



**Values, programmes and actions:  
examining the ideologies and legislative  
positions of Ukrainian political parties**

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## Abstract

One of the hallmarks of the party system in Ukraine is quasi-absence of well-defined ideological platforms of parties. In Ukraine political parties often are artificial projects created for specific elections with the main purpose of avocation the interests of those oligarchic groups that are funding them. In this situation, ideology plays a minor role. In 2019, presidential and parliamentary elections will take place in Ukraine. The voting will take place in difficult socio-economic conditions and in conditions of armed conflict in the East of the country. The key issue in the elections is the implementation of public reforms. Ukraine is a parliamentary-presidential republic, so it is expected that the political parties are to offer the society their version of modernization. In this paper, the ideological platforms of the most ranking Ukrainian parties are examined through the prism of their political programmes' analysis on the eve of elections. The party programmes have been studied from three perspectives: domestic, international and public. The paper also proposes mechanisms for improving the quality of party programmes.

## Introduction

The concept of ideology is one of the most controversial in political science. Nowadays, there are dozens of different classifications that describe in different ways the nature and features of this concept. David W. Minar identifies three broad classes, among which he defines six types of ideas to which the label ideology is frequently applied. They include the following: ideology as thought distinguished by content or structure, ideology as thought distinguished by its function, and ideology as thought distinguished by its locus.<sup>1</sup>

Considering ideology as system distinguished by content or structure is closer to the morphological theory, which studies the ideology through the prism of its structure. Michael Freeden proposes to consider ideology as a set of political concepts organized in a certain way. Thus, each ideology consists of the core, adjacent and peripheral concepts.<sup>2</sup> The number of concepts is considerable and encompasses freedom, equality, justice, order, etc. Morphological theory emphasizes the dynamism of ideologies, indicating that ideology is not a stable system, but is a dynamic variable that changes under certain conditions. In this way, ideologies tend to borrow political concepts from each another. For example, the concept of freedom or equality exists both in liberalism and in conservatism, but their understanding and place in the structure of ideologies are different. In addition, even within the limits of liberalism, there were historically different understandings of the concept of freedom.

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1 David M. Minar, "Ideology and Political Behavior," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 5, no. 4 (1961): 321-22.

2 Michael Freeden, "Political Concepts and Ideological Morphology," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 2, no. 2 (1994): 140-164.

In the aforementioned circumstances the key role belongs not to the ideological concepts used by the parties, but how these concepts are harmonized and organically combined. Therefore it is impossible to draw straight line of division between the leftwing, rightwing and centrist parties in the modern world. Here we should talk about the approach of parties to one of these spectra, taking into account all existing restrictions. Ian Budge and Judith Bara divide the left and the right ideologies on the basis of the dominant categories in them. So, among the main categories of left-wing parties are the following: a positive attitude to such issues as market regulation, economic planning, protectionism, controlled economy, nationalization, Welfare State Expansion. And among the main categories of right-wing parties are political authority, freedom and human rights, free enterprise, limitation of the welfare state, national way of life, law and order.<sup>3</sup>

Populism involves precise consideration, which researcher Ben Stanley calls a 'thin' ideology. Unlike the full ideologies, it is even more inclined to absorb the concepts of other ideologies, since, despite having an ideological core that is a confrontation between the people and the elite; it is devoid of adjacent and peripheral concepts, which allows populism to easily adapt the concepts of other ideologies to their needs.<sup>4</sup>

Morphological theory demonstrates how diverse and varied ideologies can be. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian political discourse is dominated by a simplified understanding of the nature and content of ideologies. In practice, it is manifested in public demand in pure rightwing, leftwing and centrist parties. This understanding is too simplified and stereotypical as it does not take into account any modern developments, in particular, the process of mixing of ideologies. However, it is more important to see logic and meaning behind the combination of these concepts, and whether there is a conflict between the concepts. The issue of implementation of ideologies manifested in party programmes is also crucial but is quite often overlooked by the researchers.

In general, Ukrainian political context typically suggests the combination of the opposite concepts in party programmes with the sole purpose of making these programmes attractive for the voters. However, in practice, even if such combination ensures electoral support in a short run, it does not entail the implementation of the programme in practice as this inherent contradiction actually prevents it from being implemented. This, in turn, leads to further disillusionment of citizens and undermines the credibility of the parties.

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3 Judith Bara and Ian Budge, "Party Policy and Ideology: Still New Labour?," *Parliamentary Affairs* 54, no. 4 (2001): 605.

4 Ben Stanley, "The thin ideology of populism," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13, no. 1 (2008): 95-110.

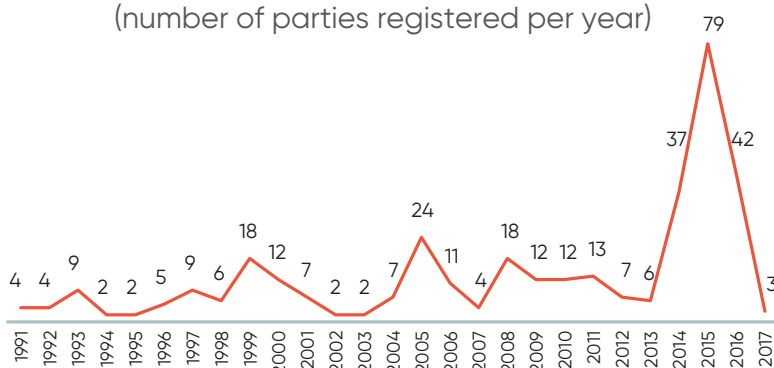
# Section I

## The party system of Ukraine within the context of ideological vacuum

The Law “On Political Parties in Ukraine” defines political parties as “registered according to the law voluntary associations of citizens supporting certain nationwide programme of social development with a purpose to facilitate formation and expression of the political will of citizens, participation in elections and other political activities”.<sup>5</sup>

The concept of Political Party defined at the level of the law as an association of citizens who support a certain programme of development, thus, ideology. However, in practice, the vast majority of Ukrainian parties do not have a clear ideology and do not attach particular importance to it. At the same time, the party system in Ukraine is distinguished by the rapid increase in the number of parties in recent years, the almost complete lack of active parties, at least during the two election campaigns, overwhelming number of parties without a clearly defined ideology but high degree of dependence on their leader, and critically low levels of public confidence in the parties as political institutions.

The growth in the number of parties in Ukraine  
(number of parties registered per year)



5 “The law “On Political Parties in Ukraine,” *Legislation of Ukraine*, accessed September 17, 2018. <http://zakon0.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2365-14>.

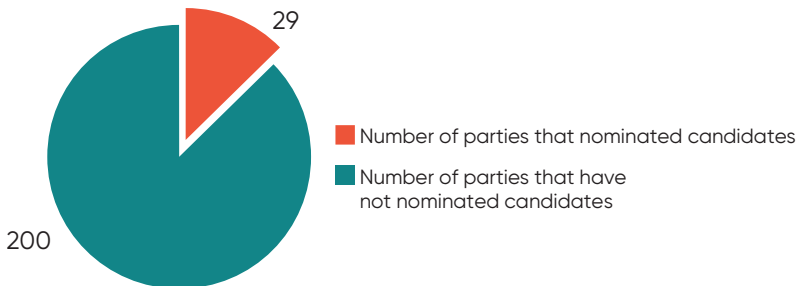
As of September 2018, 353 political parties have been officially registered in Ukraine. At that, almost a half of Ukrainian parties have been registered over the past few years. Thus, in 2016, 42 new political parties were registered, compared to 79 registered parties in 2015 and 37 in 2014 respectively. Prior to this, the similar activity in party registration could be observed in 2005 with 24 newly registered parties. The reason can be the revolutions that preceded the party boom (The Orange Revolution in 2004 and the Revolution of Dignity in 2013-2014).

Despite a significant number of parties, only a small portion of them is really active in politics. Only 29 parties officially stated about their participation in parliamentary elections on October 26, 2014, and 141 parties – in the last local elections on October 25, 2015. Only 40 political parties more or less regularly nominate candidates from their parties for the local elections in the amalgamated territorial communities that have been taking place since 2015 in the course of decentralization reform.

