

“Voter Awareness 2012: Lessons Learned”

11 December 2012, Kyiv

1. On the basis of the results of a public opinion survey conducted before and after the elections (please refer to the survey results presented by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation and Research & Branding Group¹), one may ascertain that voter awareness about the issues addressed by the awareness campaigns (such as voting procedure, inclusion in the voter list and vote buying prevention) has in general improved.
2. The participants of the discussion agreed that there is a need to continue implementing awareness campaigns for Ukrainian voters in the future, including in-between the elections.
3. The awareness campaign implemented by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine demonstrated that with the help of state television channels (UT-1, as well as regional television and radio companies), only close to 37% of television viewers have been reached, despite the large number of broadcasts (the total of 4,817 during the campaign implementation period). Advertising on popular commercial channels “1+1” and “Inter” has delivered comparable results with a significantly lower number of broadcasts (1+1 – based upon the principle of time remaining unsold and Inter – 90 broadcasts).
4. Meanwhile, advertising on the state radio stations (including regional television and radio companies) proved to be significantly more effective than advertising on any commercial radio station.
5. The distribution of printed awareness materials via the network of state institutions (civil registry offices (RAHS), the State Migration Service offices, technical inventory bureaus (BTI), passport sections in municipal housing offices (ZhEKs), employment offices), as well as the network of educational institutions, bus stations and railway stations was sometimes connected with substantial difficulties. Individual institutions ignored the CEC requests, as the employees of relevant institutions did not realise the social significance of awareness materials, and as people could not distinguish between awareness materials and election campaign materials. However, co-operation could be improved by the CEC adopting relevant resolutions regarding the dissemination of awareness materials, as well as by forging closer co-operation with local inter-agency voter awareness groups in oblasts.
6. The use of information technologies, such as social networks, “new media”, webinars, online-translations, etc., is growing more important in the implementation of an awareness campaign.

¹ <http://www.osce.org/ukraine/98054>

7. The distribution of awareness materials via the Ukrposhta network, which has over 13 thousand offices throughout Ukraine, proved to be rather effective.
8. Access to village voters, who remain to be the least informed about their rights and the most susceptible to violations, remains a key problem during the administration of an awareness campaign.
9. The lessons learned by the Civil Movement Chesno demonstrate the importance of engaging public opinion leaders who do not belong to civil organizations, such as leaders from church, mass media, show business, in the implementation of an awareness campaign.
10. The involvement of mass media and journalists in the implementation of the awareness campaign not only to disseminate information, but also to share ideas and values promoted by the awareness campaign proved effective.
11. At the active phase of the awareness campaign implementation, the implementing agents should have the answer to the question “how to become engaged in the campaign” for maximum public involvement, specifically representatives of the target audience. One should consider all possible involvement means, for instance, via the network of regional organizations / representative offices, the Internet, and public events.
12. Work with youth is most effective in delivering results, as compared to other age groups.
13. Public protest may be utilized during implementation of an awareness campaign as a form of action most effectively drawing attention to the issue(s) addressed by the awareness campaign.
14. The best result may be achieved by consolidating during implementation of a voter awareness campaign the efforts of various organizations: state institutions, the non-profit sector, mass media, others.
15. There is a demand in Ukraine for simple values, such as honesty, justice, transparency and human rights. The Civil Movement Chesno shows that a campaign capable of providing information in response to such demand has fair chances of being successful, conditional upon efficient management.

The conference has been arranged within the frames of a project aimed at developing election training capacity and enhancing voter awareness. The Project has been implemented upon request of the Central Election Commission with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway.