

ICPS newsletter®

Service quality in Kyiv— Something for officials to think about

For the first time, an independent opinion poll on the quality of municipal services has been carried out in Kyiv. Between 24 September and 25 October 2007, the International Centre for Policy Studies ran a project called "The Best District in Kyiv" on its own initiative. ICPS Director Volodymyr Nikitin and analyst Ihor Shevliakov reported on the results and conclusions of this project at a press conference held at UNIAN, a news agency, on 30 October 2007

Why evaluate service quality?

To prosper, Ukraine as a whole and Kyiv in particular need investment. The scale of this investment directly depends on the quality of services that can be provided by the capital. According to international experts, Kyiv is only 163rd among the 217 major cities around the world whose quality of life is regularly analyzed and evaluated. Similar studies and public debate of their results can contribute to an improvement in the quality of life through the provision of better services.

The ICPS study is the first independent large-scale public opinion survey in Kyiv regarding the quality of public services. The main objective was to reveal the real state of services Kyiv residents get and the worst problems, and to raise awareness of European standards for quality of services among Kyiv residents. ICPS specialists are

convinced that a systematic dialog between the city government and city residents will guarantee the formation of civil society and greater democracy in the nation's capital.

How this study was carried out

Kyiv residents were surveyed about the level of services using the questionnaire method. Between 24 September and 25 October, 4,000 Kyiv residents filled out questionnaires, that is, 400 per city district.

Respondents were asked to evaluate services in eight areas:

- municipal public transit;
- residential services (utilities and multi-unit building maintenance);
- the state of streets and roadways;
- how healthcare and educational institutions operate;

- local government actions to resolve specific problems brought up by residents;
- conditions for doing business and for obtaining loans in a given district;
- the organization of arts and sports events by district councils;
- the closeness of grocery stores, food markets and drugstores to apartments in a particular district.

In filling in the questionnaires, respondents evaluated the quality of each type of service provided. Each item was evaluated on a five-point scale (5=100%). Afterwards, the point evaluations were converted into a percentage that reflected the level of satisfaction with the quality of services.

How Kyiv residents evaluated city services

According to the results, the overall indicator for the quality of services provided to Kyiv residents was 3.53 points, reflecting a 70.6% level of satisfaction. Five areas were the most problematic:

- getting from one's home to one's destination in a timely and comfortable manner by public transit—3.38 points (67.6%);
- conditions for doing business—3.38 points (67.6%);
- medical services—3.43 points (68.6%);
- residential services (central heating, hot and cold water supply; maintenance of multi-unit residential building entrances, porches and elevators; the timely removal of garbage; and grounds maintenance)—3.44 points (68.8%);
- arts and sports events organized by district councils—3.4 points (68.0%).

Of 10 types of municipal services, Kyiv residents gave "good" marks only to two:

Chart 1. Evaluation of all types of services in Kyiv

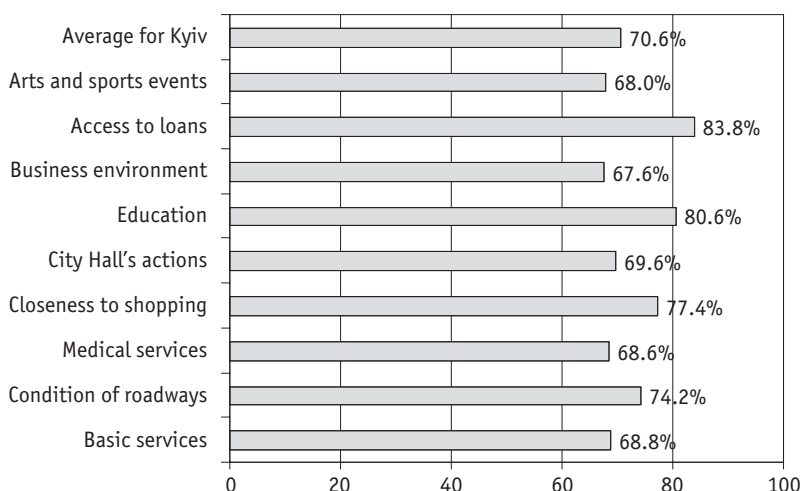
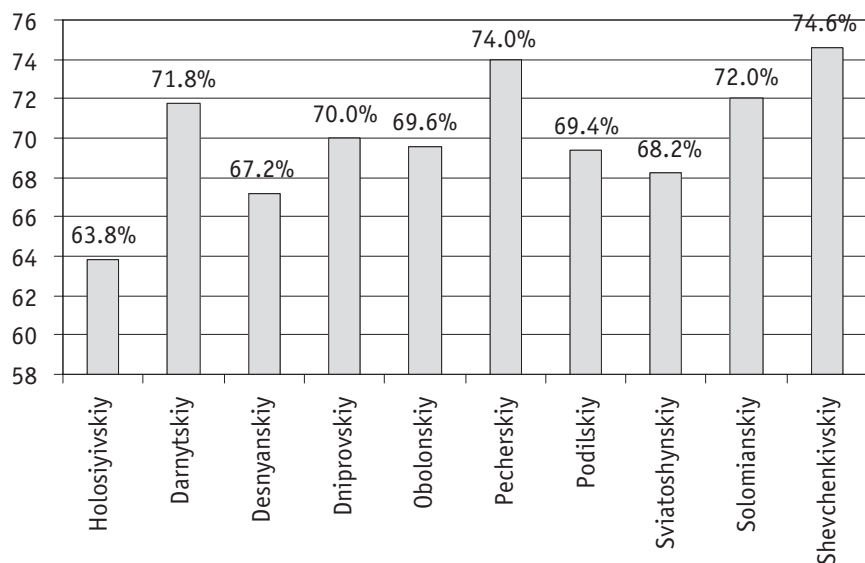


