



DECENTRALIZATION
OF POWER

DECENTRALISATION:

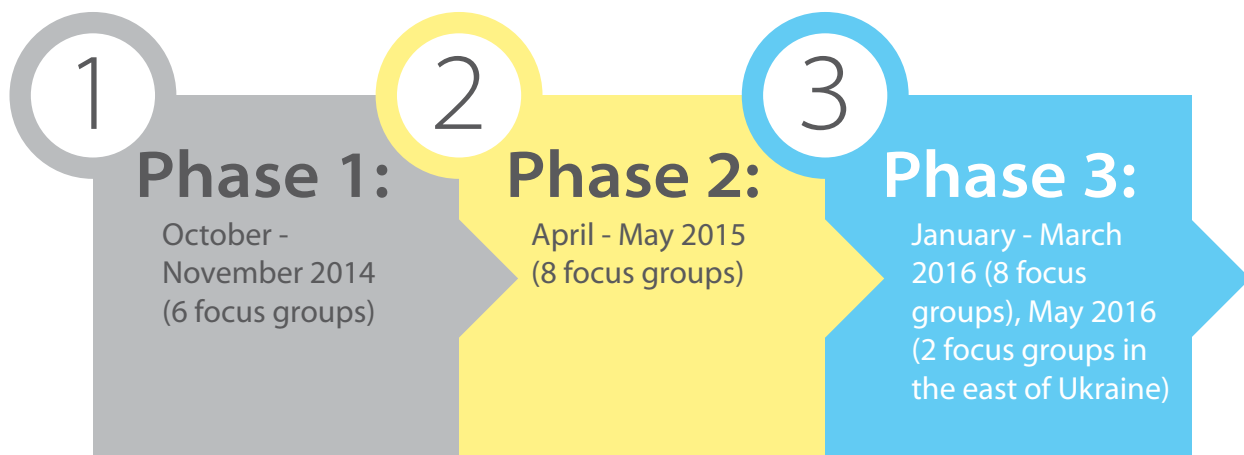
how is the public opinion changing?

2014 2015 2016



SURVEY

To prepare the information campaign on decentralisation of power reform implementation in Ukraine, the Swiss-Ukrainian Decentralisation Support to Ukraine Project DESPRO carried out a number of qualitative surveys (focus groups) to collect and analyse as wide as possible a range of public opinion on the decentralisation.



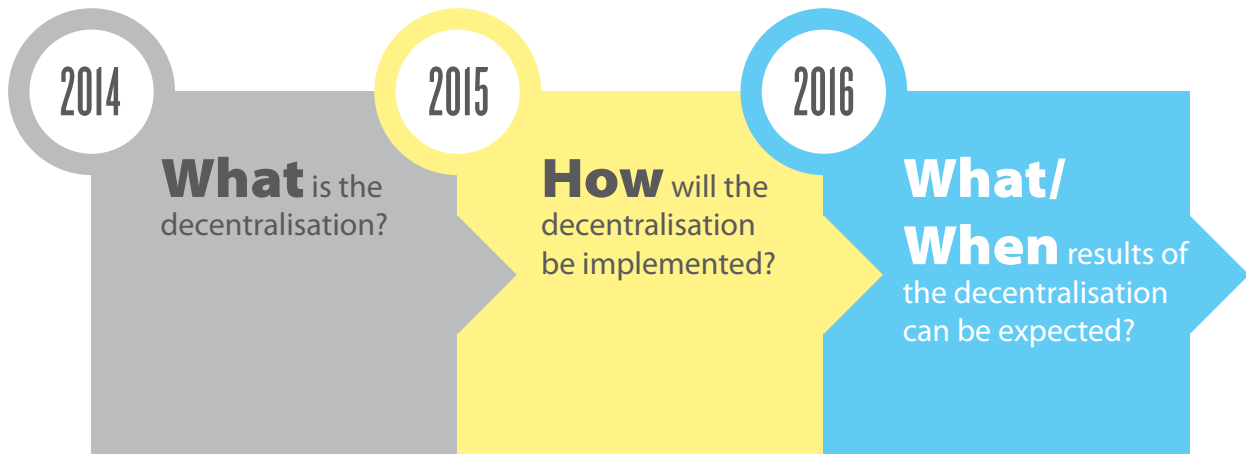
Geography:

west, east, north, south, and central part of Ukraine

Participants:

