

27 September 2016

Dr. Valery Engel,
President of the European Center for Democracy Development, Latvia

Dear Mr. Moderator,

Adopted in July 2015 by the law On local elections The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine deprived of internally displaced persons (IDP) from the areas beyond the control of Kiev (Donetsk and Lugansk regions and the Crimea) opportunity to vote outside of the cities or villages, where they are registered (electoral address). An exception to this rule can only be voted on special sections.

According to the Central Election Commission of Ukraine, migrants will be able to vote in local elections only after the end of Anti-terrorist Operation and only at their official place of registration. In this version this Law is in conflict with the Law of Ukraine "On ensuring the rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons", according to which IDPs can vote in local elections by changing the voting place without changing the electoral address.

Initiatives such as the deprivation of the right to vote in the elections, taking registration of IDPs, the implementation of audits of the actual place of residence / stay, which were accompanied by humiliating inspections, had negative consequences for the social protection of IDPs.

The violation of the fundamental rights is also the changing the electoral boundaries in October 2015 in order to limit the possibility of entering the Ukrainian parliament representatives of organized political groups of Carpathian Hungarians compactly living in this territory. This draws the attention of the Hungarian Government. Unfortunately, to no avail.

It is also surprising that the Ukraine in the past two years is actively attended to the subject of respect for the fundamental rights of the Crimean Tatars in Crimea, which is de facto no under control of this country, but it ignores the request of the national minorities who live in the territory under its control. In particular, we are talking about the Ruthenian minority, demanding recognition of himself as a national minority, as well as other minorities, which require a law on national-cultural autonomy and to guarantee their cultural rights.

It is of concern a decision to remove from Article 161 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine part, concerning the criminalization of discrimination, as well as Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On liquidation of the National expert Commission for the Protection of morality" on May 27, 2015 No 333, which abolished the National Expert Commission on protection of public morals, as "inefficient and unnecessary public authority". Meanwhile, it was the only professional body of experts, who had the right to determine what constitutes incitement to hatred (hate speech). Today, these functions were transferred to the Interior Ministry and others. state agencies that do not have the possibility to engage in professional expertise and often make decisions which are obvious instances of hate speech are not considered as such.

Thank you.