

ICPS newsletter®

Ukraine-Poland interns prepare briefs on public policy in Ukraine

The Fellowship Program for Ukrainian Policy and Opinion Makers ended on a high note in 2008. The purpose of the program was to strengthen policy think-tanks and Ukraine's future community leaders by establishing new contacts, exchanging experience and transferring knowledge in the analysis of public policy and the preparation of recommendations. It also focused on establishing effective communication between community activists and the government in Ukraine regarding public policy issues. During the course of the project, participants prepared briefs analyzing public policy, which are presented here in abridged form

The group of interns under this program consisted of Ukrainian experts from both the government and the NGO sector who are fluent in English. The program involved training in both Poland and Ukraine, participation in a study tour in Poland, consultations with Polish and Ukrainian experts, and the preparation of analytical papers.

The program was organized and coordinated by ICPS jointly with the Institute of Social Affairs (Warsaw), with financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Poland under a Polish assistance program for 2008.

By going through the program, the interns prepared a number of briefs analyzing policy and dedicated to specific practical issues in the formation and enactment of state policy in various spheres in Ukraine. Of the six papers drafted, four focused on local and regional themes, while two were dedicated to issues of national significance.

Yulia Rashchupkina prepared a study on the topic "Community participation in urban planning in Luhansk: How can a balance be maintained between economic development and the interests of the community." Town meetings with all stakeholders in the urban planning process are an indivisible component of sustainable urban development. This kind of event ensures that the public receives objective information and allows all stakeholders to state their positions, which increases the likelihood that future decisions will be more effective and

that conflicts within the community are reduced.

According to the researcher, the key factor that might reduce the level of conflict in the urban planning activities in Luhansk would be for the City Council to develop and adopt zoning.¹ Once Luhansk City Council adopts the Provision "On the procedure for town hearings regarding urban planning documents within the limits of the City of Luhansk," it will foster the establishment of clear procedures and mechanisms for informing stakeholders and taking their various positions into account on urban planning policy. Urban planning activities need to be widely publicized, including explanations for why certain decisions are necessary, by posting the necessary information on the internet, holding town meetings, issuing informational bulletins, publishing announcements, and so on.

Liubov Vasylchuk analyzed *How EU funding might be used to greater effect, based on the experience of local governments in Poland*. The researcher is convinced that Ukraine should learn from the positive experience of other countries, because using EU financial instruments helped Poland carry out a variety of programs in local, regional, investment, social, and economic development.

¹ Zoning is a graphic component of local building rules that clearly regulates permissible appearance, conditions and restrictions on construction and other use of territory within a given zone.

But the most important point was that it helped prepare the country for EU accession.

Starting in 2007, the European Union has instituted a new financial instrument to which Ukraine has open access: the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument (ENPI). Under ENPI, local government bodies in Ukraine can participate only in cross-border and certain thematic programs. Of Ukraine's oblasts, nine are eligible to join the international program with neighboring regions.² The researcher is convinced that it is important to activate the work of Ukraine's local administrations that are participating in these programs, once they are officially open for business and procedures for applying have been announced.

Ukraine's local governments should also work to improve their capacity to participate in EU cross-border programs, by studying the experience of other countries, improving qualifications, turning to their governments with a request to improve mechanisms for participating in grant programs, and generally putting more effort into putting together strategic development strategies for their regions.

Olena Hrabovska, compared *Ukrainian and Polish experience, analyzed the importance of establishing positive conditions for effective interaction between government bodies and NGOs*. Her paper presents the Ukrainian and Polish models for interaction between the government and non-government organizations and an attempt is made to outline the most appropriate model for intersectoral interaction.

This researcher recommends that the current role of the government and NGOs in Ukraine be reviewed and rethought

² (1) The Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Program; (2) Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine; (3) Romania-Moldova-Ukraine.

and that new strategic roles and plans be put together. In order to establish effective intersectoral interactions on the principles of openness and complementarity, she proposes reviewing and instituting various forms of cooperation in the process of formulating and enacting government policy, including participation in the development of legislative and other strategic documents.

The first step for the Government of Ukraine on the path to strengthening relations with NGOs should be setting up a coordination center in key ministries with the involvement of representatives of community organizations. In the long-term prospect, it makes sense, according to the researcher, to launch procedures for drafting a single law that would include clear standards and forms of intersectoral interaction. This would help ensure transparency and accountability on the part of both partners.