Despite a significant number of parties, the information on ideological component of their activities is scarce. In total, only 16% (56 political forces) out of 353 parties indicate in their names particular ideology affiliations. Most of them (18 parties) formally support the ideology of socialism or communism. Another 17 parties can be categorized as liberal-democratic. In particular, it is the Liberal Party of Ukraine, the Liberal Democratic Party of Ukraine, the Christian Liberal Party of Ukraine, the Christian Democratic Union Party, and the Free Democrats Party. 11 parties affirm the ecological orientation in the party names, 7 – identify themselves as republican parties, 2 – conservative parties, 1 party claimed to be anarchist (Union of Anarchists of Ukraine). Another portion of parties indicated in their names the nationalist nature of their activities. In particular, Conscious Nation Party, The Spirit of the Nation, Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, The Power of the Nation. 34 parties use the word “people” in their names.

Sometimes the name of the party shows the problem party is called upon to resolve (Anti-corruption Movement, Ukraine without Corruption, Ukrainian Party of Honor, Combating

### Participation of parties in the 2014 parliamentary elections





Corruption and Organized Crime). Moreover, there are such parties as the Party of Pensioners of Ukraine and Youth Party of Ukraine. The parties of national minorities, such as the KMCS Hungarian Party of Ukraine, the Democratic Party of Hungarians of Ukraine, the Party of Poles of Ukraine, the Gypsy Party of Ukraine, and the Georgian Party of Ukraine are particularly worth mentioning. In addition, part of the parties in their names emphasize on the names of settlements whose interests they represent. In Ukraine there are such parties as Our home – Odessa, Kievans First!, We are Kievans, Vinnitsa European strategy. But according to the law, the party's activities should be exclusively national.

Leading Ukrainian parties are often built not around a certain ideology, but around a particular leader. Often this is directly reflected in the name of the party. For example, The Petro Poroshenko Bloc "Solidarity" (Petro Poroshenko – President of Ukraine), Radical Party of Oleh Liashko, Public Political Platform of Nadia Savchenko, Movement of New Forces of Mikhail Saakashvili, UDAR of Vitali Klitschko.

The unstable nature of the party system in Ukraine and the orientation towards instant results cause political forces to regard ideology and any long-term planning as something secondary. Short-term activity focused on fast results and voters support becomes more important for parties. It is a typical situation for Ukraine when a popular party having formed a coalition in the Verkhovna Rada still gradually lost almost all support of the electorate. Thus, the People's Front party received 22.14% of the votes in the 2014 elections, which was the highest rate. And the party leader Arseniy Yatsenyuk was appointed Prime Minister of Ukraine. However, two years after the election the rating of political force has almost exclusively vanished and according to the polls of various sociological services it was 1%.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the parties are aware of the fact that their arrival to power does not necessarily mean stable electoral support at the next elections. On the contrary, it is really likely that their rating will decrease because of the general lack of credibility of the people in power. Therefore, the parties do not invest resources in strategic programming, but focus on activities that bring rapid results and can be observed at once by the citizens. At the same time, traditionally voters themselves point out that political ideology is not a key factor when choosing favorite political force. According to Razumkov Center (data for 2015), 27% of citizens indicate that they prefer parties with a clear ideology and party program while 67% deem that it is enough when party sets a "big goal" (for example, joining the EU) or just aims to address one particular problem (for example, the fight against corruption).<sup>7</sup> Moreover, most citizens do not read party programmes and learn about party activities from the media. All this creates the situation of an ideological vacuum, in which parties are united not around ideology, but around a particular leader and often offer to the society low-quality or hardly realistic programmes which, however, meet the expectations of citizens.

6 "Rating of People's Front collapsed by 55 times over two years," *Ukrainian News*, November 22, 2016, <http://ukranews.com/ua/news/461544-reytyng-narodnogo-frontu-za-dva-roky-obvalyvsvya-u-55-raziv>.

7 Razumkov Centre, *"The transformation of the party system: Ukrainian experience in the European context"* (Kyiv: Publishing House "Zapovit", 2017), 428.

# Section II

## Programmes of parties prior to the elections 2019

### 1. Elections 2019: socio-economic context and expectations of citizens

The 2019 presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine will take place in conditions of increased competition between the political forces and general dissatisfaction of the population with the actions of the authorities and the results of reforms. In general, there can be distinguished the following conditions in which elections will take place and which will have a direct impact on tactics and strategies of party programmes.

First, a high level of citizen distrust of the authorities, in particular of political parties. As of the beginning of 2018, the balance of trust (the difference between trust and distrust) in the key political institutions was at a critically low level. Thus, trust in the Verkhovna Rada is minus 76%, to the state apparatus – minus 75%, to political parties – minus 71%. Instead, citizens trust the volunteers, the army, the church and public organizations.<sup>8</sup>

Second, there is a high demand of citizens for new faces in politics. Thus, 62% of respondents believe that Ukraine needs new political leaders.<sup>9</sup>

Third, the elections will take place in the context of the overall dissatisfaction of society with the reforms. As of the end of 2017, 41% of citizens believed that nothing was done in the direction of reforms.<sup>10</sup>

Fourth, considerable discontent among citizens create socio-economic issues and that means that politicians will use it. Most citizens are concerned, first of all, about solving social problems. In particular, low wages or pensions (35.6%), rising prices and in-

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8 "Public Opinion in December 2017: Election Ratings and Trust Ratings," *Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation*, 2017, <https://dif.org.ua/article/rejtingijfojseoj8567547>.

9 Ibid.

10 "Reforms in Ukraine: public opinion," *Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation*, 2017, <https://dif.org.ua/article/reformi-v-ukraini-gromadska-dumka-naseleennya-2017>.

flation (32%), unemployment (27%).<sup>11</sup> Thus, most respondents favor social-democratic ideology (14%), then the national-democratic (10.1%), the socialist (8.7%), the christian-democratic – 6.4%, the nationalist – 6.2%, the liberal – 4.9%. The issue of the war in the East of Ukraine remains relevant. This question is a matter of concern for 52.1% of Ukrainians. Also among the most urgent issue for Ukrainians according to opinion poll is the fight against corruption.<sup>12</sup>

Fifth, citizens began to focus more on the ideology of political forces than on the specific politicians behind them<sup>13</sup>. Traditionally, Ukrainians do not pay much attention to programmes of political parties. However, recent years have seen the increase in the demand for more ideologically-based parties. Now 54.2% voters point out on the importance of the real party activities, 39.5% – believe that the ideology of political force is important and 25.6% of citizens are guided by the names of its leaders.<sup>14</sup>

The respective expectations of voters will directly affect the content of party programmes. Prior to 2019 there should be distinguished a few key issues that will determine the development of Ukraine in the coming years and the answer to which should be laid out in the programmes of parties. These issues can be divided into the following spheres:

- foreign policy (further rapprochement with the EU or the restoring ties with the Russian Federation);
- security (NATO membership or non-aligned status);
- the return of the occupied territories (reintegration of the Donbas or the isolation of these territories, the issue of UN peacekeepers);
- the form of governance (pure parliamentary or presidential form of governance or the preservation of a mixed parliamentary-presidential model);
- the issue of the Constitution (separate amendments to the current Basic Law or the adoption of a new Constitution);
- decentralization (strengthening of territorial communities or centralization);
- economy (model of “state-night guardian” or social-democracy);
- taxes and social services (high taxes and free services or low taxes and paid services);
- the private sector (nationalization or privatization of state-owned enterprises);
- trade protectionism (“for” or “against”);
- agrarian sector (“for” or “against” the moratorium on the sale of agricultural lands);
- culture (strengthening the course on Ukrainianization or non-interference of the state in matters of language, churches, etc.).

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11 “Socio-political orientations of Ukrainians, May-2018” *Center for Social and Marketing Research SO-CIS*, 2018, [http://socis.kiev.ua/ua/2018\\_05/](http://socis.kiev.ua/ua/2018_05/).

