

REFORMS DIGEST



№ 1, June 2010

The **Reforms Support Network** is a self-managed platform uniting civil society organisations that share the ideology of reforms, take efforts to form the public demand for reforms and to promote their implementation, as well as to create the climate for consolidated and conscious support to the project of Ukraine's modernisation

The proposed first **Reforms Digest** is the **Network's** monthly edition tracing the key events and trends spotted in the political and public life in the regions, activities of the regional reforms committees, and key civil society initiatives in the context of the country's reform

More information on the **Network** and its projects can be found at the end of this publication

Authorities and Politics

Volyn Region

At the beginning of June, President Victor Yanukovich **made a number of changes in the leadership of rayon state administrations (RSAs)** in Volyn Region having replaced the heads of Ratne, Lyuboml, and Rozhysheche RSAs. The positive aspect of such staffing policy pursued by the President and the Head of Volyn Oblast State Administration (OSA) is that the majority of the appointed RSA heads either come from their rayons or have worked in them for a long time.

Governor Borys Klimchuk has been actively involved in the development of **Yagodyn international border crossing point** which has been focusing on since the time of his first term in office. Nowadays, Mr Klimchuk has quite serious state support, as the Yagodyn-Dorogusk route has been prioritised in the context of preparation to EURO-2012. It is expected that reconstruction of the Volyn section of M-07 Kyiv-Kovel-Yagodyn-Warsaw highway will also get the same attention from the Governor.

Kharkiv Region

Kharkiv Region is lagging behind the **oblast budget** revenue plans, which in the first five months of the current year was fulfilled by **37.5%** against the targeted 41% (<http://www.kharkivoda.gov.ua/uk/news/archive/date/2010-06-11>)

The **World Bank** delegation visit Kharkiv on 14 June 2010 to study the city and oblast possibilities in terms of industrial, transport infrastructure, city economy, and land market development. At the meetings,

the leading bank experts and city officials discussed the long-term cooperation and attraction of investments into the priority sectors of the city economy.

In addition, **Martin Raiser**, World Bank Director for Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova, and Gerard Bayam met with representatives of the **city civil society organisations** dealing with the reform of the local self-governance. The meeting was arranged by the Foundation for Local Democracy.

Donetsk Region

Donetsk Oblast Council has approved a regulation on **provision of material assistance to the citizens by council members**. This decision was passed on 1 July at a session meeting. Previously, at the Council panel meeting, Andriy Shyshatskyi, Chairman of the Council, announced that the documents would be improved and submitted for discussion at the closest session. This decision added a line on provision of funds by council members to voters in the approved Donetsk Region Budget. Altogether, 2.25 mln UAH (15,000 UAH per member of council) are set aside for this line.

Donetsk Oblast Council approved a new version of the **EURO-2012 Targeted Regional Programme**. This decision was also made on 1 July during a session meeting. The Programme implementation requires 19 bln UAH, including 10 bln UAH from the state budget and 0.56 mln UAH from local budget. The Oblast Council intends to invest 119 mln UAH of its own funds, while private investments may make up to 8.3 bln UAH. <http://www.ngo.donetsk.ua/donsociety/17562>

The State Statistics Committee has reported that as of 01.06.2010 the salary arrears have increased by 11.1% as compared to 1 May (up to 1,887.023 mln UAH). As of 1 June, the biggest salary arrears are noted in Donetsk Oblast – 362.514 mln UAH, Luhansk Oblast – 171.810 mln UAH, and in Kharkiv Oblast – 167.797 mln UAH. <http://www.ngo.donetsk.ua/donsociety/17514>

On 29 June 2010, Governor Anatoliy Blyznyuk said that Donetsk Oblast State Administration was going to make an agreement with the Ministry of Education on **development of a life-long learning strategy**. The strategy will involve the training of young and promising civil servants, staff, and re-training of the already employed civil servants. This initiative is implemented on the instruction of the President of Ukraine to the local authorities to train new staff.

Sumy Region

The people in Sumy Region expect implementation and not imitation of immediate reforms. When asked “*What is your personal attitude to the implementation of structural reforms in Ukraine?*”, only 3.9% of Sumy citizens replied that reforms should be refrained from during the most recent survey done by the Centre for Regional Policy Studies (CRPS) in Sumy, another 3.6% were in doubt, while 50.4% said that “the country needed immediate reforms”. There were also 33.2% who claimed that “reforms are needed if they do not affect the people's wellbeing” and 8.9% who answered that “reforms were needed, even if unpopular reforms would worsen the people's wellbeing”...

<http://www.sumynews.tv/index.php/sumynews/sociology/844-2010-07-05-15-06-56>

On 9 June 2010, at a press conference, which took place at SumyNews press centre, a broad practical discussion was announced on the **necessity of changes in the constitutional structure of the regional self-governance in Ukraine** based on decentralisation as its driving force. “We have no doubts that Ukraine needs such reform, and at this stage there is a need to define the volume of changes, their order and timeline”, Oleksandr Khoruzhenko, CRPS Director, said at the press conference. This statement was followed by the presentation of a CRPS strategic plan on basic communities reform in Sumy Region. Its basic innovation component is introduction of mechanisms which can be used by the citizens of future communities and local self-governance to act as partners of the government at all stages of the reform, starting with the preliminary collection of information and modelling of administrative/territorial units (ATUs) and ending with submission of a community setup bill to the parliament. In addition, it is proposed to use the discretionary principle, since the ATUs enlargement is not the main aim of the reform, should a community be able to use the mechanisms of social modelling and long-term planning to demonstrate its ability to mobilise the existing resources to ensure local development and provision of the proper level of administrative and social services. The community partnership mechanisms are proposed as an alternative to

the enlargement and a method to consolidate the potentials of individuals ATUs to meet the tasks which cannot be fulfilled by one ATU.

<http://www.sumynews.tv/www/index.php/sumynews/press-center/695-2010-06-11-15-02-19>

Lviv Region

On 30 June, the Western-Ukrainian Regional Training Centre has initiated a **Public Forum "Building European Ukraine – Getting Lviv Ready for EURO-2012!"** in Lviv. This Forum was the first one in a series of similar forums in six Ukrainian cities which are preparing themselves (or have started their preparations, like Dnipropetrovsk and Odesa) for the EURO-2012 final matches. During June-September 2010, such forums will take place in Lviv, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk, and Kyiv. Their main aim is to develop a model for an open discussion between the public and the government about city development and improvement, in particular in the context of infrastructural development of the Ukrainian cities to the EURO-2012 finals.

http://www.zurnc.org.ua/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=61&Itemid=72

In Lviv, **political elites do not seem to be very enthusiastic about the new law on local elections.** Adoption of this bill was passed by the parliament in the first reading and announcement of the local elections date launched a vivid discussion on the democratic nature of certain rather ambiguous innovative norms introduced by the bill. Representatives of local political organisations claim that they were ready to get united in order to express their resistance to the current governing top which tries to push the new bill on local elections through <http://portal.lviv.ua/news/2010/07/05/171605.html>

Odesa Region

The **composition of Odesa Oblast State Administration continues to be upgraded.** In particular, Natalia Chehodar (Head of Ovidiopol RSA in 2005-2010 and an ardent Yushchenko's supporter in 2004) was appointed First Deputy Governor. The appointment gave rise to many speculations and assumptions, as until now Ms Chehodar has not been officially connected to the Party of Regions, as well as she has not occupied any positions above the Head of RSA. In addition, Ms Hilko, Head of the Foreign Policy Department has been dismissed, and voluntarily followed by almost all Department staff. Practically all other heads of OSA departments have also been replaced over this period.

At the same time, the Governor has officially headed the Party of Regions oblast organisation, having replaced businessmen and member of parliament Leonid Klimov. Recently, the entire management of the Party of Regions oblast organisation has been replaced.

Chernihiv Region

The beginning of summer has slowed down the public and political life in the region. At the same time, more active reformatting of local authorities could be observed, in particular as concerns **appointment of RSA heads.** In the majority of cases, the persons appointed occupied executive positions in the region before 2005.

