



UKRAINIAN SCHOOL OF POLITICAL STUDIES

NARRATIVE REPORT

NAME OF GRANTEE

AGENCY FOR LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

REPORTING PERIOD

8-9 December 2020

PROJECT TITLE

**USPS Online-events in the framework of
the 9th World Forum for Democracy**



BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

Ukrainian School of Political Studies (USPS) is a joint program of the Agency for Legislative Initiatives and the Council of Europe, founded in 2005. It unites successful young people who represent politics, civil service, social activities, academia, business and journalism from all over Ukraine. It is an intellectual milieu for dialogue, exchange of ideas and networking.

The mission of the School is education, networking, information and intellectual support, and value-orientation of responsible leaders, managers and opinion-makers on national and local levels.

The comfortable interactive atmosphere and innovative approaches - round tables and panel discussions, strategy and role-playing, master classes and workshops, interactive communication and meetings with extraordinary people - create favorable conditions for learning and ideological development of participants and graduates of the School.

Activity of the USPS includes holding the main annual programme consisting of 4 training sessions (in Ukraine and in Strasbourg), a series of thematic meetings, in particular, within the School Club, international events and study tours for participants and alumni, as well as organizing additional educational modules on the School's basis.

The main topics of the seminars are:

- Democracy. Rule of law. Political processes and political institutions.
- Media. Communication.
- Key reforms in Ukraine. The strategy of modernization. Public policy analysis.
- Good Governance on National and Local, Regional Policy.
- Social market economy and democracy. Financial crisis.
- Foreign policy and European integration

The project's objectives are to become a ground for young Ukrainian leaders to connect and find like-minded people who would promote democratic values through their professional and personal engagements, to strive to grow into a one stop shop for democracy education raising political culture of participants, and to expand School by increasing a number of groups and creating branches in regions and others.

This will enable a new generation of politically active individuals to participate in decision making and influence public and political agendas.

The School aspires to become an effective platform for dialogue on democracy and European values.

Agency for Legislative Initiatives project recognizes USPS as a successful long-term venture. We hope to increase the presence of the School at the regional level and increase the quality both of the content and participants who will form a new generation of politicians, journalists, civil servants, academics, businessmen, lawyers and other representatives of civil society.

The main goal of the projects is to create a community of young, ambitious, critically inclined citizens who in their daily activities would practice and profess democratic principles and values, who can form a new generation of politicians and are able by supporting each other to push important social and political changes.

Project Objectives are:

- To become a ground for young Ukrainian leaders to connect and find like-minded people who would promote democratic values through their professional and personal engagements;
- To strive to grow into a one stop shop for democracy education raising political culture of participants;
- To form in School participants a system of knowledge on the principles of democracy, prospects of democratic reforms in Ukraine, and the place of Ukraine in the international society;
- To develop a new democratic vision of relationship between government and society, the respect and understanding of European values in local leaders;
- To stimulate participants to the work for the benefit of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and ensuring Ukraine's sustainable development;
- To give local leaders not only knowledge but also skills necessary for building a successful political career, participating in the decision making at all levels of government, and solving social problems;
- To expand School by increasing a number of groups and creating branches in regions;
- To acquaint these people with key notions of strategic planning, principles of effective lobbying, effective negotiations, administration and leadership norms, skills of analysis of public policies and decision-making procedures etc.

The programme of USPS consists of two key directions – main annual programme, which involves seminars, and extra-curricular activities.

Within the framework of the main annual USPS programme three national seminars and one international are conducted. National seminars are held in Kyiv, Lviv and Crimea (or Odessa), and the fourth seminar takes place in Strasbourg (France) during the World Forum for Democracy.

Extra-curricular activities include meetings of the USPS club (open and diplomatic), alumni conference, study trips etc.

National seminars are held three times a year in different parts of Ukraine (Kyiv, Lviv, and Crimea/Odessa). Each of these seminars is attended by a selected group of approximately thirty participants representing different social groups, including young politicians (MPs and members of local councils), government officials, business executives, civil society activists, trade union leaders, journalists, as well as judges and lawyers.

In the framework of the **World Forum for Democracy** participants attend institutions of the Council of Europe (including the European Court of Human Rights), are able to communicate with renowned experts and politicians, as well as students of other national Schools of Political Studies.