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

## 2. Party programmes prior to the 2019 elections

Prior to the 2019 election, several major political parties that have a chance to enter the Verkhovna Rada can be identified. Such data is conditional, since a significant proportion of voters have not yet decided whom they will give their vote. According to the data of a survey by KIIS, SOCIS and the Razumkov Center conducted between August 30 and September 9, 2018, the following 7 parties will overcome 5% threshold in the elections to the Verkhovna Rada: Batkivshchyna (14,5%), Servant of the People (10%), Civic Position (8%), Block of Petro Poroshenko “Solidarity” (7,5%), Opposition Bloc (7,3%), For Life (Za Zhytia) (5,2%), Radical Party of Oleh Lyashko (5,2%). The survey was conducted with a sample representing the adult population of Ukraine. In total, 1,0005 respondents were interviewed.<sup>15</sup>

### All-Ukrainian Union «Batkivshchyna»

**Founded:** 1999

**Leader:** Yulia Tymoshenko (Prime Minister of Ukraine in 2005, 2007-2010).

**Performance in the previous elections:**

- **Presidential Elections May 25, 2014** – 12,81% of votes
- **Parliamentary Elections October 26, 2014** – 5,68%
- **Local Elections October 25, 2015** – 2nd place among the parties by the number of elected deputies and heads

**Number of local organizations with the status of legal entities:** 655

**Number of employees in the Central apparat of the party:** 74

**Expenditure of party in 2017:** 30.5 million UAH (of which 10 mln – advertising on TV, 6.4 mln – for rent, 6 mln – payment for services, office supplies and consumables, 3.6 mln – salaries)

**Ideology:** Centre-left

**Key messages:** *“a new social contract”, “the victory of democracy, justice, free enterprise”, “a nationwide referendum”, “the victory of the Ukrainian village”, “fair tariffs”, “European choice», “for real decentralization”.*

**Programme:** in June 2018 a programme of the party entitled «New Course» was presented in Kyiv. Among other things, it was announced that the Batkivshchyna advocates the

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<sup>15</sup> “Socio-political situation in Ukraine. presentation of data,” *KMIS*, 2018, <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=783&page=1>.

introduction of a chancellor-type parliamentary republic in Ukraine and the adoption of a new constitution by convening constituents.

The party supports Ukraine's accession to NATO. It believes that negotiations on the Donbas should take place on the basis of the Budapest Memorandum. It also advocates the creation of an international fund for the revival and development of the Donbas. In 2017 Batkivshchyna supported the trade blockade of the occupied territories of the Donbas.

Regarding the economy, the party supports the social democracy model; advocates for providing significant social guarantees; criticizes excessive social polarization between the rich and poor; supports the introduction of a luxury tax. Batkivshchyna opposes the privatization of state-owned enterprises and the permission to sell agricultural land. The party supports the protectionism of national commodity producers. In the matter of culture, it stands for state support of the Ukrainian language. In particular, the introduction of language quotas on TV and radio.

**European affiliation:** a member of the European People's Party.

## Civil Position party

**Founded:** 2008

**Leader:** Anatoliy Hrytsenko (Minister of Defense of Ukraine in 2005-2007).

**Performance in the previous elections:**

- **Presidential Elections May 25, 2014** – 5,48%
- **Parliamentary Elections October 26, 2014** – 3,10%
- **Local Elections October 25, 2015** – 12th place among the parties by the number of elected deputies and heads

**Number of local organizations with the status of legal entities:** 31

**Number of employees in the Central apparat of the party:** 3

**Expenditure of party in 2017:** 113 thousand UAH

**Ideology:** Centre-right

**Key messages:** *“from the active citizen to the state leader”, “Security. Justice. Renewal”, “renew authorities», «protect people and the state”, “reliance on tradition”, “active civil society and the middle class”.*

**Programme principles:** the party stands for the presidential republic by the model of enlightened authoritarianism and the adoption of a new Constitution. Thus, A. Grytsenko states: *“I want people to understand one simple thing – do not be afraid of an authoritarian regime. Enlightened authoritarianism leads the country to a new, higher level of the economy, and on its basis to democracy. Who should be the key figure in the state? I consider it to be a popularly elected president”*.<sup>16</sup>

In the programme the party emphasizes the importance of traditional values of Ukrainians. 31% of the programme is devoted to this section. The party supports the popularization of the traditional spiritual values of Ukrainians and the proper status of such socially important professions as a teacher, scientist, doctor, and soldier; emphasizes the struggle with the oligarchs and the restoration of justice in society.

A third of the programme devoted to economic issues. The party stands for a market economy with powerful antimonopoly functions of the state; advocates reducing taxes and reducing social benefits; does not support the possibility of selling agricultural land and privatization of state-owned enterprises.

Regarding foreign policy, the party supports Ukraine’s accession to NATO. It supports a deployment of the UN peacekeeping mission in the occupied territories of the Donbas and a complete trade blockade of the occupied territories. Since the beginning of the Russian occupation, the party has advocated the introduction of martial law in the eastern regions of Ukraine.

**European affiliation:** the party is a member of The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe.

## Block of Petro Poroshenko “Solidarity” (BPP)

**Founded:** 2014

**Leader:** Petro Poroshenko (5th President of Ukraine, 2014 – present)

**Performance in the previous elections:**

- **Presidential Elections May 25, 2014** – 54,70%
- **Parliamentary Elections October 26, 2014** – 21,82%
- **Local Elections October 25, 2015** – 1st place among the parties by the number of elected deputies and heads

**Number of local organizations with the status of legal entities:** 29

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16 “Anatoliy Gritsenko: No need to be afraid of an authoritarian regime,” *Official site of Anatoly Gritsenko*, accessed September 17, 2018, <http://grytsenko.com.ua/press/view-anatoliy-hrytsenko-ne-potribno-bojatysja-avtorytarnoho-rezhymu.html>.

**Number of employees in the Central apparat of the party:** 42

**Expenditure of party in 2017:** 112 million UAH (of which 67 mln – local branches, 9.4 mln – salaries, 8.4 mln – payment for services, office supplies, 6.9 mln – party newspaper)

**Ideology:** Centre-right

**Key messages:** *“solidarity”, “time to unite”, “save the country”, “Dignity. Patriotism. Responsibility. People’s Authority. Justice”, “Responsible state. Successful people. Innovative development. Traditional values. Strong communities. International Leadership”, “Competition and Deoligarchism”.*

**Programme principles:** The party stands for the separate amendments to the Constitution and not the adoption of the whole new document. Support the current parliamentary-presidential form of government. 15% of the programme devoted to the issue of national security and foreign policy. The party supports Ukraine’s accession to NATO. Advocates the introduction of UN peacekeepers into the territory of the Donbas, does not support the trade blockade of the occupied territories. To the economic issue is devoted 26% of the party programme. BPP advocates minimal state intervention in the economy and private sector support on the basis of free competition. The party supports the privatization of state-owned enterprises and the lifting of the moratorium on land sales. The party is in favor of limiting existing social benefits and targeting them. A significant part of the programme (11%) is devoted to the issues of culture and spirituality, as well as reforms in education and medicine (25%). The party supports traditional values, quotas for the Ukrainian language in media and culture, and further Ukrainization.

**European affiliation:** the party is not a member of any European family, but the party expressed its desire to join the European People’s Party.

## Opposition Bloc party

**Founded:** 2014

**Leader:** Yuriy Boyko (Minister of Energy and Coal Industry in 2010-2012, Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine in 2012- 2014)

**Performance in the previous elections:**

- **Presidential Elections May 25, 2014** – 0,19%
- **Parliamentary Elections October 26, 2014** – 9,43%
- **Local Elections October 25, 2015** – 3rd place among the parties by the number of elected deputies and 5th by the number of heads

**Number of local organizations with the status of legal entities:** 76

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## Number of employees in the Central apparat of the party: 44

**Expenditure of party in 2017:** 52.3 million UAH (of which 20.1 mln – local branches, 12 mln – advertising on TV, 7.9 mln – payment for services, office supplies and consumables, 5 mln – rent)

**Ideology:** Centre-left

**Key messages:** *“party of peace”, “Peace. Stability. Renaissance”, “restore order in the state”, “protect people from the crisis”, “restore the economy”, “cancel draconian reforms”, “stop the trade war and increase exports to the Russian Federation”, “consolidate the guarantees of the development of regional languages”.*

**Programme principles:** The party stands for the parliamentary form of government and the adoption of a new Constitution. It positions itself as a «party of peace»; to this subject is devoted 24% of the programme. The party does not support Ukraine’s accession to NATO, stands for the improvement of relations with Russia, supports a deployment of the UN peacekeeping mission in the Donbas and its location in between the military demarcation line, but not along the border of Ukraine. The programme promises include such as to end the war in six months, stabilize prices and tariffs, abolish reforms, in particular, regarding pensions.<sup>17</sup> 57% of the programme is devoted to issues of economic development and social protection. The party supports the model of social democracy with active social obligations of the state. At the same time, the party supports the reduction of taxes and, in particular, the abolition of military fees; advocates for the protection of national commodity producers and against privatization; supports the moratorium on land sales and promises to revise the terms of cooperation with the IMF. It advocates for Russian as a regional language; doesn’t support the introduction of the Ukrainian language quotas.

**European affiliation:** the party is not a member of any European family. However, its ideology has more similarities with the Party of European Socialists, which focuses on such economic issues as ensuring social justice, economic growth, and job preservation.

