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KEY FINDINGS

JUNE 2015 SURVEY IN UKRAINE



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Methodology

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) fielded a national survey in Ukraine from June 15 to 25, 2015, with a total of 1,558 interviews in areas outside Donbas and Crimea. The margin of error for a sample of this size is plus/minus 2.5 percent. Interviews were conducted in all oblasts outside Donbas for this sample and the sample is representative of the Ukrainian population outside Donbas and Crimea. In addition to this national sample, an additional sample of 209 interviews was fielded in Donbas. Due to the lack of official data on population transfers in Donbas over the past two years as well as concerns about possible intimidation or adverse influences impacting responses of those interviewed, the data from this sample in Donbas is not considered representative. Rather, it may be indicative of opinions that may exist among current residents of Donbas. The Kiev International Institute of Sociology conducted all fieldwork and data processing for this survey.

Opinions on the Situation in the Country

The survey finds that in the nine months since the 2014 parliamentary elections in Ukraine, Ukrainians are decidedly more skeptical about the direction of the country. Ukrainians are less likely to say that their country is heading in the right direction than they were following the parliamentary elections, and many Ukrainians say that the overall socio-political situation in the country is worse than it was six months ago.

- Only 20 percent of Ukrainians outside Donbas say that the country is headed in the right directions, while a majority of 61 percent say that it is headed in the wrong direction. This represents a decrease of 13 percentage points from December, when 33 percent of Ukrainians outside Donbas saw the country going in the right direction, compared to only 45 percent who saw it moving in the wrong direction. Pessimism about the direction of the country is widespread. In no region of Ukraine outside Donbas do more than 24 percent of residents (North and Kyiv) say Ukraine is heading in the right direction, a number which falls to a low of 14 percent in the Center of the country. In Donbas, attitudes are more negative, with 80 percent saying the country is going in the wrong direction, compared to only 5 percent who say it is heading in the right direction.
- Both in Ukraine outside Donbas and in Donbas, most respondents say that the Donbas conflict is the most serious issue facing the country. Ninety-one percent of Ukrainians in Donbas and 83 percent of Ukrainians outside Donbas cite the conflict in Donbas as the most serious issue facing the country presently. Economic issues also concern Ukrainians, with 58 percent of Ukrainians outside Donbas mentioning inflation, 33 percent saying poverty is a serious issue, 30 percent noting general economic problems, and 25 percent mentioning unemployment. Forty-eight percent mention corruption as a serious issue facing the country.
- Only 6 percent of Ukrainians outside Donbas say that the overall situation in Ukraine is better than it was six months ago, while almost three-quarters saying that the situation is either somewhat (36%) or definitely worse (39%). A further 16 percent say they have seen no changes over the past six months. Overall, the number of Ukrainians saying that the overall situation is

worse has increased slightly since December, when 71 percent said that things were worse off in Ukraine than six months prior.