USPS clubs have several formats: the format of a Diplomatic Club is held exclusively for USPS alumni and implies meetings and discussions with notable diplomats and significant individuals; the Open Club set-up implies engagement of a broader network including representatives of different NGO's, businesses, politics, civil service, and academics.

Annual Alumni Conference of the Ukrainian School of Political Studies gathers more than 300 USPS alumni to reflect on topics important for Ukraine on a higher level.

Topics that are usually discussed during seminars and other USPS events:

Cooperation between Government and Civil Society:

- *Principles of Democracy:* the content and criteria of democracy; the role of political parties in the development of democracy; the constitutional reform in Ukraine and its outcomes; prospects of parliamentary elections; democratic forms of civil involvement in the public administration decision making.
- *Human Rights and Their Protection:* international standards of human rights and their reflection in Ukraine's legislation and practices; limits of human rights; efficiency of the judicial power in Ukraine.
- *The Rule of Law as a Basic Principle of the Democratic Society:* the concept of the "rule of law" and its meaning for the functioning of democratic institutions.
- *Democratic governance and design making process on local level, strategy planning of regional development, European experience of regional development.*
- *Democratic reforms in Ukraine* (in the areas of administrative, legal, economic and social policies based upon the principles of democracy, protection of human rights, the rule of law, public opinion and the role of the media, as well as the fight against corruption).
- *Environment, ecology, energy saving and natural resources.*
- *Fight Against Corruption:* avenues to curb corruption in the Ukrainian society.

Democratic Reforms in Ukraine:

- *Constitutional Development:* resolving enduring constitutional crisis by harmonizing the legislation with the Constitution as well as ensure enforcement.
- *Administrative and Local Self-Government Reform:* reform of the government and the system of central executive authorities; the administrative and territorial reform; the fight against corruption; improvement of local self-government system; approximation of the work of public authorities to the needs of the people (simplification of administrative procedures); and judicial reform problems.
- *Economic Development:* ways to create a beneficial investment climate in Ukraine; the regulatory policy; and the tax reform.
- *Social Policies:* the poverty problem and the ways to overcome it; reforms of the public health care, education, employment, and social security.

The School also maintains its web site at:

www.usps.org.ua.

Our Facebook page is:

www.facebook.com/USPStudies

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A. Pre-Implementation

- 1) Preparation of a detailed operation concept for the satellite event in Ukraine within 9th edition of the World Forum for Democracy: Can Democracy save the environment?
- 2) Dissemination of information on the event
- 3) Preparation of the registration form for the event
- 4) Adjusting the project plan to the newly imposed restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic

B. Main Activities

- 5) Organization of discussion within 9th edition of the World Forum for Democracy
- 6) Organization of online Town Hall Meeting within 9th edition of the World Forum for Democracy
- 7) Broadcast events on Facebook and YouTube for distribution to the general public
- 8) Video recording of online-events in two languages (Ukrainian and English) for international participants of the World Forum for Democracy
- 9) Maintaining the School website and social media presence

ANALYSIS OF PROJECT RESULTS:

A. Pre-Implementation

In 2020, the usual activities of the School were impeded by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic imposing restrictions on public activities and gatherings.

Considering Covid-related restrictions for public events, the event took place over two days both offline and online: the discussion was held in a venue and streamed for the audience online on the first day; the Town Hall Meeting was held completely online via Zoom on the second day.

The informational campaign for the satellite events in Ukraine within 9th edition of the World Forum for Democracy was disseminated by:

- 1) **Messaging through the Agency's mailing list** (1699 e-mails: International organizations, embassies, NGOs, SPS school network (818), USPS alumni (468), Party Innovation Hub alumni (143), School of Community Leaders alumni (270).
- 2) **Messaging by School partner organisations.**
- 3) **Publication of information on the websites of the USPS, Agency for Legislative Initiatives and other partner NGOs.**
- 4) **Alumni network.**

The registration form for the event was open for USPS community and partner organisations (115 members: online-discussion (69) and Town Hall Meeting (46)). At the same time live online stream of these events was open for the general public (2544 views: online-discussion (2146), Town Hall Meeting (398) during the initial stream).

