Ethnic structure of population by Ukrainian oblasts (2001)

■ Ukrainian ■ Russian ■ Other
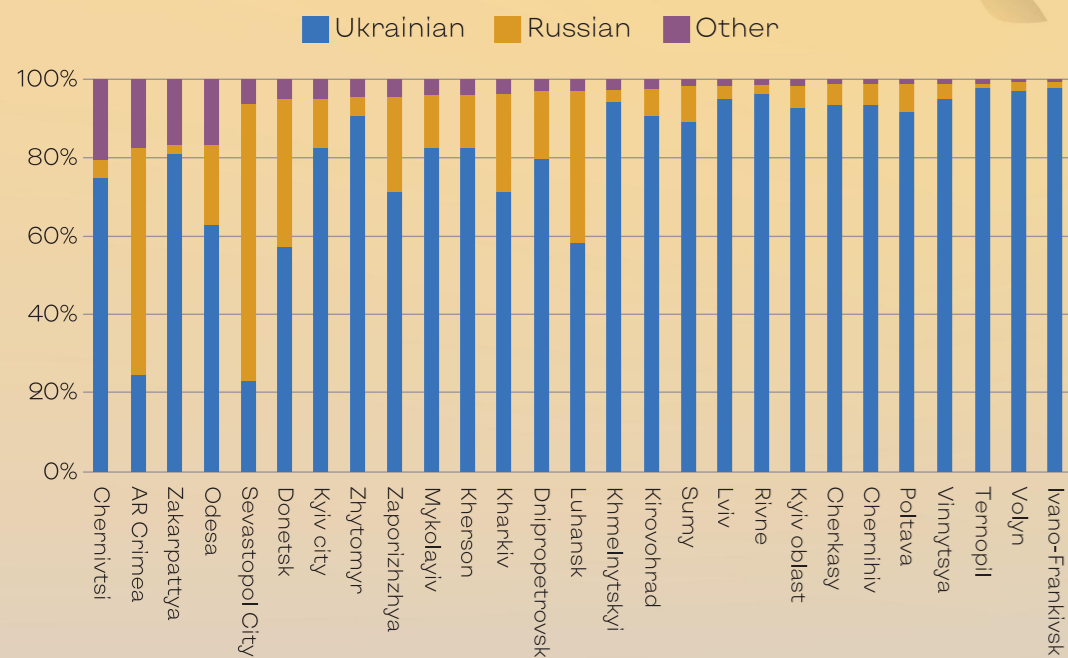
Ethnic structure of 3 researched oblasts (2001)

■ Ukrainian
■ Russian
■ Moldovan
■ Bulgarian
■ Hungarian
■ Romanian
■ Other
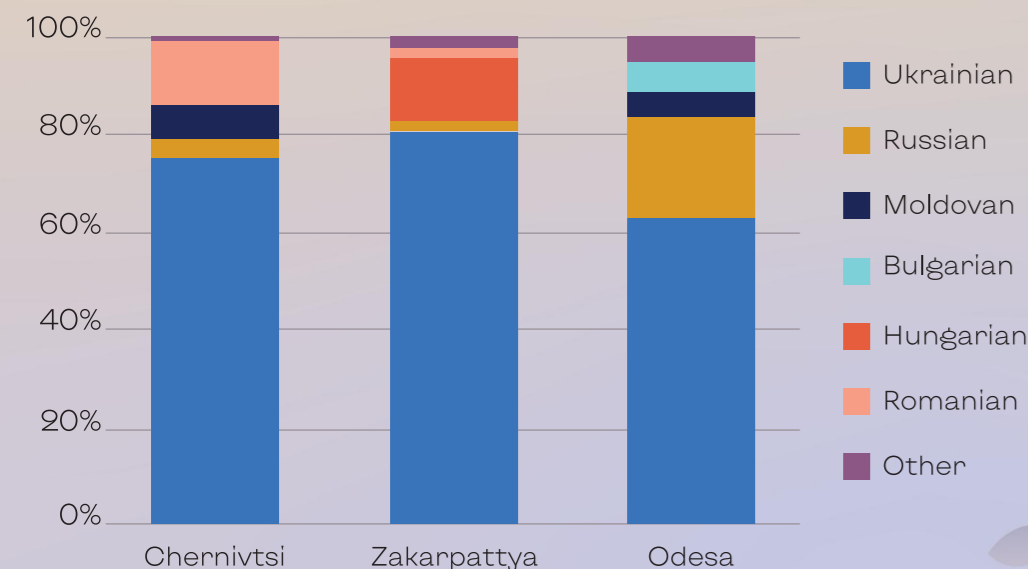
Main conclusions

- In general, the idea of decentralisation reform is positively assessed by citizens and local elites. This conclusion is supported both by nation-wide surveys of citizens and by interviews with various representatives of local elites.