- women and men (1/1), at the age of 20 to 70 years
- active persons (various social groups) in cities, towns, and villages
- representatives of local self-government bodies (mayors of small cities, heads of Oblast (regional) councils, heads of town councils)

Reform perception dynamics – principal point



Two main points of view regarding the decentralisation

2014

Positivists

- Participation of communities in the solution of local problems;
- Provision of more powers and resources to local government;
- Responsibility of the local government for the results of its activity

Perplexed, aggressive persons

- The decentralisation will result in dissolution of the country, turmoil;
- Increase of corruption, growth of dependence on local 'princelets';
- A threat to the national security.

2016

Positivists

- There appeared ideas on the capability of solving nationwide problems, an instrument of the country's accelerated development, etc.;
- quote by a participant from the city of Kramatorsk: «*You should not say 'the Western Ukraine' but rather use 'west of Ukraine', 'east of Ukraine'. We need to sew Ukraine together!*»

Perplexed, aggressive persons

- The expressions of perplexity decreased significantly and the 'malicious fault-finding' almost disappeared.

Key aspects of discussions

2014

- The subject knowledge of the discussion topic is fragmentary;
- There is no complete understanding of the essence of the reforms;
- Confusion of the notions of 'separatism' and 'federalization'.

2015

- Understanding of the essence of decentralisation as the transfer of powers and finances to the local level;
- Comprehension of the decentralisation as reform No. 1 in the state;
- People are aware that each step in the implementation of the reform will affect them personally.

2016

- Readiness to participate in the implementation of the reform;
- Awareness of the necessity of learning to live in new conditions;
- Need for knowledge and skills of economic management and democratic principles of the 'individual - community - authorities' interaction.

Shift in attitude

2014-2015

A significant part of people expressed concern that the decentralisation would result in

- Dissolution of the country;
- Turmoil;
- Increase of corruption and growth of dependence on local 'princelets';
- A threat to the national security.

2016

The majority is aware of positive significance of the reform for local development and

- Participation of communities in the solution of local problems;
- Provision of financing and more powers to local government;
- Responsibility of communities and local government

Supporters of decentralisation may be conventionally divided into two groups - 'Democrats' and 'Economic Men':

'Democrats'

- **WHO:** young proactive individuals - social activists (new leaders), students, representatives of government who came after the Revolution of Dignity, and, in part, journalists and bloggers.
- **EMPHASIS** on the change of the person himself/ herself, his/ her mentality, habits, social and communal activity.
- **VISION OF POSSIBILITIES:** global - improvement of education, equal language opportunities, national policy, elimination of corruption, managerial resources, development of business, 'bottom-upwards' development of the country - from the villages and cities to the centre.
- **CRITICISM OF THE REFORM:** emphasize the lack of far-reaching global vision, a clear plan, and road map; point out to the disruptiveness of the reforming chain, the obscurity of new 'rules of the game'.
- **VISION OF PERSONAL PROSPECTS:** implementation of personal knowledge, abilities and energy through the development of the country irrespective of the place of application thereof: in self-government bodies, business, social activity, politics. They are not afraid of changes and are ready to take a risk.



'Economic Men'

- **WHO:** experienced representatives of the local self-government bodies, representatives of small business, aged persons, those who experienced failure with reforms, and even those who perceived the Revolution of Dignity with precaution.
- **EMPHASIS:** efficient use of resources and capabilities at the local level, transfer of powers, making services closer to people, simplification and responsiveness in the solution of pressing problems, an increase of local budgets.
- **VISION OF POSSIBILITIES:** solution of concrete problems faced by communities - local budgets replenishment, encouragement of investments, security, quality of the healthcare and education, communal issues (roads, repair of buildings, water pipelines, landfills) culture and leisure activities.
- **CRITICISM OF THE REFORM:** criticize concrete steps of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) and the Government - there is a delay in the adoption of required laws, lack of explanations regarding the power transfer mechanism, weak dialogue between the central and local governments.
- **PERSONAL PROSPECTS:** uncertainty, search of possibilities to avoid unforeseen difficulties.