2554 VIEWS
IN TOTAL ON 

ONLINE DISCUSSION
number of views: **2146**

TOWN HALL MEETING
number of views: **398**



B. Main Activities

Polluted air is one of the significant and constant global environmental challenges, but in Ukraine this problem is particularly acute. To answer the question “Can civic participation and activism be the real answer to the environmental problems?” the proposed initiative started with a discussion of the role of civil society in advancing environmental issues and presentation of real cases and practices of environmental activism affecting the lives of communities today. In order to enhance the importance of civic participation in forming environmental policies, the discussion was followed by an online Town Hall Meeting that proposed practical solutions to development of comprehensive environmental policy and strategy.

Day 1. Discussion

The event was organized in a hybrid format: the speakers participated in the discussion in the venue, and the event was streamed online on the web resources of the Agency for Legislative Initiatives and Ukrainian School of Political Studies. Online stream was available in English for international participants of the World Forum for Democracy.

Moderator:

- **Denys Kazanskyi**, Journalist, environmental activist

Speakers:

- **Olena Maslyukivska**, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at the National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy", USPS alumna
- **Artem Romanyukov**, Co-founder of SaveEcoBot, Director of Development at NGO “Save Dnipro”, USPS alumnus
- **Oleksandr Marikovskiy**, Deputy Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Committee on Environmental Policy and Nature Management, USPS alumnus
- **Maksym Borodin**, Environmental activist, winner of the “New Leaders” TV project, member of the Mariupol city council
- **Yegor Firsov**, Head of Ukraine's state ecological inspection service (2019-2020), Head of the “Environmental Alternative” political party
- **Lesya Vasylenko**, Member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Committee on Environmental Policy and Nature Management, alumna of the USPS Parliamentary Program
- **Lyubov Kolosovska**, Public figure in the field of environmental reforms, Co-founder and Director of the organization "Batteries, surrender!"
- **Oleksiy Ryabchyn**, Adviser to the Minister of Environmental Protection, Adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister on European Integration



On December 8, as part of the World Forum for Democracy, the Ukrainian School of Political Studies held an online discussion “If the State Fails: Civic Participation in Environmental Policy”.

In the online discussion from the Ukrainian School of Political Studies participated civic activists who have created large-scale environmental projects for Ukraine and government officials. Together, they tried to decide how the state and the public should interact to solve environmental problems. The conversation was moderated by Denys Kazanskyi, Journalist and environmental activist.

Experts agreed that today, unfortunately, environmental initiatives in Ukraine replace the functions of the state.

“This is not the job of a civic organization to deal with the disposal of toxic waste. A non-governmental organization should not monitor air quality, nor should it dispose of any, even solid household waste. Nevertheless, these initiatives exist in Ukraine”, – said Olena Maslyukivska, Associate Professor of the Department of Ecology at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and USPS alumna.



According to the speaker, environmental initiatives in Ukraine are similar to startups. Their goal is to create a certain public good. And society must decide how to support these organizations to ensure their sustainability.

In turn, Maksym Borodin, Environmental activist, winner of the USPS TV show “New leaders” and member of the Mariupol City Council, spoke about his environmental protest experience in the struggle for clean air with industrial enterprises in Mariupol. Thanks to the public pressure, Mariupol residents managed to force large industrial facilities to start modernizing their equipment. However, the speaker is sure that protests are a temporary means of influence.



“NGOs cannot constantly replace the state system of monitoring and control because activists do not have the authority to do this. We monitor and see excess pollution, but there is nothing we can do as activists. Until the legislation changes, there are no opportunities for environmental changes”, – Maksym Borodin explained.

The next speaker, Artem Romanyukov, is USPS alumnus and co-founder of the environmental chatbot SaveEcobot, which monitors air quality in your area and already has more than 1 million active users. After several years of working to make it easier to breathe in his hometown, Dnipro, the speaker is convinced that environmental activities should start with education.



“We have created a demand for air quality data in Ukraine. But now, the state must intervene in this process. The most logical step should be the state monitoring of emission sources. The state can be our partner here. State monitoring is an important next step. We are ready to help the state in this”, – the speaker said.

Lyubov Kolosovska, co-founder and director of the organization “Batteries, surrender!” (a project that collects batteries and organizes the recycling process) and USPS alumna, noted the importance of the financial component of environmental activism.

“Someone has to pay for environmental sustainability, decisions, and changes. However, many people do not understand this. The first idea in Europe was that the state takes money from polluters and uses it to change the situation for the better. However, this idea is outdated”, – said Lyubov Kolosovska.