Chart 2. Overall rating by district



education—4.03 points (80.6%) and access to credit—4.19 points (83.8%).

According to Mr. Nikitin, the fact that Kyiv residents say that their level of satisfaction with the quality of services in the capital is 70% is evidence of their modesty and lack of informedness about European standards of service. Similar indicators rarely exceed 30% in most European cities, although the quality of services is actually much higher.

Who are the leaders among Kyiv's districts?

The results of this study made it possible to develop a rating of the capital's districts in terms of the quality of their services. The criteria-based evaluation was used to calculate an integral quantitative indicator for each district. According to ICPS analysts, this rating was intended to provide incentives for districts to compete among themselves by improving the quality of services they provided.

The evaluations of service quality by Kyiv residents put the capital's districts into two groups. The first group includes the traditional leaders: Shevchenkiy, Pecherskiy, Solomianskiy, and Darnytskyi districts. Their service quality indicator ranged from 3.73 to 3.5 points (74.6–70.0%).

Notably, in terms of overall indicators, there is only a small difference between the two leading districts, Shevchenkiy and Pecherskiy. The quality of service in

Pecherskiy district was rated 3.7 points (74.0%). This district showed better results for the provision of residential services—3.82 points (76.4%), the maintenance of streets and roadways—4.0 points (80.0%), and conditions for doing business—4.19 points (83.8%). It shared first place with **Sviatoshyanskiy district**, at 3.82 points (76.4%), in the district council's organization of arts and sports events.

Shevchenkiy district is the best in Kyiv in terms of its overall indicator for the quality of services provided (74.6%). This district was rated first in four service areas: medical—3.82 points (76.4%), local council actions to resolve specific problems raised by residents—4.0 points (80.0%), education—4.39 points (86.4%), and access to loans—4.43 points (88.6%).

Which of the districts trail

This group includes Dniproviskiy, Obolonskiy, Podilskiy, Sviatoshyanskiy, Desnyanskiy, and Holoziyivskiy districts. Residents in these districts evaluated the level of their services between 3.19 points and 3.48 points (63.8% to 69.6%). The public transit raised particular dissatisfaction among district residents. For example, Desnyanskiy district was given only 2.51 points (50.2%) and Holoziyivskiy district received 2.71 points (54.2%).

The overall indicator for **Holoziyivskiy district** was only 63.8% because of a low evaluation of its public transit, medical services and conditions for doing business.

The overall indicator for **Desnyanskiy district** was 67.2%, a low indicator mainly because of, again, considerable dissatisfaction with transit services. **Obolonskiy district** was given 69.6% by its residents, but the quality of residential and healthcare services, and the organization of arts and sports events by the district council were rated low.

Podilskiy district came in at the Kyiv average, 69.4%. Residents of this district gave low marks to residential services, local council actions to resolve specific problems raised by residents, conditions for doing business, and the organization of arts and sports events. **Sviatoshyanskiy district** was rated somewhat lower, at 68.2%. Its residents are dissatisfied with local council actions to resolve specific local problems, healthcare services and conditions for doing business.

The practice of evaluating services should continue

International competition among major cities is a common phenomenon in a globalized world. As the most progressive cities in the world show, such surveys are carried out regularly—at least once a quarter—and are even more in-depth. The study carried out by ICPS was a pilot project for Ukraine's capital. The Centre's specialists hope Kyiv's district councils and City Hall will draw the necessary conclusions based on the results of this study.

As a result of carrying out this study, ICPS analysts have come to the conclusion that public opinion on the quality of municipal services should continue to be tracked, not only in Kyiv, but also in other cities across the country. Such a practice will develop one effective mechanism for public participation in the management of a city. ■

The results obtained in this survey demonstrate residents' evaluation of service quality as of the day the survey was carried out. In future, ICPS plans to carry out similar studies, not only in the capital, but also in other cities in Ukraine. In future projects, ICPS also plans to carry out more in-depth research into the quality of specific types of services. For more about this project, visit the ICPS website at: <http://www.icps.com.ua/eng/project.html?pid=138>.

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