## For Life (Za Zhyttia party)

**Founded:** 2014

**Leader:** Vadym Rabinovich (MP of the 8th convocation, Opposition Bloc parliamentary faction)

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17 “Live in a new way: what promises politicians in case of vining elections,” *Slovo i Dilo*, March 27, 2018, <https://www.slovovidilo.ua/2018/03/27/stattja/polityka/zhyty-po-novomu-obicyayut-polityky-razi-peremohy-vyborax>.



**Performance in the previous elections:**

- **Presidential Elections May 25, 2014** – 2,25%
- **Parliamentary Elections October 26, 2014** – did not participate
- **Local Elections October 25, 2015** – 27th place among the parties by the number of elected deputies

**Number of local organizations with the status of legal entities:** 32

**Number of employees in the Central apparatus of the party:** 0

**Expenditure of party in 2017:** 395 thousand UAH

**Ideology:** Populism

**Key messages:** *“Justice, freedom, equality”, “wise people and incompetent elite”, “social equality”, “better life for children, grandchildren and for ourselves”, “fair society of equal people”, “the state is for people”.*

**Programme principles:** The party stands for the transition to a parliamentary form of government. It supports the adoption of a new constitution and promises to hold a referendum on domestic and foreign policy; doesn't support NATO membership and European integration; advocates for improving relations with the Russian Federation. Regarding the Donbas issue, it proposes to organize in these territories a three-year transitional period during which it will acquire a new legal status. Party advocates for a “reasonable compromise” on the Donbas issue and promises to end the war by negotiations.

In the economy, it supports the model of social democracy with significant social obligations of the state. Among the programme promises are lowering of tariffs and retirement age, combating unemployment, and raising wages. The party supports a moratorium on land sales, criticizing the privatization of state-owned enterprises. In the culture issue, party For Life opposes the policy of Ukrainization.

**European affiliation:** the party is not a member of any European family. However, according to its electorate and programme, it is most similar to the Party of the European Left. The main electorate of For Life party is the former electorate of the Communist Party of Ukraine. It focuses on the issues of economic growth and criticizes current political elites along with the Party of the European Left. For Life is a center-left populist party like the Greek Syriza party, whose leader is Alexis Tsipras.

## The Radical Party of Oleh Lyashko (RPL)

**Founded:** 2010

**Leader:** Oleh Lyashko (MP of Ukraine of the 8th convocation, lead of parliamentary faction The Radical Party of Oleh Lyashko)

**Performance in the previous elections:**

- **Presidential Elections May 25, 2014** – 8,32%
- **Parliamentary Elections October 26, 2014** – 7,44%
- **Local Elections October 25, 2015** – 7th place among the parties by the number of elected deputies

**Number of local organizations with the status of legal entities:** 0

**Number of employees in the Central apparatus of the party:** 136

**Expenditure of party in 2017:** 40.5 million UAH (of which 11.6 mln – advertising on TV, 9.2 mln – salaries, 8.6 mln – payment for services, office supplies)

**Ideology:** Centre-left

**Key messages:** *“for people – protection, prosperity, the future”, “let’s protect people from the mafia”, “corruption – on pitchfork”, “there is no country without a village”, “the economy – for folk”, “victory and deseparatisation”, “language – Ukrainian, culture – Ukrainian, church – Ukrainian”*

**Programme principles:** The party supports the strengthening of the presidential power and supports the relevant changes to the Constitution; advocate for the release of all judges and prosecutors, the reduction of the number of MPs from 450 to 250, the prohibition of being elected to parliament more than twice.<sup>18</sup> 39% of the programme is devoted to political reform and the fight against corruption.

In foreign policy, it advocates Ukraine’s accession to NATO and rapprochement with the EU. The party proposes to return Ukraine’s control over the Donbas by UN peacekeeping mission located along the state border line. It doesn’t support the trade blockade of the Donbas. The question of the end of the war occupies 16% of the programme.

The largest section in the programme (40%) is economy and social protection. The party is a supporter of social democracy with high social obligations of the state (in particular, in the medical care). At the same time, the party is in favor of reducing taxes for the

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18 “Lyashko offered to eliminate the post of Prime Minister, to cut the number of MPs to 250, and ministries – to 10 or 12,” *Gordon*, June 28, 2018, <http://gordonua.com/ukr/news/politics/-ljashko-zaproponuvav-likviduvati-posadu-prem-jera-kilkist-deputativ-skorotiti-do-250-a-ministerstv-do-10-abo-12-253262.html>.

population and increasing taxes for the oligarchs. The party supports the protection of the national producer, opposes the privatization of state-owned enterprises and the sale of lands. Supports quotas for the Ukrainian language and, in general, the policy of Ukrainization.

**European affiliation:** none. However, it has common features with such populist parties as Italy's Five Star Movement, the UK Independence Party, and Greece's party Syriza. The RPL focuses on criticizing the national elite and its corruption as the Five Star Movement. And as well as the UK Independence Party it advocates for the protection of the national producers and jobs of representatives of the titular nation (MPs from RPL developed a Draft Law No.7206 «Buy Ukrainian, pay Ukrainians», which was adopted in the first reading and which is to introduce trade protectionism of Ukrainian companies). Just as Greece's Syriza, RPP focuses on the destructive impact of international financial institutions, such as the IMF, on the Ukrainian economy.

Regarding Servant of the People party, it was registered only in 2017. Its leader is a popular Ukrainian comedian Vladimir Zelenskiy. At the moment the party has not officially announced participation in the next presidential or parliamentary elections. According to its financial statement for the first quarter of 2018, the party did not spend any funds. Also, it does not have any local branches.

It is worth drawing attention to the results of other parties mentioned in the study. Among them are such parties as Union "Samopomich" ("Self-help"), All-Ukrainian Union "Svoboda", and the Agrarian Party of Ukraine rating of which are 3,4%, 2,6%, and 1,2% respectively. In accordance with Ukraine legislation in force parties that get more than 2% of votes are subject to funding from the State Budget of Ukraine.

The party Union "Samopomich" was registered in 2012. 10,97% of voters supported the party in previous Parliamentary Elections. The party leader is a mayor of Lviv city Andriy Sadovyi. According to Oleg Bereznyuk, who is a head of political faction Samopomich, the party is close to American Republicans and British Conservatives.<sup>19</sup> The party stands for a pure parliamentary form of government. It supports Ukraine's accession to NATO and pro-European course. The party supports a market model with minimal state interference ("state-night watchman"); stands exclusively for targeted social assistance to disadvantaged groups; supports limited privatization of state-owned enterprises; advocates lifting the moratorium on land sales; does not support the protection of the national producer, advocate free trade. Supports state quota for Ukrainian language and culture promoting products; promote ideas of the importance of Christian morality in life. The party expressed its desire to join the European People's Party.

All-Ukrainian Union "Svoboda" is a right-wing radical party, founded in 2004. The party leader is Oleg Tyahnybok. The party supports the introduction of a presidential republic

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19 "Bereznyuk: For now, Sadovyi should not be a president," *Liga*, December 11, 2014, [https://news.liga.net/politics/interview/bereznyuk\\_na\\_segodnyashniy\\_den\\_sadovomu\\_ne\\_nado\\_byt\\_prezidentom](https://news.liga.net/politics/interview/bereznyuk_na_segodnyashniy_den_sadovomu_ne_nado_byt_prezidentom).

in Ukraine. In foreign policy, it advocates accession to NATO. In the economy, it stands for a model of economic nationalism and an active nationalization, in particular. Among the party manifestos is to support of the national producers. The introduction of the principle of “small business – small taxes, big business – big taxes” is envisaged. The party supports the model of social democracy and promises to act on the principle of “social justice”. It supports a moratorium on the land sale. Svoboda advocates for active Ukrainianization: proposes to introduce a mandatory Ukrainian language exam for public officials and candidates for elected positions and restore the column “nationality” in passport or ID. Until 2014 Svoboda was in the status of observer in the Alliance of European National Movements, which unites the right parties which talk the rhetoric of protection the national sovereignty of states, traditional values, and national identity. However, in 2014, the party announced a cessation of cooperation with Alliance because of its support of Russia annexation of the Crimea.<sup>20</sup>

The Agrarian Party of Ukraine is one of the new political forces that become active after 2014. Party leader is Vitaliy Skotsyuk. In 2018 he announced attempts at raiding party capture by other politicians. Party ideology is close to right-centered. The programme emphasizes the importance of such conservative values as morality, religion, and family. Beside this the party advocates for granting citizenship only after passing the Ukrainian language, history, and culture tests. The party stands for the current parliamentary-presidential form of government. Stand in favor of Pro-European course, but its programme does not foresee Ukraine’s membership in NATO. It supports protectionism of Ukrainian producers of goods and services; believes that strategic state-owned enterprises should remain state-owned; emphasizes on the importance of the agrarian sector for the development of the state economy; supports a ban on the sale of land. Has the most similar features with The Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe and the European People’s Party. In particular, it supports such conservative ideas as the importance of such traditional institutions as family and religion; believes in the importance of protecting private property and a market economy. The party is active mostly locally: 5th among parties which representatives elected to local councils in 2015 local elections. The Agrarian Party also officially spends the biggest money among all non-parliamentary parties of Ukraine.