According to the expert, if the polluter can simply buy off, it is the avoidance of responsibility because responsibility lies entirely on the state. Instead, the state should delegate responsibility and authority to other entities, such as garbage-producing businesses, so that they can contribute to solving the problem themselves. The state should only control this process.

Head of Ukraine's state ecological inspection service (2019-2020) and Head of the "Environmental Alternative" political party Yegor Firsov, in contrast, is convinced that activism alone cannot solve environmental issues. He also thinks that democracy does not have enough instruments to deal with environmental challenges and climate change.



“Activists cannot be relied on to solve, and not just actualize, environmental problems. Activism is like an antibiotic. It only works when there is an acute problem. Professional non-governmental institutions engaged in environmental activities could help. The environmental agenda in the world and in Ukraine is now very complex, especially if it needs to be synchronized with European legislation. This task also covers the economy, energy, infrastructure. Energy and activism are simply not enough to solve these problems. We need professional people”, – the speaker said.

Lesya Vasylenko, Member of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Environmental Policy and Nature Management and USPS Parliamentary Program alumna, noted that synergy, coordination, and cooperation are needed to solve environmental problems.



“Our task is always to use the opportunities we have at a particular time. There are tasks for the government, for the parliament, and the civil society. Besides, it is necessary to involve local governments, media, business representatives. The latter make money by using resources, and therefore it also depends on them whether the decisions will be implemented. Roles must be clearly assigned. We have to play these roles to the end and ensure, within the limits of our capabilities and responsibilities, the rules and observance of the rules that will allow us to live in a safe environment”, – Lesya Vasylenko explained.

Oleksandr Marikovsky, Deputy Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Environmental Policy and Nature Management and USPS alumnus, also participated in the discussion. According to him, the fight against environmental problems depends on values.



“The vocation to protect the environment is based on values. Through activism and civic organizations, these values can be revived in the population. This is what is happening in Ukraine. With a critical mass of people who share these values, civic participation in environmental policy is a very great force”, – said the MP.

In turn, Oleksiy Ryabchyn, Adviser to the Minister of Environmental Protection, Adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister on European Integration, and USPS alumnus, shared his experience of cooperation between civil society and the state in environmental issues.



“NGOs do not always know how to incorporate their initiatives into the state mechanism properly. If cooperation with civic organizations is successful, great things can happen. However, some aspects, such as environmental externalities, must be tightly controlled by the state. Such questions cannot be left to chance”, – Oleksiy Ryabchyn said.

The discussion participants concluded that it is necessary to look for new ways of interaction between environmental activists and the state to achieve results not only through pressure, protests, demands, and crowdfunding initiatives. The state must provide support to civic environmental organizations and take over the functions of monitoring and control over Ukraine’s environmental situation, as no one else in the country has the authority to do so.



The state should be a partner for civic initiatives. This is not happening yet, but we must strive to share environmental pollution responsibility, not to avoid it. Representatives of civic organizations expressed readiness to assist the state on environmental issues.

Day 2. Town Hall Meeting

Town Hall Meeting is an informal public gathering for a qualified, purposeful and effective discussion of any specific issues of public interest.

The Town Hall Meeting format includes:

- discussion on the basis of several prepared scenarios – various options for solving the issue with the simultaneous display of participants' positions on the screens;
 - the participants of the discussion are, first of all, citizens interested in solving a certain problem;
 - experts, politicians, public figures take part in discussions on an equal grounds with ordinary citizens;
 - the discussion is held simultaneously in small groups (from 10 to 12 people);
- at each group, there is a facilitator and a note taker (the person who notes on the computer the thoughts expressed by the participants);
- participants consistently discuss all options (15-20 minutes per script);
 - participants' thoughts and positions can be viewed in real-time in a common chat;
 - after the discussion, the participants vote for the best scenario.

The event made use of an exclusive software developed by the Agency for Legislative Initiatives and Ukrainian School of Political Studies (<http://thm.parliament.org.ua>) designed

specifically for Town Hall Meetings in Ukraine. In order to accommodate the restrictions of the quarantine, the event was held completely online using Zoom software and its Rooms add-on.