A splash of activity occurred at the end of the month and was caused by the **preparation to the local elections.** A number of national level politicians (V. Lytvyn, A.Hrytsenko, M.Tomenko) visited the region. They mainly were dealing with presentation of political forces at the local level and the wish to participate in the mayor's elections. In this context, the main political forces represented in the region (BYuT, Lytvyn's Bloc, Hrytsenko's Civic Position) have stated their wish to participate in the elections of the Mayor of Chernihiv. The current Mayor, O.Sokolov, has also expressed his intention to participate in the local elections.

A press conference has also taken place dedicated to the meeting of **Chernihiv G20**, a social and political project which aims to involve prominent individuals, associated with Chernihiv, into the development of the city. Despite of broad information and promotion campaign, the organisers have managed to get together only eight out of twenty announced participants. <http://pfirs.org/>

Kherson Region

Kherson Region is also undergoing **staff changes**. Thus, in June the head of the regional police department and the governor were dismissed. With the advent of the new ruling team at the national level, almost all key officials in the region have been removed from their offices. Certain experts explain such "revolutionary" changes in Kherson Region by the conflict of business interests and the situation that has developed around the Henichesk Rayon which part of the oblast.

http://www.grivna.kherson.ua/gubernator_situatsija_v_genicheskom_rajone_sitsilija_otdyhaet.htm,

<http://www.vgoru.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=9237>,

<http://www.pskherson.com.ua/pervye-poteri-udarnoy-gruppy-anatoliy-gritsenko-2.html>.

The newly appointed governor Mykola Kostyak has started his activities in the office with the change of the team, having dismissed all deputy governors and increased their number to six, even though only one has been officially appointed so far (Vyacheslav Bilyi as the first deputy governor and chief of staff).

<http://www.pskherson.com.ua/v-upravlenii-ministerstva-vnutrennikh-del-ukrainy-v-khersonskiy-oblasti-proizoshla-smena-rukovodstva.html>

The project "Formation of Consensus between Member of Parliament, Independent Experts, and Civil Society Organisations on the Ways to Improve Parliamentary Procedures and Practices Through Consultations and Discussion of the Green and White Papers of Ukrainian Parliamentarism", run by the Agency for Legislative Initiatives and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, produced an **educational film "Reforms Dictated by Time" dedicated to the parliamentary reform in Ukraine**. The film describes the main problematic aspects in the functioning of the Verkhovna Rada, as well as mentions the possible ways how to remove them and to improve the functioning of the Ukrainian Parliament. The film production involved members of Parliament, experts, and researchers.

http://parliament.org.ua/index.php?action=news&ar_id=2066&as=0

Experts of the Agency for Legislative Initiatives analysed the **legislative results generated by the Ukrainian parliament in June 2010**. Altogether, **20 laws** have been **passed**, out of which 13 have already come into force along with 9 other laws passed back in May. The majority of the adopted laws concerns sector policies (10 laws); 4 laws are aiming to improve legal policy; 3 laws regulate economic policy; 2 laws concern social policy; and 1 law is dealing with information policy.

http://parliament.org.ua/index.php?action=news&ar_id=2065&as=0

Regional Reforms Committees

Volyn Region

On 16 June 2010, the Regional Committee for Economic Reforms held its third meeting. Governor Borys Klimchuk and his deputies Oleksandr Bashkalenko and Edward Stoyev presented the Economic Reforms Programme for 2010-2014 unveiled by President Victor Yanukovych on 2 June 2010. The "reform" approach appeared to be rather formal, which evidences that the new authorities are not going to deal with reforms on a systemic basis. This, in particular, is confirmed by the fact that the presentation was made to the deputy heads of all rayon state administrations, the majority of which are about to be replaced, and despite of this, they are requested to arrange discussions of the Programme in their districts.

At the same event, Myhaylo Nahod, Head of the Centre for Political Analysis and Election Consulting, presented the Reforms Roadmap for Civil Society, produced by the Reforms Support Network, as well as a comparative analysis of the Modernisation of Ukraine: Reform Priorities and the Economic Reforms Committee.