- Ukrainians' views on the worsening situation in the country over the past six months are reflected in the attitudes towards satisfaction with many elements of the present situation in the country. Among Ukrainians outside Donbas, only 29 percent are satisfied with the foreign policy of Ukraine, 28 percent are satisfied with the cultural situation, and 11 percent are satisfied with the political situation in the country. Very few Ukrainians outside of Donbas are satisfied with the current healthcare situation (6%) or economic situation (2%).
- Ukrainians outside Donbas are largely dissatisfied with President Petro Poroshenko's handling of many key issues, although some areas have seen improvement since December 2014. Overall, 95 percent are dissatisfied with his efforts to keep prices low, 91 percent with the creation of jobs, 87 percent with addressing official corruption, 86 percent with addressing the situation in Donbas, 82 percent with relations with Russia, 80 percent with attempts to limit the influence of big business on State authorities, 78 percent with creating political stability, 71 percent with efforts to increase energy independence and 70 percent with bridging the regional divide in Ukraine. Attitudes are mixed as to his attempts to respect the rights and freedoms of the media (32% satisfied vs. 53% dissatisfied) and addressing the status of Ukraine and the European Union (36% satisfied vs. 49% dissatisfied).
- Half of Ukrainians outside Donbas (50%) say that Ukraine would be better off if the country had closer relations with Europe, while only 9 percent say the country would be better off with closer economic ties to Russia. Seventeen percent think the country would be better off with closer relations with both Europe and Russia, while 14 percent argue that Ukraine would be better with closer relations to neither. These totals are similar to findings from September 2014, when 53 percent of Ukrainians outside Donbas advocated for closer relations with Europe. In Donbas, only 8 percent say that Ukraine would be better off having only closer economic relations with Europe, while 37 percent say Ukraine would be better off with closer economic relations to both Europe and Russia, the most popular option in the region. Slightly fewer (36%) say that Ukraine would be better with closer economic relations with Russia.
- Ukrainians outside Donbas are divided as to the appointment of former Georgian Prime Minister Mikhail Saakashvili to be the Governor of Odessa oblast. Outside Donbas, 38 percent support the appointment, compared to 34 percent who oppose the appointment. Support for the move is highest in the West (46%), the North and Kyiv (46%), and the East outside Donbas (46%). Support for the move is much lower in the South (24%), with only 29 percent in Odessa oblast supporting the appointment, compared to 39 percent who oppose the appointment.
- Ukrainians outside Donbas strongly support the government pursuing reforms in a variety of different areas. Vast majorities say that it is important that the government initiate reforms to decrease corruption (96%), reforms to the judiciary (96%), reforms of law enforcement bodies (96%), tax reforms (91%), decentralization of power to local self-government bodies (84%), public procurement reform (83%), and reforms to ensure the financial independence of political parties (68%). While Ukrainians see all of these areas of reform as being important, when they are asked

to prioritize these reforms, most mention anti-corruption reforms (50%) and reforms to the judiciary (27%).

Views on Leadership and Institutions

There has been a general decline in confidence in political leaders and institutions since the September 2014 survey. Among institutions, confidence is widespread in the military, media, and pro-Ukrainian volunteer battalions, as well as in local political leaders.

- Thirty-nine percent of Ukrainians outside Donbas express confidence in Poroshenko, a significant decrease from 59 percent in a December 2014 survey. Even with this significant decline in confidence, Poroshenko is thirteen percentage points higher than any other political leader in the country. Among other leaders, 26 percent express confidence in Kyiv's Mayor Vitali Klitschko, 26 percent in the head of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) Valentyn Nalivaichenko, 26 percent in the head of Poroshenko's parliamentary group Yuriy Lutsenko, 25 percent in the head of the Radical Party Oleh Lyashko, 25 percent in former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, and 25 percent in Vice Speaker of Parliament Andriy Parubiy. Similar to Poroshenko, confidence in Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk has decreased greatly since December 2014 to 24 percent, a decrease of 32 percentage points. Among all political leaders, the only one to see an increase in confidence rating since December 2014 is Tymoshenko, who saw a ten percentage point increase. Confidence in political leaders is even lower in Donbas, with only 7 percent expressing confidence in Poroshenko.
- Confidence in the Ukrainian military continues to be high in Ukraine outside Donbas, with 24 percent expressing a great deal of confidence and 49 percent expressing a fair amount of confidence in the military. Similarly, although confidence has begun to wane for the pro-Ukrainian volunteer battalions, a majority of Ukrainians outside Donbas (53%) still express confidence. The Ukrainian media also inspires confidence among Ukrainians outside Donbas, with 54 percent expressing confidence in it.
- As is typical for surveys in Ukraine, local political leaders are viewed more favorably than national or regional leaders. In Ukraine outside Donbas, 46 percent express confidence in the Mayor of their city, and a further 45 percent express confidence in their city or village council. Only 20 percent express confidence in their oblast Governor, while 43 percent don't express much or any confidence.
- Other State institutions do not inspire much confidence, with 33 percent of Ukrainians outside Donbas expressing confidence in the Central Election Commission, 24 percent in the Ukrainian police, 23% in the Cabinet of Ministers, and 23 percent in the *Verkhovna Rada*, (Ukraine's Parliament). With the exception of the Ukrainian police, there has been a decrease in confidence in each of these institutions since December 2014. Confidence in these institutions in Donbas is lower than in the rest of Ukraine.
- Ukrainians largely do not trust the country's judicial and law enforcement bodies. Less than a quarter of Ukrainians outside Donbas express trust in any judicial or security institution, with the

most trusted bodies being the SBU (23%), Constitutional Court (18%), Appeals Court (16%), Supreme Court (16%), and High Administrative Court (16%).