Our experts developed scenarios (options of the policy) for participants to discuss. The web application for Town Hall Meetings has produced an automated report of the meeting with results of the voting and chat messages.

A priority in participation registration was given to participants from regions most affected by environmental problems, in particular, air pollution (Mariupol, Zaporizhzhya, Dnipro, Kyiv, etc.).



On December 9, the Ukrainian School of Political Studies organized an online Town Hall Meeting as part of the World Forum for Democracy.

The discussion was attended by alumni of the Ukrainian School of Political Studies and interested Ukrainian citizens. They have formed “a community of a big city”, which is looking for a solution to the problem of emissions from the cars’ use.

The Town Hall Meeting takes place in several stages. The first is to understand the importance of the problem and the need to find a solution. During the event, Olena Maslyukivska, Associate Professor of Ecology at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, told the participants about the true extent of air pollution due to cars’ use.



“In large cities, emissions from mobile transport sources – cars – cause major air pollution. For Kyiv, for example, in 2015, 78% of air pollution was caused by cars. And this year, Kyiv has several times reached the top of the ranking of cities with the most polluted air IQAIR, and sometimes even headed it. According to the World Health Organization, air pollution is one of the main health risk factors associated with the environment. Polluted air contributes to the appearance and worsens the course of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases”, – the expert explained.

After a discussion with the environmental expert, participants received possible scenarios for solving the problem, which were specially developed for this Town Hall Meeting. 4 scenarios were presented for discussion.

In the first of them, it was proposed to leave everything as it is and not influence the use of cars by public policy measures. This scenario does not solve the problem, but it does not require additional funding and allows authorities to focus initially on solving other air pollution problems.

However, most Town Hall Meeting participants almost immediately rejected this scenario, noting that if the problem is not addressed now, the situation will constantly deteriorate.

The second solution to the problem contains a proposal to increase fuel quality and encourage the use of certain fuels that are more environmentally friendly. Ukraine has a large number of old cars that citizens bought cheaply in Europe. In addition, many people still drive cars with diesel engines, which pollute the air more than other fuels. Therefore, this scenario proposes to introduce certain rules for the use of diesel engines and new quality standards for fuel.

1 I do not support this scenario

1 Doing nothing means that the situation will be constantly deteriorating

1 I partially support

1 Given a number of financial topics

3 If everything is left as it is, the problem will increase and the indicators will worsen

1 Ukraine has no surplus funds

3 There is no comprehensive monitoring system

Зал 1

Тетяна Поліщук

Наталія Манушкіна

Олена Машуківська

Уліана Полтавets

Тарас Миколайко

Тетяна Андричук

Kateryna

This scenario was also primarily not supported by the participants, as they agreed that reducing the use of diesel fuel would not significantly affect the level of air pollution. The problem with cars is much more complex and therefore requires a complex solution.

The third scenario proposes to create an economic mechanism that would encourage citizens to “switch” to electric transport. This scenario described the specific steps that the state should take to increase electric cars’ share in the overall structure of road transport to 70% in 2045 for Ukraine.

Зал 2

Volodymyr Skry...

Данило Остапч...

Юлія Джус

3 The number of cars is increasing, leading to spontaneous parking and traffic jams

1 Negative pollution statistics in Ukraine

1 I support the scenario because the industry needs to be changed

1 No need to start by changing the frequency of car use

1 We pay a lot of taxes, prices in utility bills are rising

The third scenario was supported by the Town Hall Meeting participants in part because of its environmental friendliness. However, the participants also concluded that the introduction of this

scenario is still unrealistic for Ukraine. The construction of the necessary infrastructure for electric cars and the stimulation of electric transport production in Ukraine will require substantial funds, which Ukraine cannot yet spend on this problem.

The basis of the fourth scenario is a paradigm shift in mobility. This scenario is about developing such a policy that would change users' priorities of urban space, putting in the first place the needs of pedestrians, then cyclists, public transport, and then personal cars. Among the proposed measures are the development of municipal transport, restrictions on the cars' use in the city, pedestrian and bicycle routes network development.

The participants liked the latter scenario the most, as it proposes to reduce the level of air pollution and reduce the number of road transport in the city in general.

After discussing all the scenarios, the Town Hall Meeting participants voted and supported the №4 scenario by a majority. 74% of participants voted for its implementation, the remaining 26% voted equally for scenario №1 and scenario №3.