Among other parties mentioned in the study are party “UKROP”, Public-political movement “Spravedlyvist” (V. Nalyvaichenko), Natsionalny Korpus, Narodnyi Front, Narodnyi Kontrol, Nash Krai. Their ratings fall from 0,3% to 0,9%. Nash Krai is a center-left party, others mentioned above are right-wing radical. Such parties as Democratic Alliance and Syla Liudey also deserve attention. Both parties are often seen as progressive centre-right parties that propagate new approaches to state governance and are oriented, first and foremost, on the middle class. Among the leaders of the party Democratic Alliance are Vasyl Gatsko, as well as MPs of the 8th convocation Serhiy Leshchenko, Mustafa Nayyem and Svitlana Zalishchuk. The party maintains active contacts with the

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20 “AUU “Svoboda” ceases to be an observer in the Alliance of European National Movements,” AUU “Svoboda”, accessed September 17, 2018, <http://svoboda.org.ua/news/events/00105526/>.

European People's Party. It advocates a liberal economy with minimal state interference and proposes to limit social benefits.<sup>21</sup> The party demands to cancel the moratorium on land sales and supports the maximum privatization of state-owned enterprises. In foreign policy, it supports the pro-European course of Ukraine and its accession to NATO.

Power of People (ukr. Sylalyudey) party was registered in 2014. In 2017, it applied to join the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe. The party supports the pro-European course of Ukraine and its accession to NATO. It advocates a market economy with limited state influence and emphasizes the importance of private property and promises to sell loss-making state-owned enterprises. Party opposes trade protectionism, supports a free sale of land except agricultural<sup>22</sup>.

### 3. Ideological trends in party programmes

Social demand for meaningful policies and readiness to pay attention, first of all, to party programmes raise the issue of the ideological content and adequacy of such programmes. In the meantime, there are several key features that determine the development and direction of party programming in Ukraine prior to 2019.

At the moment, some parties manipulate or use incorrect the notion of ideology in their programmes, in terms of science. For example, UKROP claims that their ideology is Ukrainian patriotism.<sup>23</sup> Samopomich use as their ideology a motto "be yourself, collaborate with others, help those who are in need".<sup>24</sup> Nash Krai party states that its ideology is "expressed in simple words: professionals working alongside people".<sup>25</sup>

Given the party programmes in Ukraine, centrist parties dominate, but actively used both the ideas of the left and the right. Ideas of the left are mainly used in the economy (the moratorium on land sales, criticism of privatization, the introduction of a luxury tax), and ideas of the right usually are culture-related (support of the Ukrainian language, culture, decommunization). These ideas were previously supported by the Communist Party of Ukraine and Svoboda party, respectively, but now they are not so popular, and therefore, there is no left or right party likely to overcome threshold for now in Ukraine. In the economy, the closest to the social democracy are the programmes

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21 "Party programme of Democratic Alliance," *Political party "Democratic Alliance"*, accessed September 17, 2018, <https://dem-alliance.org/aims/programa-demalyansu>.

22 "Party programme of People's Power party," *Political party "People's Power"*, accessed September 17, 2018, <http://sylalyudey.org/programa/>.

23 "Ideological platform," *Political party "UKROP"*, accessed September 17, 2018, <http://www.ukrop.com.ua/uk/about/values>.

24 "Berezyuk: For now, Sadovyi should not be a president," *Liga*, December 11, 2014, [https://news.liga.net/politics/interview/berezyuk\\_na\\_segodnyashniy\\_den\\_sadovomu\\_ne\\_nado\\_byt\\_prezidentom](https://news.liga.net/politics/interview/berezyuk_na_segodnyashniy_den_sadovomu_ne_nado_byt_prezidentom).

25 "Who we are," *Political party "Nash Kray"*, accessed September 17, 2018, <https://nashkray.org/ru/pro-nas/> [Accessed 15 Sep. 2018].

of Batkivshchyna party, Opposition Bloc, For Life and the Radical Party of Oleh Lyashko. BPP and Civic Position programme ideas are closer to the liberal model of minimal state intervention in the economy.

It is common for parties to provide unrealistic promises in their programmes. According to opinion polls, only 28% of citizens are ready to tolerate a decline of standard of living for the sake of the ultimate success of reforms<sup>26</sup>. All of these creates a situation where populist slogans of politicians who promise to secure a fast result of modernization without significant time and resources of voters become popular. To some extent, populism exists in the programmes of all parties. For example, RPL promises to increase the state expenses on medicine by 10 times; Batkivshchyna declares that a population that can not afford to pay utilities by that high tariffs will not do this; Opposition Bloc promises to end the war in a half year, lower tariffs on gas and heat. Such promises as increasing the funding of medicine in 10 times are not only abstractly formulated, but also unrealistic, given the difficult socio-economic situation in the state. For example, comparing expenditures on health care in the consolidated budget of Ukraine in 2014 and 2016 shows that during this time, expenditures increased by only 23% (from 57,1 billion UAH to 74,3 billion UAH).

The core of the ideology of populism is the confrontation between people and elite. In this context, political parties are inclined to romanticize people in their programmes and use ideas such as anti-establishment and direct democracy. All major parties promise voters to increase their influence on politics while limiting the power of the politicians. In particular, Batkivshchyna party, BPP and Opposition Bloc promised to give citizens the right to elect a part of judges, and RPL – to create a public anti-corruption body from veterans of the war to fight corruption. The ideas of referendums and other mechanisms of direct democracy are becoming popular (in particular, the recall of MPs through the imperative mandate). For Life party advocates referendum on state foreign and domestic policy, Batkivshchyna – a referendum on the extension of the moratorium on land sales. Also, parties speculate on such topics as reducing the number of deputies and officials, as well as limiting the opportunities to be elected. Thus, RPL demands to reduce the number of MPs from 450 to 200, and For Life proposes to prohibit the reelection of the same person to parliament, UKROP proposes to cancel present law in force and to codify it.

Regarding the high level of dissatisfaction with the actions of the authorities, the parties propose radical steps to upgrade the political system. Thus, Batkivshchyna, Opposition Bloc, For Life, Civic Position support the adoption of a new Constitution of Ukraine. An absolute majority of the parties also suggest changing the form of government in Ukraine. Batkivshchyna, Samopomich, For life and Opposition Bloc support

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26 "Tired of enduring: who Ukrainians consider as major reformers," *Politeka*, December 5, 2017, <https://politeka.net/ua/news/547135-nabridlo-terpiti-kogo-ukrayintsi-vvazhayut-golovnimi-reformatorami>.

the transition to a pure parliamentary republic, Civic Position, Svoboda, RPL – to a presidential system.

In general, programmes of political parties have a lack of really new messages and contain a lot of internal contradictions. In programmes, parties avoid answering questions about the priorities of their activities, trying to reach the widest possible range of topics. The parties are not inclined to make an ideological choice between what is more important for them: freedom or equality, individualism or collectivism, private property or state monopoly, traditional values or human rights. Instead, the parties are simultaneously trying to combine the concepts of different ideologies in the programmes without identifying their priority. It resulted in illogical and controversial combinations, and party programmes closer to the model of catch-all parties. Thus, all major parties are in favor of reducing taxes, but they stand for significant social obligations of the state and free services. The parties claim to support free trade, but they are in favor of the laws on trade protectionism of Ukrainian producers. The parties point out that they support the idea of a free market, but at the same time, strongly against the introduction of the land market in Ukraine. The parties state publicly about the need for optimizing resources and balancing the budget but oppose the closure of non-productive schools, hospitals, and other social institutions.

