

# ICPS newsletter®

## Quality of Life in Ukraine: The crisis will pass, but the problems will not

*For every human being, there is only one indicator that really shows the success or otherwise of a government's work: the quality of life of its citizens. Income levels that allow a person to support themselves and their family, an education that ensures a decent job, a healthcare system that helps people live longer, an environment that is healthful—these and other key indicators are the foundation for the quality of life. For Quality of Life, Ukraine ranks only 53rd among 63 major countries in the world. This was its result in the latest annual survey by the International Centre for Policy Studies (ICPS) presented during a roundtable on 24 April 2009 called "Realizing Ukraine's potential and the quality of life of its citizens during the crisis"*

In the last year, Ukraine has moved up four points in this rating. Still, not one of the structural problems that prevent the country from reaching a decent quality of life has been resolved. In terms of energy efficiency, Ukraine is a straggler in world ratings. Individual indicators for its business climate are tens of times poorer than for EU countries. The level of corruption in Ukrainian society and in its educational system is one of the highest in the world.

The current economic crisis has been exacerbating the impact of these problems to catastrophic levels and makes it urgent for the country to start doing something serious about them. To effectively withstand the crisis and eliminate structural hindrances to its development, Ukraine **needs to establish clear policy priorities**. During a recent ICPS roundtable on quality of life in Ukraine, leading politicians and economists came up with a number of key priorities:

- **Oleksandra Kuzhel, Chair, State Committee for Regulatory Policy and Entrepreneurship:** Ukraine needs appropriate and consistent regional development policies. This has been

made clear by the results of studies carried out by ICPS, where the last places in regional quality of life ratings go to "donor oblasts," that is, those regions that end up donating part of their revenues to develop other regions.

- **Stanislav Dovhiy, National Deputy of Ukraine:** Ukraine needs to remove those obstacles between students and teachers or patients and doctors that result in ineffective, overly bureaucratized and corrupt services. Ukraine's statistics for education and healthcare are pretty scary. Only 6% of our population can be considered completely healthy, while not a single post-secondary institution in this country has made it to the ranks of the top 500 institutions in the world.
- **Vira Nanivska, Honorary Chair, Supervisory Board of the International Centre for Policy Studies:** The opportunity to improve quality of life depends on completing the "desovietization" process in Ukrainian society, that is, bringing the government and public administration

systems and Ukraine's legislation in line with multi-party, competitive political and economic systems.

- **Traian-Laurentiu Hristea, Ambassador of Romania to Ukraine:** ICPS's research has confirmed the latest report from the European Commission on Ukraine. Instituting European standards and approaches to public administration will help raise the quality of life in this country.

**Conclusions:** This discussion confirmed that the quality of life needs to be acknowledged as the main indicator of the success or otherwise of the work of the Government and the country's politicians. An assessment of the quality of life makes it possible to pinpoint structural development problems in Ukraine and to determine what should be its public policy priorities. ■

*The "Socio-Economic Performance and Potential Analysis Capacity" (SEPPAC) project has been carried out by ICPS in partnership with the Conference Board of Canada and the Government of Ukraine for the last three years, with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The project's purpose is to build capacity in the Government and NGO sectors to develop and analyze public policy through the assessment of Ukraine's economic potential and the socio-economic impact of realizing it.*

*For additional information, contact Publications Coordinator Maksym Boroda at (+38044) 484-4400 or via e-mail at mboroda@icps.kiev.ua.*

**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 your request to: marketing@icps.kiev.ua.

**icps newsletter** editor: Olga Lvova (olvova@icps.kiev.ua)  
Phone: (380-44) 484-4400. Fax: (380-44) 484-4402  
English text editor: L.A. Wolanskyj  
Articles may be reprinted with ICPS consent.

The International Centre for Policy Studies is an independent research organization 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: vul. Pymonenka 13A, Kyiv, Ukraine 04050  
Web-site: <http://www.icps.com.ua/eng/>