia's policies and will create obstacles to European integration and NATO membership for Ukraine***

A PR–SPU–CPU coalition will lead to an adjustment in Ukraine's foreign policy aims, something that its candidate for premier, Viktor Yanukovich, has already indicated. ICPS analysts say that this will primarily mean softening Ukraine's rhetoric in Russia's direction and depoliticizing economic relations. Still, there is a risk that, reluctant to tackle Russia head-on, such a Government will allow many important bilateral issues to go unresolved and this does not bode well for Ukraine in the long run.

### Russia will continue to put pressure on Ukraine

Ukraine's development as a strong national democratic state capable of running domestic and foreign policy independent of Russia is against Russia's national interests as today's Russian leadership sees it. As long as Ukraine continues to develop in the direction of a national democratic state, Russia will continue to put pressure using all the leverage at its disposal.

It is probable that, after the formation of the Government in Ukraine, Russia will issue new terms and conditions for the delivery of energy to Ukraine. For Russia, talks on new prices for gas will be a kind of test of how willing the new Government is to concede, and for the new Government, a serious test of its commitment to the campaign promises it made.

Trade wars with Russia will continue and could next affect metal and machine-building products. The signal for this was a proposition by a deputy in the Russian Duma to introduce a moratorium on metals imported from Ukraine and a chain reaction among some Arab countries who

committed Ukrainian enterprises to certifying metal imports to them as being radioactively safe.

### Lack of confidence in the new Government is a risk for relations with the EU

The progress of the coalition-building process in Ukraine cannot but cause concern among the country's European partners. Despite the EU's statements that it is ready for cooperation with any Ukrainian Government, the main risks for the future of Ukraine's European integration are passivity on the part of the Government and the Verkhovna Rada in implementing reforms and possible lack of confidence in Ukraine on the part of the EU. Lack of confidence in such a Government and doubts as to its intentions to entrench democracy and carry out reforms could lead to partial isolation from the EU. This will get in the way of deeper cooperation between Ukraine and the EU.

The new Government will face the task of developing, together with the EU, a new format for mutual relations for the coming period. This has to be set in the new agreement that will replace the old Partnership and Cooperation Agreement after 2008.

Within the context of the EU's neighborhood policy, the Union is prepared to offer Ukraine expanded free trade. Still, the key condition for instituting expanded free trade is Ukraine's accession to the World Trade Organization. For the necessary legislation to be adopted in Ukraine, the country needs a fully functioning legislature and Government.

### Relations with the US remain stable

The results of the coalition-building process will not affect the stability of Ukraine's relations with the US. On the Ukrainian side, the guarantee of good relations is President Yushchenko. US policy towards Ukraine will also remain unchanged.

At a time when the EU is weakened by internal crisis and unready to take an active role in the region, as well as its growing dependence on Russian fuel, the US will start to strengthen its support for western NIS as a counterweight to Russia. For this reason, Ukraine remains a key ally of the US in countering Russia's expansion in the energy sphere and the White House is likely to continue to support Ukraine's course towards European and Euroatlantic integration.

### The pace of movement towards NATO will slow

Demonstrations against international military exercises in Crimea, which were accompanied by anti-NATO slogans, spurred NATO countries to put off an invitation to Ukraine to join the membership Action Plan, which was planned for a fall Summit in Riga. Although the US will continue to insist on fast-track membership for Ukraine, it will not have the support of European members of the Alliance, who are disturbed by the situation in Ukraine and Russia's hard position. In addition, in a situation when the majority of deputies in the Verkhovna Rada are against membership in NATO, a referendum on the issue is inevitable. A public awareness campaign regarding the Alliance and Ukraine's Euroatlantic integration—something Ukraine's government has never done yet—will not be a priority for the next Government. ■

*political commentary is a regular publication of the International Centre for Policy Studies that offers a monthly review of political and economic trends in Ukraine. For additional information, contact ICPS specialist Natalia Shapovalova by phone at (380-44) 484-4400 or by e-mail at nshapovalova@icps.kiev.ua.*

# Preparing and holding public debates on party policy issues

**ICPS held a workshop called "Preparing and holding public debates on party policy issues" on 7 July 2006. Participants included CSOs from Donetsk, Mykolayiv, Poltava, and Vinnytsia, and ICPS specialists. All the participants are involved in "The impact of NGOs on the formation and implementation of political platforms" Project being implemented with the support of the Institute of Sustainable Communities (ISC) and the Ukraine Citizen Action Network (UCAN)**

The goal of this workshop was to develop practical skills among participants in running public debates on party policy issues and to strengthen the impact of NGOs on the formation and implementation of effective political programs in the interests of communities and regional and municipal development.

