

ICPS newsletter[®]

Vira Nanivska: Ukraine urgently needs a new quality of state policy

Vira Nanivska is the new head of the National Academy of Public Administration under the President of Ukraine. In a recent decree, President Yushchenko designated the director of the International Centre for Policy Studies president of the Academy, at the same time eliminating the post of Rector of NAPA. This Academy is Ukraine's primary institution of higher learning for training, re-training and the advanced professional development of civil servants and local government officials. ICPS is proud of its director's new posting and took this opportunity to talk with her about her plans in this new job

ICPS: Why is the Academy undertaking changes at this time and why did President Yushchenko choose you for the job?

VN: I think that, at this point, the gap between the democratic political system in Ukraine and the machine that is supposed to run this system has become painfully obvious. This can be seen, among others, in the endless stir-ups in Ukrainian society that are inevitably brought about by ill-prepared policy decisions. I mean by this, that there is no information about the inevitable consequences of a particular decision, there's no analysis of the positions of different interest groups, and there aren't any procedures for mandatory consultations with stakeholders long before any decision is made. Whether you take Premier Tymoshenko's inability to fight monopolies, or today's situation with international military exercises in Crimea, the underlying factor is the same. The Government and Government agencies are not providing enough support for their decisions. It looks like, in a democratic environment, the well-intentioned plans of politicians can be destroyed simply by organizing a clever information campaign.

This issue of informational and analytical support for policies has now become the most urgent political issue. Moreover, it's a political issue not just for the president, but for any party or political force that is ever likely to be in power.

Why did the president appoint me? I think this is tied into the fact that only ICPS has been talking about the problem with public administration on a technical level. The Centre talks about approaches,

methods and the technical side of democracy. Public policy is not some kind of rocket science or higher math. It's something that any average Ukrainian can grasp. But you can't expect the average bureaucrat who has never been required by their job description to analyze issues and work on organizing public hearings to succeed. And any political group that is in power and has responsibility for running the country will suffer as long as it lacks this kind of capacity. They need to understand this in order to succeed.

ICPS: How would you then assess the work of the Academy in the past? What have been its strengths and weaknesses?

VN: The Academy has achieved a considerable amount. In the first place, it was established. It is absolutely the right place with the right functions and objectives. This is already very good and enormous effort went into this. A major role in all this was played by Bohdan Krawchenko, the ideologist who founded and ran the Academy. NAPA evolved very actively at the institutional and administrative levels. The last Rector, Volodymyr Luhoviy, was very successful precisely in developing this aspect of the Academy. And this foundation now provides an excellent opportunity, a chance to bring that new meaning to the Academy that is so urgently needed today.

The problems of NAPA are the same problems that are widespread in Ukraine today. The Academy is supposed to train civil servants to analyze policy to organize public consultations, to understand what it means to work with the opposition, and to understand what

New ICPS Director

ICPS has a new director, Viktor Chumak, the Centre's main expert on security and defense issues. A PhD in law, Mr. Chumak has degrees in both military science and jurisprudence. He has the status of an associate professor and a Major-General of Justice. In addition to authoring 12 studies, Mr. Chumak both headed and participated in working groups to draft 11 bills of law. In 2001–2004, he was a permanent member of the Ukrainian delegation negotiating with the European Commission on the Ukraine–EU Action Plan regarding the judiciary, internal affairs and readmission. From 2002 to 2004, he also ran an informal group under the Administration of the State Border Service to study the reform of border services in Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and the US and the transformation of their police.

procedures should be followed in doing so. This is what the Academy was missing. Civil servants need to be aware of how much depends on them and to understand that political competition needs to be constructive competition, not destructive conflict.

ICPS: What will be your first steps as president of the National Academy of Public Administration?

VN: My first task has already been stated in the Presidential Decree that appointed me. In the next three months, we have to put together our proposal for how to overhaul the Academy. Of course, these three months are over the summer break and most of the teachers at the Academy will be on vacation, and most politicians won't be around, either.

I think that the first thing will be to activate, mobilize and possibly even strengthen the Board of Supervisors. This Board needs to include those who, for lack of a better word, commission work from the Academy, its "customers:"

politicians, business professionals and top government officials.

ICPS: What do you see as the basic problems with public administration today?

VN: I'll start with talking about the good stuff. We have one major advantage and that achievement is, in some sense, an enormous plus for public administration. The truth is that we have a very good understanding of what constitutes the work of a bureaucracy: it has to be based on procedures, it requires discipline, and it means that documents are standardized. Not all developing countries have this kind of ready-made understanding.