The analysis shows that ideology often does not affect the practical activity of parties. For example, this is evidenced by the fact that political parties in Ukraine are inclined to join the European groups not because of shared values, but solely on political grounds. Thus, the party *Batkivshchyna*, which is a center-left party, is a member of the center-right European People's Party. The party declared it in 2007, although before it officially used to link its activities with the left-wing European parties, while party leader Yulia Tymoshenko, during her talks with the EPP, on the question about preferred ideology said that it is still the center-left.<sup>27</sup>

The other example is a membership of the *Hromadska Posytsiya* (Civil Position) party in The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, despite the fact that party leader Anatoliy Hrytsenko officially supports the establishment of enlightened authoritarianism in Ukraine. Such an alliance seems conceptually wrong since ALDE formally advocates defending a model of liberal democracy and fundamental human rights, which in principle runs counter to the practices of authoritarianism.

It is also noteworthy that none of the analyzed parties oriented towards rapprochement with the Russian Federation are a member of the European party. This applies to the parties *Opposition Bloc* and *Za Zhyttya* (For Life). At the moment, these political forces have not even expressed a desire to join in future any European group. While other Ukrainian parties that occupy a pro-European position express an official desire to become a member of the European group. This confirms once again that joining one of the

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<sup>27</sup> Victor Chivokunia, "Tymoshenko changes her orientation," *Ukrainian Pravda*, August 7, 2007, <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2007/08/7/4422266/> [Accessed 16 Sep. 2018].

groups is primarily a political issue, and therefore Ukrainian parties oriented towards the Russian Federation are not interested in such cooperation. In this case, for example, the Opposition Bloc could theoretically co-operate with the European Social Democrats but does not express such an interest.

It is significant that the Party of Regions, representative of which was the President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich in 2010-2014, began cooperation with the European group (the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats) only when it was taken the state's course towards rapprochement with the European Union. Before this party, despite the proximity of ideologies, ignored such contacts. Thus, the appropriate cooperation should have a purely political rather than ideological character.

These examples emphasize the secondary importance of ideologies for political parties in Ukraine. The parties are inclined to join those groups with which they succeed to establish political ties, often ignoring the conceptual unity of their ideologies. However, it also raises questions about the interests of the European groups that agree to such cooperation. In general, it should be noted that only two of the analyzed Ukrainian parties are members of the European political families. It shows a general underdevelopment of contacts between Ukrainian parties and their possible European allies.



# Section III

## Implementation of the party platforms: the basic challenges and responses

### 1. Experience of realization of party programmes based on the 2014 elections to the Verkhovna Rada

Prior to the 2019 elections, the programmes of major parties had many similarities. The same was before the 2014 elections. Experience has shown, however, that the presence of common ideas yet does not ensure their implementation. The factions' voting in parliament is often determined not by their programmes, but by the opposition or pro-government status of political force. Therefore, important is not only the content or quality of party programmes, but also whether policymakers are ready for their implementation and under what conditions.

At the time of the 2014 elections, all major parties, with the exception of Opposition Bloc, had a strategically identical vision of the state's development. The analysis of party election programmes showed that the parties had a common vision of 16 positions in such areas as foreign policy, decentralization, judicial, economic, social policies and the fight against corruption.

However, two years after the 2014 parliamentary elections, the parties have implemented less than half of the provisions of their election programmes – 61 points out of 138.<sup>28</sup> Later, in 2016, "European Ukraine" coalition collapsed and the level of implementation of programmes was further reduced.

Among the main election promises made by the parties are to launch the decentralization reform, launch an electronic declaration system for civil servants, adopt a new law on civil servants, make amendments to the Constitution in the framework of judicial reform, to launch the work of new anti-corruption bodies, abandon non-aligned status, introduce quotas for the Ukrainian language on TV and radio. But most of the promises were not fulfilled. In particular, such promises as the election to the Verkhovna Rada

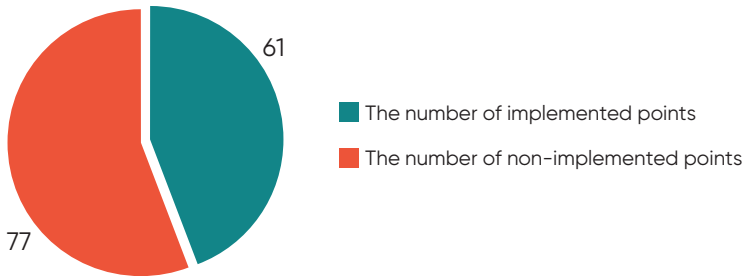
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28 Committee of Voters of Ukraine, "CVU report: "Two years of the Verkhovna Rada: how factions implement their election programmes," 2016, <https://goo.gl/iwU3c8>.

Common positions in election programmes in 2014 («+» – the statement is in the party programme)						
	Peo- ple's Front	BPP	Oppo- sition Bloc	Sam- opo- mich	Bat- kish- chyna	RPL
<b>FOREIGN POLICY</b>						
Ukraine's accession to NATO, refusal of non-aligned status	+			+	+	
rapprochement with the EU	+	+			+	+
<b>DECENTRALIZATION</b>						
Empowerment and transfer financial resources to communities	+	+	+	+	+	+
Establishment of executive bodies of local self-government, elimination of state administrations		+	+		+	
Simplify the provision of administrative services	+			+	+	
<b>JUDICIAL POLICY</b>						
E-declarations for officials	+	+			+	+
Lustration		+		+	+	+
Refreshment of the judiciary, a new law enforcement officials	+	+	+	+	+	+
Elections to the Verkhovna Rada under the proportional system		+			+	+
<b>FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION</b>						
Creation of anti-corruption bodies	+			+	+	+
Involving the public in control of power	+	+		+	+	
<b>ECONOMIC POLICY</b>						
Tax liberalization, the struggle against monopolies	+	+	+	+	+	+
Opposition to oligarchs, the introduction of a crisis tax	+	+				+
Support of the agrarian sector, protection of rural population rights	+	+		+	+	+
<b>SOCIAL POLICY</b>						
Social protection for poor families	+	+	+			+
Social support for military personnel	+		+	+	+	+

under the proportional electoral system, the abolition of parliamentary immunity, the abolition of state administrations, the adoption of laws on the impeachment of the President and the opposition, granting citizens the right to elect judges. And of course, such frankly unrealistic promises as the return of nuclear status to Ukraine (RPL) or indexation of wages in accordance with inflation (BPP) have not been fulfilled.

### Implementation of election programmes of parliamentary parties (2014–2016)



Some promises were not only unfulfilled but were generally implemented in a way that was directly opposite to the written. Thus, instead of strengthening the anti-corruption control of the public over the authorities, which was promised by the People’s Front, BPP, Samopomich, and Batkivshchyna, there was adopted the law No. 1975 on the e-declaration for anti-corruption civil organizations, which caused criticism of the international partners of Ukraine.

Despite the presence of common positions, in practice, during voting in Parliament parties often vote according to the situational interests and do not vote for the initiatives offered by their opponents even if they are in line with the programmes of those parties. That is, the «opposition-coalition» division become crucial and often define party voting, rather than their general or election programmes.

The situation with the decentralization reform is an indicative benchmark. At the time of 2014, this was the only promise that was present in the programmes of all six parliamentary parties. Moreover, mechanisms for implementing the reform were absolutely identical (strengthening of basic communities, elimination of state administrations, the establishment of executive committees of district and regional councils). Before the collapse of the coalition, the faction was quite active in supporting the reform. However, after some of them left the coalition they began to criticize the reform. In this, there were criticized even those provisions for which ex-members of coalition voted earlier. Depending on their membership in the coalition or the opposition, the parties often change their attitude even to the things that seemed to be fundamental for them. Thus, during the premiership of Yulia Tymoshenko, her party advocated the opening of the land market, which was one of the requirements of the IMF. While at the moment the party is in opposition and strongly opposes the lifting of the moratorium on land sales.

In assessing the implementation of programmes, it is necessary to take into account those objective restrictions that are imposed on the party under the conditions of the parliamentary-presidential model. First of all, this is the issue of the number of deputies in the parliamentary faction. It is obvious that parties with fewer deputies tend to have

fewer chances to perform their programmes. Therefore, in this context, it will be more relevant when the parties develop not one programme, but two, namely the minimum programme and the programme maximum. This will allow voters to understand more clearly what to expect from the party, depending on its performance in the elections, and for parties to carry out a more objective assessment of their possibilities.