Upon consideration of the agenda issues, it has been decided to oblige heads of working groups to study the Economic Reforms Programme in detail, to look into the proposals set forth by the Regional Reforms Committee, to coordinate them with the Economic Reforms Programme and with problematic issues related to the development of the relevant sectors and areas of activities. Likewise, they were also requested to take into account the status of settlement of the problematic issues when preparing new proposals for the nationwide economic reforms programme; to arrange round tables (one in June and one in July) to discuss the draft Programme and proposals thereto involving representatives of NGOs, business

associations, experts, researchers; and to prepare new proposals and comments on the results of the discussion. <http://www.voladm.gov.ua/struct.php?id2=1067&nnm=139>

Donetsk Region

The innovation territorial planning strategy and the regional environmental strategy were the main topics discussed at the next meeting of the Regional Economic Reforms Committee chaired by Governor Anatoliy Blyznyuk. Serhiy Tretyakov, Head of the State Environmental Department, presented a draft environmental strategy which changes the rules for the use of natural resources and contains proposals on the solution of environmental problems of Donetsk Region, city industrial conglomerations, and Azov Sea. <http://www.ngo.donetsk.ua/donsociety/17508>

Kharkiv Region

Kharkiv Regional Committee for Economic Reforms developed proposals for the Economic and Social Development Programme for 2010 produced by Kharkiv Council on the basis of President Yanukovych's Programme *Ukraine for People*. These proposals were positively assessed by Iryna Akimova, First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration and Executive Secretary of the Economic Reforms Committee, who expressed her gratitude to the citizens of Kharkiv and Poltava for fruitful work and outlined further priority objectives (<http://kharkivoda.gov.ua/uk/search/tag/name/komitet>). At the same time, as it was noted by Deputy Governor Yuriy Sapronov, one of the main tasks of the Economic Reforms Committee is to prevent to the maximum extent possible the unprotected groups of the Ukrainian population (<http://kharkivoda.gov.ua/uk/search/tag/name/komitet>).

Kherson Region

For the first time in its history, the Oblasts State administration approved a Public Consultations Plan for 2010. The Public Council, functioning at the Administration, sees this as a positive step which makes it possible to inform the local authorities of many problems of the people.

The Plan sets a number of tasks for the relations with the regional public. In particular, the following events are planned by the end of the year: National Meeting of Head Masters of Boarding Schools with participation of the public to discuss the ways to reform boarding schools for orphans and children deprived of parental care; the Youth Forum of Kherson Region within the framework of the Youth of Kherson Region Programme for 2010; a vocational schools round table to discuss a vocational schools development programme for 2011-2015; measures dealing with tourism development, social protection of war veterans, fulfilment of the social and economic development programme (construction); and public hearings on observance of human rights in the region. In addition, the consultations will also include discussion of the draft economic, social, and cultural development of Kherson oblast for 2011.

The Governor arranged a special meeting of the regional economic reforms committee where he presented his initiative in the form of a concept for introduction in Kherson region of a special taxation system for quick and substantial improvement of the regional economy. The regional businessmen present at the committee meeting supported the Governor's proposal on introduction of special (or simplified) taxation regime in the region. On the results of the meeting, it was decided to submit the concept improved during the meeting for public discussion.

Sumy Region

President of Ukraine requested that a programme for development of depressive regions be prepared in the near future. Speaking at an extended meeting of Sumy regional economic reforms committee, the President instructed Iryna Akimova, First Deputy Head of Presidential Administration, Governor Yuriy Chmyr, and other officials to develop a mechanism for creation of development programmes within shortest terms possible. The President also noted that Sumy region is one of the most difficult regions from the economic perspective, where economy has suffered probably more than in other regions of Ukraine, while the viability of the region is very important and in some cases even critical.

Odesa Region

The oblast reforms committee operates mainly through the meetings of temporary working groups. It is, however, not clear which criteria have been used to select their members. On 21, 23, and 29 June, the committee arranged three round tables “Wealthy Society, Competitive Economy, Efficient State” to consider the draft Economic Reforms Programme for 2010-2014 chaired by Deputy Governor Varrava. The participants of the round tables included representatives of local authorities, NGOs, experts, who expressed a number of proposals to the Programme, which are supposed to be passed over to the Economic Reforms Committee under the President of Ukraine. At the same time, no real work is being done so far apart from meetings of working groups and resonant declarations.