During the workshop, participants discussed the "Methods for monitoring how local organizations of political parties and election blocs fulfill their election platforms" developed by ICPS. Three components of these Methods raised special interest among participants in this workshop:

- 1) Tables comparing party priorities declared in party election platforms and priorities included in municipal or regional socio-economic development programs developed by a majority of deputies and approved by the local government.
- 2) The system of quality criteria for monitoring how local organizations of political parties and election blocs fulfill their election platforms.
- 3) A breakdown of the impact of NGOs on the formation and implementation of party policies in the relevant region or municipality.

During the discussion of these Methods, participants agreed six positions:

- what methodological principles will make monitoring how local organizations of political parties and election blocs fulfill their election platforms effective;
- what criteria or indicators will be used and which areas of public life will be monitored and evaluated for how party priorities declared in local election platforms are fulfilled;
- what specific objectives of this monitoring must be fulfilled at each of the main stages;
- what qualitative and quantitative indicators reflect the power and influence

of a local party or bloc organization in its municipality or region the most objectively;

- how to evaluate the effectiveness of inner-party and public events of local party organizations and how to track the objectivity of how these events are reported;
- how to track and evaluate changes in basic activities of a region, municipality and community based on how party policies are implemented.

In addition, special attention was focused on technological aspects of preparing and running public debates on party policy issues.

Participants dedicated a large part of their working time to developing approaches to running public debates on party policy issues. After presenting and agreeing the main principles, elements and special features of such public debates, NGOs were divided into three working groups. Each group received a separate task. After fulfilling these tasks, the working groups made presentations and held discussions on six key issues:

- formulating goals and problems for public debates;
- identifying target groups and forming working groups for these debates;
- predicting the possible outcomes of such public debates;
- developing a program and the rules of order for public debates;
- developing a draft wrap-up document;
- identifying the main components of reports on the results of such public debates;
- identifying how NGOs should disseminate the results of these debates among interest groups and the public-at-large.

Those from NGOs understood what difficulties they might face in running

public debates. Mostly, they were concerned about apathy on the part of heads of local party organizations regarding cooperation with NGOs: 72% of them mentioned this problem; 58% mentioned the reluctance of representatives of local governments to participate in public events on the issue of party policies; 53% spoke about involving the media in covering the public debates and their results; 25% saw difficulties with preparing the wrap-up document and motivating the general public to participate in developing party policies and overseeing how they are implemented.

Quality monitoring of how local party organizations fulfill their election platforms and quality public debates will help increase the impact of NGOs and the general public on the formation and implementation of regional party policies.

Regional public debates on the results of monitoring how local organizations of political parties and election blocs fulfill their election platforms will be held in October–November 2006. The results of these debates will be summarized and then published in the media and disseminated among stakeholders. ■

*The International Centre for Policy Studies is implementing "The impact of NGOs on the formation and implementation of political platforms" Project with the support of the Ukraine Citizen Action Network (UCAN) and the Institute of Sustainable Communities (ISC). For additional information, contact Project Manager Petro Udovenko by phone at (380-44) 484-4400 or by e-mail at [garant\\_kvali@icps.kiev.ua](mailto:garant_kvali@icps.kiev.ua).*

## **By the way...**

As part of the "Policy Analysis Groups" Project, a workshop involving PAGs was held 17 July 2006, dedicated to applying the best in European experience in analyzing policy and preparing public documents. The workshops were run by Zoe McNeill-Ritchie and John Cannon, consultants from the UK Department for International Development (DFID). Prior to this workshop, the two consultants reviewed 10 Green Papers prepared by Ukrainian PAGs and prepared professional recommendations that will be delivered during special feedback sessions with each PAG.

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