- It does not mean that the reform process has not met any criticism. The critical comments concerned the initial stage and the final stage of the reform.

- District administrations were often identified among the main opponents of the reform.

- Representatives of polyethnic amalgamated communities in all the target regions were more likely to share a positive attitude toward the reform outcomes than representatives of regional or national minorities' NGOs.

- Most national minority organisations (regional and national level) were not actively engaged in the reform consultations and did not provide their policy advice, as the local opinion leaders (first of all - national minority village/settlement heads) took the lead at the grass-root level.

- The amalgamation has not affected the opportunities for receiving administrative services in minority languages.

- Major concerns were voiced regarding school education in amalgamated communities, resulting mainly from the national school reform.

- There seems to be an increasing level of interest among all categories of stakeholders in consultative mechanisms and instruments of civic participation.

Recommendations

- Monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of the decentralisation reform.

- Ensure clear division of powers and responsibilities between the State and local authorities as well as between different tiers of local government.

- Consider revision of legislation relating to local elections to ensure representation of all communities in local elected assemblies.

- Improve legal framework on sub-municipal units protecting identity and representing interests of small communities.

- Enhance financial and legal instruments to ensure availability and quality of education at schools teaching in minority languages.

- Strengthen legal framework on the protection of national minorities.

- Expand legal framework on participatory democracy, promote use of the existing relevant tools and enhance targeted capacity building and awareness raising interventions.

Find the full Report on the website of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine

Council of Europe Report

Impact of the decentralisation reform on national minorities in Ukraine in the selected regions: Chernivtsi, Odesa and Zakarpattya oblasts

The report was prepared by the Department of Democracy and Governance and Anti-Discrimination Department of Directorate General of Democracy (DG II) within the framework of the Programme "Decentralisation and local government reform in Ukraine" and Project "Protecting national minorities, including Roma, and minority languages in Ukraine"

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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Goal of the report

to assess the impact of the decentralisation reform, specifically communities' amalgamation, on national minorities in Ukraine in the selected regions (Chernivtsi, Odesa and Zakarpattya oblasts).

The Council of Europe standards referred to

- European Charter of Local Self-Government and Additional Protocol to it on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority.

- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

- European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

- Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the processes of reform of boundaries and/or structure of local and regional authorities CM/Rec(2004)12E.

- Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the participation of citizens in local public life CM/Rec(2018)4.

The report is based on a variety of sources of empirical material collected and analysed in June – September 2020

1. General information on the progress of decentralisation reform in the country.

2. Ethnic structure of the population.

3. A series (39) of semi-structured individual and group interviews conducted within the project in the three target regions.

The report draws also from its own research of the project on the perception of the reform. One source of information is the Council of Europe supported annual opinion surveys of the nation-wide random sample of citizens.

Categories of respondents interviewed in the three target oblasts

	Chernivtsi oblast	Odesa oblast	Zakarpattya oblast
Number of amalgamated communities covered	3	5	4
Local authorities' management (Mayor, deputy mayor, starosta + amalgamated communities' executive committee managers)	6+1	8+7	6
Education institutions	6	5	0
Oblast/district authorities	5	5	3
National minorities organisations	3	4	3
Other regional institutions	3	1	2
All-Ukrainian non-governmental organisations of national minorities and/or umbrella NGO		9	

During the interview respondents were asked about

- Their general perception of the decentralisation reform (with exclusive focus on voluntary amalgamation of communities) and its outcomes.

- Main supporters and opponents as well as their arguments for and against the reform.

- Role of national minorities issues in the local debates on the reform.

- Possible impacts of the reform on securing minority rights as well as their participation in local policy making.

The report summarises results and conclusions from information collected through all of those sources.

The most frequent arguments in support of voluntary communities' amalgamation

- Local government autonomy, 'independence from the district authorities' that used to shape almost all aspects of community life.

- Closer oversight and fairness of local budget allocations.

- Better and closer public services to local residents.

- Potential for local development, including ability to manage land plots outside the settlements; access to substantial support from the state budget and international grants specially designated for amalgamated communities.

The most common arguments against voluntary communities' amalgamation

- Loss of administrative centre status by the village/settlement, resulting in the diminished status of the village/settlement mayor, redundancies of the village council personnel and subsequently loss of local identity of remote villages, especially those with different ethnic structure.

- Risk of schools being closed or downgraded in the course of reorganising the network of educational institutions.

- Incapacity of amalgamated communities in the proposed configuration, both fiscal and managerial; as well as mistrust in fair agreements with the future community partners, esp. regarding budget allocations.

- Distrust to the central authorities.