Civil Society

Donetsk Region

On 16 June 2010, a round table “Economic Reforms in Ukraine in the Context of Election Programme of V. Yanukovich”. The event has been arranged on the initiative of the Donetsk Organisation of the Committee of Voters together with the Right to the Future Civic Coalition and the Reforms Support Network. The public, local authorities, and the media were presented with a methodology used to assess the efficiency of the election programmes implementation and the results of the expert opinion poll on the prospects and mechanisms used for implementation of the President’s election programme. <http://www.cvu.dn.ua/news/525>

Sumy Region

The Centre for Political Studies presented an open **letter to Governor Yuriy Chmyr with ten simple tips** able to change the life of the people for the better. The time has come for this letter because “the civil society has its place and its mission: we help both the authorities, and the opposition. In this former case, through understanding the reforms; in the latter, by offering the intellectual and efficient service to the society. Both the authorities, and the opposition (any opposition) will be able to stand only if they are doing real, appreciable, and most importantly – reasonable things.” The key tips made by the public included a warning against the attempts at the freedom of speech, an advice to make a real and not imitated promotion of the oblast, reforms, to get at least one serious foreign investor into the region, to give the Sumy airport into proper hands, to study the state language, and to stop making attempts at the cultural future of the country. <http://www.sumynews.tv/www/index.php/sumynews/politics/682-10->

Lviv Region

Despite of the repeated comments from the world community to the new Ukrainian authorities that it is **undemocratic to oppress the media**, the Azarov government proposes to prohibit dissemination of information messages through the Internet. This initiative has underlines once again the intentions of the new authorities to create Ukraine for the Party of Regions. Alongside with such odious reforms as the Tax Code, the judicial reform, the law on local elections, prohibition of free dissemination of information products through the Internet evidences curtailing of the main civil rights established by the constitution for the benefit of the power institutions. <http://portal.lviv.ua/news/2010/07/01/165851.htm>

Civil society organisations remind the municipal authorities of their promise to make a bicycle route, while the bureaucrats threaten to deprive the disobedient ones of the financial support. http://ngo.lviv.ua/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3648:2010-02-06-10-54-23&catid=2:s-&Itemid=12

Kherson Region

For almost ten weeks, the regional civil society has been discussing the topic which united all the people. In particular, it is the **struggle for the citizens’ right to decide on the fate of green plantations in the city at free public discussions**.

In 2007, a rather doubtful land auction took place, and the Amstor trade network received five hectares of the Jubilee Park (better known as the Oak Grove or the Oaks) to construct a trade and

entertainment centre. Amstor has got a permit to cut down about 800 60-year old oaks. At the beginning of the year, civil society organisations raised against this initiative having collected several thousand signatures, held a meeting with faction leaders and tried to convince them that the park had to remain for the city citizens. An initiative group has been set up which arranged a meeting next to the park, addressed the EU Ambassadors who visited the city for Europe Day celebrations, and initiated public hearings. After a series of critical publications about the members of the oblast council, representatives of the Party of Regions, which lobby the Amstor's interests in the municipality, the then-Governor Anatoliy Hrytsenko made a statements that he was against the destruction of trees in the park and promised that no single tree would be cut down.

In mid-June, despite of the provocations and pressure from city authorities and violent ordered campaign in the press, public hearings did take place. More than four hundred citizens supported the preservation of the Oaks. But the city mayor sabotaged the publication of the decision made by the public hearings, and only informed the members of the city council at a session that such hearings took place, and the council majority, which includes representatives of the Party of Regions, Natalia Vitrenko Bloc, and Volodymyr Lytvyn Bloc, refused to preserve the park. The struggle goes on.

Chernihiv Region

The Pure Politics Expert Club held a round table Development of Community and Local Self-Governance as the Strategic Priority of the Municipal Management. The experts discussed the developments prepared by the Foundation of International and Regional Research: Results of the Monitoring of Programme No.5 Development of Community and Local Self-Governance of Chernihiv Development Strategy. In addition, the results of the public opinion poll conducted among the citizens of Chernihiv were presented. The poll concerned the level of satisfaction with the efforts of the city authorities in the area of community and local self-governance development. <http://pfirs.org/?p=891&language=uk>

Odesa Region

A number of civil society activists arranged a **flash mob** against Bill No. 2450 on Peaceful Gatherings currently considered by parliament.