Valentyna Zasadko wrote about *"Activating cross-border cooperation in Ukraine in the context of the European Neighborhood Policy."* The researcher says that two main factors prevent Ukraine from successfully carrying out the European Neighborhood Policy. Firstly, Ukrainian legislation has considerable discrepancies, which makes it difficult to develop cross-border cooperation. Secondly, the level of interest among Ukraine's oblast and local administrations in these issues is relatively low. There is not enough previous experience in cross-border cooperation in Ukraine and the European Neighborhood Policy. This threatens to reduce the level of international financial assistance, damages Ukraine's image, and is causing distrust in Ukraine's institutions as partners in cooperation to grow.

It will be impossible to carry out cross-border programs without mobilizing local players (government bodies, business and communities), combining foreign and domestic resources, and developing and carrying out pilot projects. This requires the establishment of regional interactive networks, organizing effective decision-making teams, and engaging professional institutions and scientific facilities in cross-border activities.

Polish experience shows that the main pre-condition for the active development of cross-border cooperation is strong motivation among those involved in this effort. These individuals need to be clear about all the advantages of participating in ENP programs. Only under these conditions will those involved in cross-border cooperation initiate the necessary changes in legislation, look for partners for projects, and expand their own experience.

Aspects of planning the implementation of the new deeper Ukraine-EU agreement were studied by **Oleh Myroshnichenko**. Relations between Ukraine and the EU are moving into a new phase characterized by the anticipate conclusion of work on the new, deep agreement. According to the Ukraine-EU Summit in 2008, it is likely to be called an Agreement on Association.

During the next phase of bilateral relations, the expectation is that Ukraine will take on a higher level of commitment in European integration, something that is taking on particular significance in light of the country's long-standing desire to gain membership in the Union. The signing of a new agreement between Ukraine and the EU will not only signify a diplomatic coup for Ukraine but will also bring with it new challenges largely linked to internal problems than with external policy.

For Ukraine to maintain its commitments within the context of the ENP, especially those related to the adaptation of legislation, will require not only political responsibility but also the development and application of a well-thought-out system for planning and implementing these commitments. This kind of planning, in turn, will require balanced coordination within the executive branch of government, just as in relation to civil society and business. To implement the anticipated goals, it will be necessary for the country to have an effective administration with a clear understanding of the *acquis communautaire* and real motivation to "Europeanize" the country. In the context of the current system of European integration in Ukraine, this objective may prove extremely difficult to reach.

In this way, writes the researcher, carrying out the ENP will require a comprehensive document on strategic planning (programming) that anticipates the entire spectrum of measures needed for implementation and one in which the entire government administration system would have a stake.

Maria Tyshchenko studied *the problems and prospects for e-government at the local level in Ukraine*. According to the researcher, one of the biggest problems at the state level is, on the one hand, the absence of a strategy to develop a knowledge society, and the absence of a strategy to close the digital gap, on the other. The level of computerization is a clear measure of state and community development. Sufficient penetration by computers could foster a narrowing of the distance between Ukraine and EU countries such as Poland.

Today, Ukraine's Government needs to begin to respond to the serious challenge of developing a national computerization strategy that would capture those spheres of the economy and community life that will be key to the future flowering and development of the country. Ukraine has to improve the quality of life of its citizens through the use of information technologies in order to provide electronic services at the local level.

This is a necessary condition to institute electronic Government in Ukraine. Poland's experience shows that planning the development of an electronic government is extremely important for our country, given that our western neighbor has already formed an e-government and is ensuring that its capacities are being widely put into use. ■

The program organizers plan to extend it into 2009. More information about this program and its results can be found on the ICPS site <http://icps.com.ua/eng/project.html?pid=147>.

For additional information, contact Project Manager Ihor Shevliakov by phone at (38044) 484-44-00 or via e-mail at ishevliakov@icps.kiev.ua.

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icps newsletter editor: Olga Lvova (olvova@icps.kiev.ua)
Phone: (380-44) 484-44-00. Fax: (380-44) 484-4402
English text editor: L.A. Wolanskyj
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Address: vul. Pymonenka 13A, Kyiv, Ukraine 04050
Web-site: <http://www.icps.com.ua/eng/>