Views on Democracy and the Maidan Movement

A majority of Ukrainians still see democracy as the best form of government for the country, however the number that say they are able to influence decision-making through voting has decreased since the last survey. Almost half of all Ukrainians still express confidence in the Maidan movement.

- Outside Donbas, 58 percent of Ukrainians say that democracy is preferable to any other form of government, while 12 percent say that in certain situations, a non-democratic government can be preferable, and for 17 percent of Ukrainians outside Donbas it does not matter what form of government Ukraine has. While the number saying that democracy is preferable has dropped seven percentage points from September 2014, it remains higher than in pre-Maidan surveys. In Donbas, 38 percent say that democracy is preferable, 26 percent do not care which form of government there is, and 16 percent say that a non-democratic government can be preferable.
- The number of Ukrainians outside Donbas who say that their country is currently a democracy has held steady at 39 percent since September 2014, with a further 7 percent saying that it has elements of democratic and non-democratic governments. Overall, 32 percent say that Ukraine is currently not a democracy. A majority of Ukrainians in the North and Kyiv (54%) say that Ukraine is currently a democracy. In the South, however, only 19 percent of Ukrainians say that the country is a democracy, the lowest number in the country outside Donbas.
- There has been a decrease in the percentage of Ukrainians who think that voting gives the influence over decision-making since the September 2014 survey. Overall, 41 percent of Ukrainians say that voting gives people like them a chance to influence decision-making in Ukraine, a decline from 53 percent in September 2014. Forty-nine percent disagree, rising from 41 percent in September 2014. Despite this negative trend, the percentage of Ukrainians outside Donbas who agree that voting gives them influence is still at its highest level since the post-Orange Revolution surveys.
- Almost half of Ukrainians outside Donbas express confidence in the Maidan movement, with 13 percent saying they have a great deal of confidence in it and 33 percent saying that they have a fair amount of confidence in it. Conversely, a third of Ukrainians outside Donbas say they have either no confidence (19%) or not much confidence in the movement (14%). Confidence in the movement is highest in the West (59%), Center (50%), and North and Kyiv (46%), while it is far lower in the East outside Donbas (31%) and the South (31%). In Donbas, only 4 percent express a fair amount confidence in the Maidan movement.

Opinions on Elections

Perceptions of the October 2014 parliamentary elections largely mirror what Ukrainians expected from the elections in the September 2014 survey. Overall, 60 percent of Ukrainians say that the elections were

at least somewhat free and fair, compared to a minority who say that the elections were flawed. Ukrainians also largely have a positive outlook on elections in the country, with views on the integrity of elections increasing significantly since 2013.

- The October 2014 parliamentary elections were largely free and fair, according to Ukrainians outside Donbas. Overall, 17 percent say that the elections were completely free and fair, 43 percent say that the elections were flawed, but reasonably free and fair, while two in ten say the elections were either so flawed as to doubt the accuracy of the results (15%) or that they were not free and fair at all (6%). These findings largely correspond to attitudes from before the election, when 19 percent said that the elections would be completely free and fair and 40 percent said that the elections would be flawed, but reasonably free and fair. Residents of the Center (74%), West (65%), North and Kyiv (59%), and East outside Donbas (53%) are more likely to say that the elections were at least reasonably free and fair. In the South (43%), residents are less likely to say that the parliamentary elections were free and fair.
- Ukrainians outside Donbas largely have positive perceptions of the electoral process. Overall, 75 percent agree that they feel safe voting however they wish in an election, 64 percent say that the elections are competently administered, and 44 percent say that the results of elections accurately reflect the way that people voted.
- With a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a result of the war in Donbas and Crimea, a majority of Ukrainians (53%) say that so long as the IDPs have registered as IDPs, they should be able to vote in local elections any time after their arrival in their new communities. Slightly more than a fifth say that there should be some restrictions, with 13 percent saying that the IDPs should stay in the community for six months before being able to vote, while a further 10 percent say that they need to obtain their registration from the *zheck* before voting. Only 6 percent of Ukrainians outside Donbas say that IDPs should never be able to vote in their new communities.