The bureaucratic mind-set as that element that is based indubitably on strict discipline, on strict standards and strict procedures is already a major victory. We don't need to get caught up in that. We don't need to work on establishing that. We only need to alter those procedures, to adjust the standards, and to change the technical assignments. And, of course, transform the meaning. These changes are needed because the old hierarchic system of power had a very strong bureaucratic machine that took care of a single group and a single set of interests, and was run rigidly from the top down. This system did not recognize the idea of open competition.

Today, the civil service has not been re-focused to work within and support a political system that has a number of lateral points of political influence and legitimized competition. A Government politician has to constantly juggle opposing, mutually exclusive pressures. On one hand, there has to be a strong strategy going in one clear direction: the politician will be seen as ineffective if he can't achieve the declared goal. On the other, that same politician has to pay attention to the demands of different interest groups that are pulling in a variety of directions. There has to be an internal system that can digest and absorb all the various alternatives. This is why public policy is at the same time an instrument of political security and a means of ensuring effectiveness. Otherwise, there is no way to get to where you want to go.

At the moment, the opposition is brilliant in the way it is taking advantage of freedom of speech and open competition, while the current Administration is not using these instruments of public policy and doesn't know how to work with them.

In order for state policies to be completely informed, in order to foresee all possible consequences, both positive and negative, all the threats and risks underlying each decision, the country needs a professional civil service that has been newly and properly prepared. Every single decision needs to be absolutely informed. And this means analysis: impact analysis and analysis of the positions of all interest groups.

That is why hearings and consultations are held and conclusions are formed based on what people's positions are, what they know, what they believe in, what they need, and what kind of information could get them to change their point-of-view.

ICPS: What would you say to those who want to work in the civil services?

VN: I would tell them: you need to clearly understand that we live in a period of change. We are surrounded by norms, standards, habits and skills from the old world, that is, the world of a top-down bureaucracy. We need to take this into account and within this world we need to respond to laws and norms. At the same time, we are faced with new rules, new laws, and new standards—with a democratic society where not just one force is in power, but a number of forces are in power. And all the time there is serious, even aggressive competition among these forces. No one is to blame, here, and no one can be appealed to. You just have to work hard. The old environment has to be transformed. And you need to understand what you want to do down the line. You just have to keep learning.

No authoritarian or totalitarian regime is ever good for its society and its people. They can be very strong as states, but the people living in these countries never have a good standard of living or freedom of expression. Personally, I would hate to see Ukraine to become a militarized super-state or part of a military state—the kind of country that will squeeze other countries or take something away from others. I want to live in a country that is productive, a country that lives for the future, a country whose children have the guarantee that they can grow up in peace. ■

Vira Nanivska is regarded as an active promoter of policy development, economic research, and administrative reform throughout Central and Eastern Europe. She has been working in the development field

By the way...

The latest issue of *political commentary* is out. In this issue, ICPS specialists focus on the process of forming the Government coalition, ethnic conflicts in Crimea and risks to economic development.

On 2 June 2006, the project called "Industrial Restructuring in the NIS: Experience of and Lessons from the New EU Member States" (INDEUNIS) held a press briefing. INDEUNIS is an international project coordinated by the Vienna Institute of International Economic Studies and funded by the European Commission through the 6th Framework Program.

On 4 June 2006, ICPS economist Ildar Gazizullin participated in Danylo Yanevskiy's talk show, Maidan. Members of the panel discussed rising rail passenger rates and the impact of these kinds of changes on the general public.

Volodymyr Nikitin, Deputy Director for Development at ICPS, was in Bucharest for the Black Sea Forum for Dialog and Partnership. The main idea behind the Forum, which was initiated by Rumanian President Trajan Besescu, is to get going a dialog on the future of the Black Sea region.

There has been a series of discussions of Green Papers prepared by Policy Analysis Groups (PAGs) under the "Setting up 10 Policy Analysis Groups (PAGs) under Ukraine's Executive Bodies" Project. Green Papers were presented by PAGs from the Finance Ministry, the National Power Regulatory Commission, the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers, and the State Commission for Regulation and Consumer Policy.

since 1978, when she completed her PhD research on the modernization of Japan at the Institute of Oriental Studies under the Russian Academy of Science. Since 1992, Ms. Nanivska has been in Kyiv and has played an active role on many fronts in Ukraine's transition to a market economy. She worked as a Program Development Officer with the World Bank in Ukraine for five years. As Director of ICPS since 1997, Ms. Nanivska has actively promoted the development of civil society and NGOs. She has substantial experience in designing technical assistance programs and facilitating interactions between international experts and the government of Ukraine.

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