

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROJECT “STRENGTHENING FREEDOM OF MEDIA, ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND REINFORCING PUBLIC BROADCASTING SYSTEM IN UKRAINE”

WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT?

The Council of Europe Project “Strengthening freedom of media, access to information and reinforcing public broadcasting system in Ukraine” aims to enhance the role of media, its freedom and safety, and the public broadcaster as an instrument for consensus building in the Ukrainian society, particularly during the election period.

This is a bridging project in Ukraine to keep the support of the reforms in the field of media ongoing after the completion of the Council of Europe [Project “Strengthening Freedom of the Media and Establishing a Public Broadcasting System in Ukraine”](#), implemented within the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2015-2017.

DONORS AND TIMEFRAME OF THE PROJECT

The total budget of the Project is EUR 550 000,00.

The Project is financed the voluntarily contributions of donors in the framework of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2021.

The consortium of donors to the Action Plan for Ukraine includes nine countries: Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Ireland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Liechtenstein.

The Project’s implementation period is 1 July 2018 - 30 June 2019.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE ACTION PLAN FOR UKRAINE 2018-2021

The [Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2021](#) is a strategic programming instrument which aims, through co-operation, to accompany the country in its efforts to bring legislation, institutions and practice further into line with European standards in the areas of human rights, the rule of law and democracy and, through this, to support the country in meeting its obligations as a Council of Europe member State.

In this Action Plan, the Council of Europe and Ukraine have agreed to jointly carry forward, through cooperation programmes, the reforms aiming among other to enhance the role of public broadcaster, to increase access to public information, to protect personal data and to improve independence of the media and safety of journalists. It has also been agreed to promote gender equality and to enhance the civil society’s role in the reform processes.

SITUATION IN THE SPHERE OF MEDIA IN UKRAINE

[Serious progress with the support by the Council of Europe](#) was achieved in the creation of a public broadcaster, reform of state and communal printed media, transparency of media ownership, ensuring safety of journalists, access to public information and other reforms in Ukraine in 2016-2018. The relevant legal framework has been developed and enacted. The registration of a legal entity of the public broadcaster (UA:PBC) was achieved in January 2017. The General Director, members of the Management Board and regional managers of the public broadcaster were elected at transparent and competitive elections in 2017-2018. However, at the beginning of important structural and content changes the Public broadcaster remains underfinanced.

Positive development in the area of **access to public information** happened when in April 2018 the Minister of Justice of Ukraine signed the Council of Europe 2009 [Tromso Convention On Access to Official Documents](#) which is going to be ratified by the Parliament of Ukraine.

Ukraine is to enter important election circle – Presidential and parliamentary elections in 2019 and local elections in 2020. There is a crucial necessity to support the national stakeholders, both national authorities involved into the electoral process and civil society organizations, in ensuring balanced, unbiased, neutral media coverage of elections, to prevent and counteract violations in media coverage of elections and disruptive influence of information disorder on the results of elections as well as to create effective model of control over political advertising during elections.

The situation with safety of journalists – physical and digital - remained important for the Ukrainian society throughout 2017 as Ukrainian journalists continued to suffer from violence. Upon official request of the Parliamentary Committee on Freedom of Speech and Information Policy the Council of Europe provided in 2017 the [expert assessment of the Ukrainian criminal legislation in the area of protection of the professional activity of journalists](#) which would serve as a road map when planning future changes of the legislation on safety of journalists.

PROJECT'S PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

- 1) Ensured and guaranteed by law independence of the Public Service Broadcaster and its increased capacity to provide unbiased and trustworthy coverage of the events.
- 2) Regulatory and self-regulatory mechanisms for ensuring balanced and unbiased coverage of elections strengthened, a concept of new legal framework on political advertising during elections is developed
- 3) Enhanced safety of journalists, particularly during election period, as a result of increased protection by the legal framework and practices as well as effective fight against impunity of those who attack them.

The project plans following major activities:

In the area of Public Broadcasting

- Support to transition to PSB through developing procedures for improving the quality of content (especially for minorities, children and on gender), peer-to-peer exchange with European public broadcasters
- Expert and methodological support to Supervisory Board
- Awareness raising activities on the need to ensure sustainable mechanism of proper funding of the Public Broadcaster jointly with Verkhovna Rada and civil society
- Improving the skills to produce high quality content of regional editorial offices of UA:PBC on the topics regarding national minorities
- Training on the role of public broadcaster in coverage of elections for the staff and management of UA:PBC
- Awareness campaign on public broadcasting

In the area of media coverage of elections

- Media monitoring and counteracting information disorder during upcoming presidential elections in Ukraine and support in creating mechanism of quick responses to propaganda and other violations

- Developing self-regulatory rules for balanced and unbiased coverage of elections in partnership with self-regulatory bodies and presenting it to journalists at a series of regional seminars
- Carrying out an expert legislative gap analysis to identify most problematic areas in regulation of media coverage of elections and defining new effective model of regulating political advertising during elections. Expert support to Regulator's work during elections
- Training on ethical standards, regulation, physical and digital safety of journalists in context of elections
- Support in implementation of the Council of Europe expertise of articles of the Ukraine's Criminal Code (prepared in 2017) on safety of journalists
- Strengthening capacity of the Ministry of Information Policy and other stakeholders in area of information security, particularly during election period, in line with the European standards

PROJECT PARTNERS

Our main partners are:

- National Public Broadcasting Company of Ukraine (UA:PBC),
- Parliamentary Committee on Freedom of Speech and Information Policy,
- National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council of Ukraine
- Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsperson),
- Presidential Administration of Ukraine,
- Ministry of Information Policy,
- civil society and media organisations,
- relevant professional associations.

HOW TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE PROJECT?

If you are interested in activities of the Project please follow us on Project's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/CoEUPSIS>

Project's publications are available at: https://issuu.com/mediaprojects_coe

Contacts:

8 Illinska str., 8 entrance, 5th floor
04070 Kyiv, Ukraine
+380443399210

Project Manager in Strasbourg:

Shahin Abbasov
Shahin.ABBASOV@coe.int

Senior Project Officer:

Galyna Smirnova
Galyna.Smirnova@coe.int

Project Officer:

Tetiana Shamrai

Tetiana.SHAMRAI@coe.int

Project Assistant:

Iryna Ostapa

Iryna.Ostapa@coe.int

Project Assistant:

Orysyia Fedorchuk

Orysyia.Fedorchuk@coe.int