Attitudes on Corruption and Campaign Finance Reform

Corruption is widespread in Ukraine according to Ukrainians, with over three-quarters saying that corruption is at least somewhat pervasive in many government institutions and bodies. Ukrainians outside Donbas say that the courts, *Rada* Deputies, and police are the bodies most likely to engage in corruption. Many Ukrainians support curbs on the power of oligarchs in the electoral process, and think that there should be more disclosure of parties and candidates on their fundraising.

- Ukrainians are concerned about widespread corruption, and many believe that the government should make it a top priority to implement anti-corruption reforms. Overall, three-quarters or more of Ukrainians outside Donbas see corruption as being at least somewhat pervasive in nine different governmental institutions. Ninety-two percent of Ukrainians outside Donbas say corruption is at least somewhat pervasive in the court system, 91 percent in the police, 89 percent among the Deputies in the *Rada*, 87 percent in the Central Executive Organs, 84 percent in the local State administration, 83 percent in the regional branches of Central Executive Organs, 83

percent in the Cabinet of Ministers, 76 percent in the Office of the President, and 75 percent in self-government bodies.

- While Ukrainians generally see corruption as being pervasive in major institutions, they are most likely to identify the courts, Deputies in the *Rada*, and police as most likely to engage in corruption when given the option to name three institutions most likely to engage in corruption. Overall, 57 percent say that the courts are most likely to engage in corruption, with over a third (34%) providing this as their first choice. Forty-two percent say that Deputies in the *Rada* are likely to engage in corruption, with 27 percent providing this as their first choice. Thirty-two percent say that the police are likely to engage in corruption, with 12 percent providing this as their first choice.
- Over three-quarters of Ukrainians outside Donbas either strongly (63%) or somewhat agree (15%) that oligarchs have too much power in the country, and that they should not be able to use this power to provide funding for parties and candidates in elections. Only a small percentage of Ukrainians outside Donbas (8%) disagree, and say that oligarchs as Ukrainian citizens have as much right to provide funding for parties and candidates as anyone else in the country.
- On the general issues of campaign finance, more than seven in ten Ukrainians outside Donbas think that it is either very (45%) or somewhat important (26%) for there to be laws regulating how political parties and candidates raise and spend their money in Ukraine. Almost three-quarters (74%) of Ukrainians outside Donbas say it is important that candidates and parties publically disclose the amounts of money donated to their campaigns, while 68 percent say that parties and candidates should disclose the identity of donors to their campaigns.
- Regarding certain areas of campaign finance reform, 77 percent of Ukrainians outside Donbas say that there should be a ban on the use of State resources by political parties for an election campaign. Furthermore, 74 percent of Ukrainians outside Donbas agree that there should be limits on how much parties and candidates can spend on election campaigns. One way that campaign spending can be limited is by limiting contributions to campaigns, and in the survey 62 percent say that there should be legal limits on how much any one person can donate to an election campaign.
- While Ukrainians outside Donbas say that they believe that parties and candidates will sometimes offer money or gifts to voters in exchange for people's votes, they are less likely to say that they have actually seen or heard of this practice taking place. Overall, three-quarters of Ukrainians outside Donbas say that vote buying occurs either frequently (33%) or sometimes (42%). Despite this, only 28 percent of Ukrainians outside Donbas say that during the most recent parliamentary elections did they see or hear of anyone in their constituency being given an incentive or money to vote for a particular candidate or party. Experiences with hearing of or seeing vote-buying during the most recent parliamentary election were highest in the North (35%) and the East outside Donbas (32%).



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