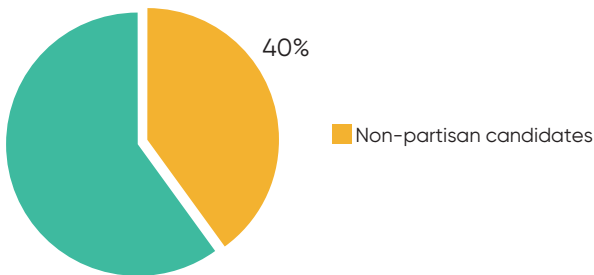
## 2. Self-control of parties over the implementation of the programmes: trends and prospects

In the implementation of the programme, two issues are important: do really the party representatives being in power try to implement the programme and how the party can influence if they refuse to follow the position of the party, and whether the party has enough resources (human, financial) to qualitatively implement its promises.

It is important that, after coming to power, the parties have the opportunity to stimulate their representatives to vote in accordance with the party general and election programmes. However, in Ukraine traditionally, intra-party discipline is low. Deputies often vote not in line with the position of the party and also change one political force to another. This applies to both national and local levels.

The main reason for such actions is that candidates often are not really connected with the party that nominated them. At the elections to the Verkhovna Rada of 2014, 40% of the candidates in the lists of parties in the multi-mandate constituency were non-partisan. That is, they were not members of the party which nominated them. In some parties this figure reached 90% (e.g., Opposition Bloc). In addition, 64% of candidates majoritarian MPs were non-partisan.<sup>29</sup>

The number of non-partisan candidates in the lists of parties  
(2014 parliamentary elections)



29 "Interim report on the results of OPORA observation during extraordinary elections of MPs of Ukraine: September 2014," *OPORA*, 2014, <https://oporaua.org/news/6307-promizhnyj-zvit-za-rezultatamy-sposterezhennja-opory-pid-chas-pozachergovyh-vyboriv-narodnyh-deputativ-ukrajiny-veresen-2014-roku>.

This means that these persons are not really party-dependent in voting. Even though they were formally nominated by it. This is particularly true with respect to the majoritarian MPs, who as a rule are elected to the largest parliamentary faction. Thus, 72 MPs of BPP faction out of 136 were elected precisely in single-mandate majoritarian districts. However, such MPs are less controlled by the factions than the MPs elected from the party list for election. Mentioned MPs may not be included in the party list for the next elections in the case of their uncontrolled voting, while with majoritarian MPs it does not work.

For Ukraine are also typical frequent transfers of deputies from one faction to another. Over the three years of work of the Verkhovna Rada 36 MPs changed their affiliation. Two MPs, Yegor Firsov and Mykola Tomenko, lost their parliamentary mandates after leaving the BPP faction. To their cases was applied the principle of the party's imperative mandate, which is enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine (art. 81).

In recent years, the parties have been trying to compensate the lack of discipline within faction by sanctioning MPs who vote against the party position and do not comply with its programme. However, such actions more often resemble a party dictatorship than a real method of solving the problem. Here should be mentioned some examples.

First, the parties are trying to tighten control over the candidates for MPs in their party lists. In February 2016, the Verkhovna Rada adopted the so-called law No. 1006 On the Party Dictatorship (among the initiators are heads of the factions Batkivshchyna, RPL, BPP, Narodnyi Front, and Samopomich). The law allowed the parties to exclude MPs from party list of candidates to the Verkhovna Rada after the announcement of election results and change the order of the candidates on the list. At the same time, the reasons for the exclusion of a candidate are not detailed in the law so de facto parties can manipulate it and implement the way they want.

Party leaders justified the usefulness of this law by the fact that it will help to prevent entering the parliament to these candidates who despite being in party lists have shown unwillingness to follow up party programme. Since the law came into force, the parties have excluded 43 names from their lists. However, in December 2017 the Constitutional Court of Ukraine abolished this law as contradicting the principles of democracy, legal certainty, and a free parliamentary mandate.

Secondly, parties are seeking to tighten control over local deputies. The bill No. 3693 (initiated by the leaders of the factions of BPP, RPL, Batkivshchyna and Samopomich) is being considered by the Parliament, which provides parties with the right to early terminate the powers of those local deputies who fail to comply with the programme of their party or vote against the position of the faction.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, as in the previous

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30 "Draft Law on Amendments to the Law of Ukraine "On the Status of Deputies of Local Councils" (regarding the revocation of deputies of local councils)," *Legislation of Ukraine*, accessed September 17, 2018, [http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4\\_1?pf3511=57517](http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=57517).

law, the grounds for such decision are not clearly formulated. Formally, a deputy can be excluded for any activity, because the phrase “fail to comply with the party programme” is too broad and blurred. The bill was criticized by expert organizations as such that stimulate the party dictatorship, but the deputies supported it in the first reading.

Thirdly, the parties actively use the mechanisms of recall of deputies of local councils. The relevant rules are enshrined in the Law “On the Status of Deputies of Local Councils”<sup>31</sup> and are formally referred to as the recall by “People’s Initiative”. The recall algorithm is following: initially, voters collect a certain number of votes for the withdrawal of a deputy from the party, and then the party at its congress decides whether to support such an initiative of citizens. If so, then the deputy will lose his mandate. Often, the reason for the recall is non-compliance with the party programme, but it is used by political forces only as a formal reason. In practice, this mechanism is used by parties not to control the implementation of the programme, but to punish certain deputies. Experts note a significant political pressure of parties on voter decisions on the recall of certain deputies, and the recall procedure itself is opaque and manipulative.<sup>32</sup> Over 2017-2018, attempts to recall deputies have taken place in such large cities as Cherkasy, Poltava, Lutsk, Kryvyi Rih and were accompanied by conflicts everywhere. Lately under the Verkhovna Rada consideration are bills envisaging the recall of MPs of Ukraine.

Thus, instead of including in the party lists for election the proven individuals, the parties operate *ex post facto*, using the mechanisms of direct democracy to punish some deputies. Such actions are opaque and manipulative, as well as stand in contrary to the basic principles of a free representative mandate. A more balanced approach is when the parties are more responsibly selecting candidates to their lists for elections. In particular, they could develop intraparty democracy and nominate candidates, first of all, members of their party or those who support its ideology. At the present stage, an intraparty democracy of some major parties is generally underdeveloped. So, none of the more than 700 local branches of RPL and 600 branches of the Narodnyi Front have legal entity status. That is, they do not have their own accounts in banks, and therefore, even theoretically, they are not capable of conducting a full-fledged economic and financial activity and are completely dependent on the central office.

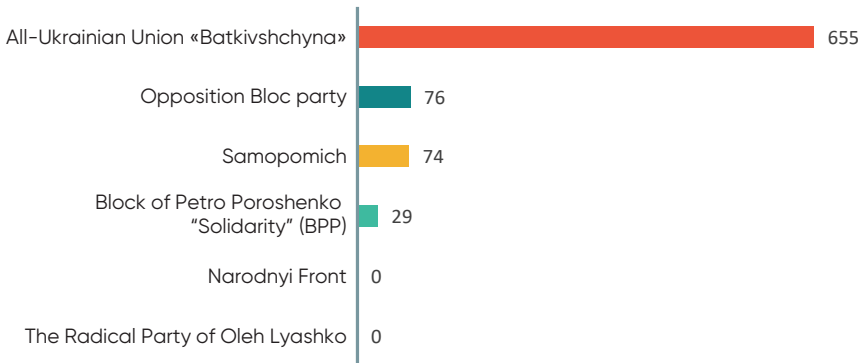
However, the presence of deputies who ready to implement the party programme does not yet mean its qualitative implementation. This also requires relevant resources (financial, material, human). Therefore, the analytical ability of the parties to implement the programme becomes important. That is, the ability to develop quality proposals to solve social problems, first of all, in the form of bills or draft decisions of the local council. The low quality of the work of the Parliament testifies to the weakness of the party’s analytical work. Experts point to a record amount of legal spam: every second draft law

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31 “The Law “On the Status of Deputies of Local Councils,” *Legislation of Ukraine*, accessed September 17, 2018, <http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/93-15>.

32 Iryna Fedoriv, “How to recall deputies: why the Parliament gave the communities an absurd instrument?” *Ukrainian Pravda*, May 8, 2018, <http://vybory.pravda.com.ua/articles/2018/05/8/7149619/>.

## The number of party branches with the status of legal entities (among parliamentary parties)



of the Verkhovna Rada of the 8th convocation receives negative conclusions from the Main Scientific and Expert Board of the Verkhovna Rada, and one in three – from the Ministry of Finance.