Kharkiv Region

The **opposition between city authorities and citizens** around the illegal cutting down of secular trees in the central city park is going on. The aim of the felling is to construct a four-row motorway through the park and connect Sumska and Novhorodska Streets. The motors way also cuts through the Children's Railway, the only one in Ukraine, the favourite place of little Kharkiv citizens, which will be non-operatable after the motorway is commissioned.

Today, tree defenders have got united into the Green Front organisation. They arranged protest campaigns during the entire June against the illegal actions of local authorities. On 19 June, public hearings on the fate of green plantations in Kharkiv were organised. The local authorities falsified the decision of these hearings. Next to Kyiv District Executive Committee, where the hearings took place, several thousand citizens willing to participate gathered, but they were not able to get to the hearings. The participants were registered in one place (2341 people were registered), while a considerable number of participants received a mandate for participation in an absolutely different place. These were mainly schools, kindergartens, and hospitals employees who, under the threat of dismissal, were forced to go and vote for the "correct" decision. According to Oleh Perehon, press secretary of the *Pecheng* Organisation, nobody counted the votes of those who voted against the felling; nobody counted the votes in a proper way; out of about 300 people in the hall, there were about 20 of those who voted for preservation of green plantations, but they were counted as one vote/

Meanwhile, the illegal felling goes on even despite of the decision of the profile parliamentary committee to stop the fillings. Construction works go on, the tree defenders who try to resist this, are arrested by the police and subjected to the court for administrative infringements. On 23 June, the city council adopted another decision on felling of 32 hectares of forest in the 32nd quarter of the forest and park area close to Pyatykhatky, a big city district, built after World War II.

In general terms, a big protest apolitical group has appeared in Kharkiv resolutely demanding dismissal of Acting Mayor H. Kernes and protesting against the illegal decisions taken by local authorities. The current situation repeats the one in 2009, when, despite of the recommendations made by eight central authorities, M. Dobkin, who was the Mayor of Kharkiv at that time, decided to liquidate the city tuberculosis hospital, having ignored the opinion of the local community and protests of the civil society activists. <http://glavnoe.ua/articles/a3758>

The Weekly Mirror, nationwide weekly, has published an article by Denys Kovryzhenko, Director for Legal Programmes of the Agency for Legislative Initiatives, titled **Certain Linguistic Issues**. In his article Mr Kovryzhenko examines the new law on language expected to be adopted by parliament already by the end of June 2010. The author gives an overview of the possible consequences of the legislative amendments which are introduced allegedly in accordance with the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. Mr Kovryzhenko believes that adoption of this law may result in the privileged status of regional languages against the state language. <http://www.dt.ua/1000/1550/69576/>



The [Reforms Support Network](#) is a self-managed platform, uniting civil society organisations which share the ideology of reforms and take efforts to form the public demand for reforms, to promote their implementation, as well as to create a climate for consolidated and conscious support of Ukraine's modernisation project.

The **Network's Mission** lies in substantial renovation of Ukraine through promotion of reforms on the basis of democratic values.

The **Network** was launched through a national campaign on preparation and discussion of a Concept for [Modernisation of Ukraine: Defining Reform Priorities](#), which has been used as a basis to develop [The Roadmap of Reforms for Civil Society](#) and to arrange a [National Council of the Reforms Support Network](#). This campaign represented an attempt to setup a team of up to forty leading independent Ukrainian analysts in order to propose an expert vision of the priority reforms to the society and involve active public centres to their discussion and promotion at the national and regional levels, to develop the vision of modernisation as a substantial renovation of the country.

Further on, the **Network** intends to focus on the key reforms and development of the relevant national and regional campaigns. In particular, special attention will be paid to the participatory democracy and the mechanisms of public involvement into the decision-making process, models of administrative reform and local elections; Ukraine's participation in the Eastern Partnership initiatives.

For more detailed information on the **Reforms Support Network**, please, click [here](#) or contact the **Network** regional coordinators.