To increase the analytical capacity of parties, it is necessary to use the mechanism of state funding of political parties, introduced in Ukraine in 2016. After the 2019 parliamentary elections, all the parties which will get more than 2% of the votes will receive funds from the state budget. Among them will be distributed about 500 million UAH. At the moment, those parties that receive state funding almost do not invest in analytical development and direct them to routine activities. So, from September 2016 to September 2017, all parliamentary parties spent a total of 436 million UAH. The largest amount, 128 million, was directed to the advertisement in the mass media (TV, radio, print media, billboards), 57 million were spent on salaries and 46 million – on rent. That is, the money was spent on routine activities (lease, salary) and PR-activity (advertising in the media), rather than analytical work.

In order to change this situation, it should be foreseen in the Law “On Political Parties in Ukraine” that the parties should direct at least 25% of the funds received from the state budget on the analyst. In particular, this includes the following areas:

- increasing the professional qualification of party members through educational activities (providing knowledge in the field of legal, political, economic sciences, studying the basics of rule-making techniques);
- creation of own think tanks in the structure of the party, which would operate on an ongoing basis with sufficient financial and others resource;
- involvement of external analytical experts, who would prepare analytical materials upon request of the party, would offer real ways of solving social problems in the format of strategies, concepts, programmes, would be involved in writing draft laws and draft decisions of local authorities;

- payment for sociological, legal, economic and other researches, which will be carried out by external scientific-expert and other institutions upon request of the party.

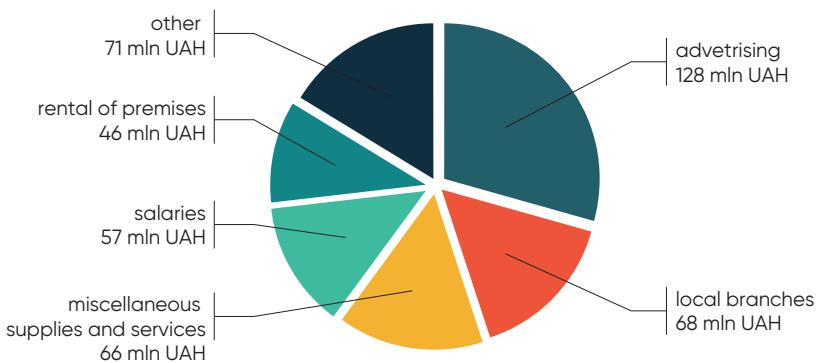
Development of a party analytical capacity would make their programmes more qualitative documents that do not contain conflicting provisions and will rely on proven facts and statistics, rather than political assessments and speculations.

At the same time, parties should work towards improving the communication of their programmes. Currently, some parties are actively investing funds, primarily received from the state, in party newspapers. So, Samopomich spent 39 million UAH on propaganda activities (mainly the party newspaper) out of a total of 104 million over the first year of state funding. Significant funds invest also BPP in their own newspaper. However, the content of such newspapers is often little informative and refers to the covering of everyday activities of parties. Therefore, the parties should work on improving the analytical component of such publications.

The low quality of communication of party programmes is naturally linked to the almost complete absence of a culture of reporting in political forces in Ukraine. For example, after signing the 2014 Coalition Agreement, parliamentary parties never reported to voters about its implementation. However, relevant mechanisms are provided for in the Agreement. The same applies to electoral and party programmes. Therefore, it is important at the moment to introduce practices of real reporting of parties to voters about their activities and it should be done in a user-friendly format. In the meantime, only 15% of MPs publish reports on their activities<sup>33</sup>. However, even they often do this in a formal and hard-to-reach for citizens way.

After all, any changes in the developing and communication of party programmes will only succeed if citizens are interested in obtaining the relevant product. In the mean-

Expenditure of 6 parliamentary parties over the period of September 2016 - September 2017 (mln UAH)



33 "How do MPs report, or Works on a free topic?," *Public Movement "CHESNO"*, 2017, <http://www.chesno.org/post/410/>.



time, only half of the citizens indicate that they read party programmes<sup>34</sup>, while 87% say they receive first-hand information from television<sup>35</sup>, which is controlled by oligarchic groups in Ukraine. Despite this, according to various sociological researches, after the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine popular demand for a more meaningful policy was formed, which obviously should lead not only to the mechanical increase in the number of parties, but also to the better work of political forces in terms of writing and implementing party programmes. The source for such changes may come from the State Budget of Ukraine, available to most major Ukrainian parties. Already, there are significant positive changes in the institutional provision of the work of parties (for example, officially employed workers), but in the near future, parties should invest more resources not only in routine activities but in analytical activities that will contribute to the development and implementation of quality programmes.

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34 "Ukrainian political parties at the start of the election campaign," *Hrushevskoho*, 5, January 31, 2018, <http://grushevskogo5.com/intresting/ukrainski-politichni-partii-na-starti-viborchoi-kampanii/>.

35 "Ukrainians are watching TV, do not trust, do not check, but continue to watch – research by Detektor Media and KIIS," *Detektor Media*, March 28, 2018, <http://detector.media/infospace/article/136076/2018-03-28-ukrainsi-divlyatsya-tb-ne-doviryayut-ne-perevirayut-ale-prodovzhuyut-divitsiya-doslidzhennya-detektora-media-ta-kmis/>.

## Conclusions

Revolution events in Ukraine in late 2013 led to a change in political regime in Ukraine, but did not result in the renewal of political elites, which was one of the main demands of the protesters. Instead, the formal increase in the number of parties has become one of the consequences: more than 150 new political forces have been registered for the period of 2014-2018. However, the increase in the number of parties did not lead to changes in the quality of party programmes and demonstrated the prevalence of the old problems. Programmes of the political parties enjoying utmost support remain intrinsically controversial and fuzzy. Among the drawbacks are the provision of deliberately unrealistic promises, the lack of logic in combining the elements of different ideologies, populism, venturing on the ideas of direct democracy, the propaganda of ideas contradicting the principles of democracy and ideas that don't have scientific grounds.

One of the options for improving the quality of party programmes is to develop the analytical capacity of the parties using public funding. Mandatory allocation of funds for activities in research and analysis will allow the parties to improve the approach to writing party programmes in a qualitative way. This implies the involvement of remunerated external experts from academic institutions, non-governmental organizations as well as political experts and the creation of their own permanent, party-based think tanks to develop and communicate party programmes. Also the development of quality programmes can be complemented with external assistance like ordering specialized sociological research and conducting relevant focus groups. This will foster deeper understanding of citizens' expectations and attitude to certain social problems. The desirable steps include the peer-to-peer exchange of experience of Ukrainian political parties with their foreign counterparts on party programmes writing and communicating. In addition, proper attention should be paid to continuous education and lifelong professional development of party members and their representatives in the government. Such trainings can take the shape of professional training on the introduction into legal science, sociology, political science, as well as full-time education in relevant educational institutions.

One of the consequences of low-quality and unrealistic programmes is the impossibility to implement the aforesaid programmes in practice. Besides, low level of party discipline remains an issue and influences the implementation of programmes. In the recent years, parties have been trying to stimulate internal party discipline through the use of sanctions against uncontrolled MPs or deputies, but such actions are manipulative in nature and contradict the idea of the representative mandate. In general, the parties should pay more attention to the nomination of candidates in the elections, introducing public persons as their members or having long-term plans for cooperation with the party members.

Potentially, the change of the electoral system for the elections to the Verkhovna Rada from parallel voting, with half members elected in single-member constituencies using FPTP system and other elected by proportional representation (closed list) in a single nationwide constituency, to proportional with open list might facilitate healthy party discipline. This will increase the role of parties in society and potentially contribute to the party discipline. In addition, the open-list system will stimulate parties to include new politicians who have support of their communities in the electoral lists and, accordingly, it will increase the chances of a political force to overcome the electoral threshold.

In the part of communication of the programmes, an important step should be the restriction for political advertising. For example, increasing the length of the publicity spots on television by law will encourage parties to disclose the content of their programmes more fully, and prevent speculation on political slogans. That in general will contribute to a more meaningful policy model. At the same time, general level of political education of the population should be increased. That means the provision citizens with full and unbiased information on the activities of political parties, with engagement of independent experts who will provide insight on efficiency and meaning of political programs. Finally, the Ukrainian parties should work more actively in the direction of interaction with the European political groups. Such action would be logical, given the general rapprochement of Ukraine with the states of the European Union after 2014. At the same time, it is important that such cooperation is of ideological rather than purely political nature, since at the moment, as shown in the paper, Ukrainian parties either are not members of the European groups at all or intend to join them due to short-term political interests, rather than with intent of real long-term and ideological cooperation.

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