2016: The number of 'democrats' decreased, whereas the number of 'economic men' increased

'Democrats'

- Place emphasis on the social and communal significance of the reform.
- The decentralisation is a step towards the development of a democratic society, democratic government of the state..



'Economic Men'

- Place emphasis on the social and economic expediency and significance of reforms.
- The decentralisation is an effective business pattern.

What problems do the participants in the discussion see in the implementation of the reform?

2014

- The central leadership will hamper everything;
- There is no political will for reforms;
- External enemies;
- Immaturity of the society;
- Lack of political culture;
- Currently, it is out of step with the time;
- The lustration is required;
- Communities are not ready;
- Lack of new, educated, young managers.

2016

- Lack of results following two years of the new government's work;
- Low level of confidence in the government, disappointment;
- Lack of professionals in the self-government and public administration;
- Non-transparency. The 'authors' of the reform poorly come in contact with the base level of local self-government - the communities;
- The specifics of Ukraine are not taken into consideration; mechanical adoption foreign experience;
- Negative influence of elections on local councils ('acceleration' of reforms as a part of pre-election technology).

VOLUNTARY AMALGAMATION OF TERRITORIAL COMMUNITIES

Three points of view regarding the attitude toward voluntary amalgamation of territorial communities (VATC)

1. speak in support of the idea of VATC;
2. voice doubts about the efficiency of amalgamation of communities and are afraid of possible conflicts between the communities;
3. believe that the amalgamation should not be carried out under the principle of 'willing - not willing', but rather on mandatory basis - on the ground of calculations of economic expediency and in accordance with the spatial planning.

Awareness of favourable consequences of voluntary amalgamation of territorial communities

- Budget increase;
- Receipt of government grants;
- Conscious and responsible attitude toward elections of deputies (members of local councils);
- Thoughtful and responsible management subject to social and economic expediency and public interests;
- VATC will accelerate the economic development at the local level, improve the quality of services, make the accountability more transparent, and provide better access to those making decisions.

Necessary conditions for efficient self-government

• For the self-government, the understanding of tasks and finding ways of fulfilment thereof in accordance with the law is the main issue;

• The community is the owner;

• Independent judiciary (a possibility to advocate for the rights of the community, otherwise the ownership would be just a paper title);

• Only democratic, conscious, free elections;

• Independent budget (then the local government understands and seeks long-term planning, and the community sets priorities);

Readiness of communities to participate in the decentralisation at the local level

2014-2015

- doubts whether communities are willing and ready to conduct efficient policy at the local level;
- inactivity of communities;
- low level of culture and law knowledge in general.

2016

- The will to participate in economic management at the local level;
- Acute need for clarifications and discussions of the reforming process;
- A part of people independently look for information, express their will to discuss the community living in new conditions.

Readiness of the self-government and officials to participate in reforming government

2014

- Emphasis is placed on the necessity of lustration, replacement of old personnel by 'fresh faces'.

2016

- Participants in the discussions
- Note the lack of professionals, persons having special education, managerial experience at any level;
 - Place emphasis on the necessity of solicitous attitude toward the 'old' personnel;
 - Argue against politically charged self-government.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION



TELEVISION

- Young people do not watch TV;
- People at the age of over 40 obtain key information from the following TV channels: Inter, ICTV, STB, 1+1, 5 Channel, 112 Channel, 24 Channel.



RADIO

- For a part of the population, as a rule, those at the age of over 40, radio, in particular, the local radio, is an important source of information..



PRINT MEDIA

- Reading is sparse (in each such group, there were not more than 20% of such persons);
- The elderly buy, subscribe to or take free-of-charge local newspapers. Teachers, journalists, employees of government institutions read: "Silski Visti", "Holos Ukrainy", "Uriadovyi Kurier" newspapers.



INTERNET

- Majority of the participants use the Internet and social networks;
- For most of them, the Internet is not so the source of information as the source of analysis of public events and the ability to compare various points of view.



CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, LECTURES, PUBLIC MEETINGS

- a part of people actively seek after, and participate in, awareness events;
- representatives of local self-government bodies emphasized that they participated in all possible workshops, meetings, lectures to be knowledgeable, have own views, be able to deliver information, and opportunely use it in their work.

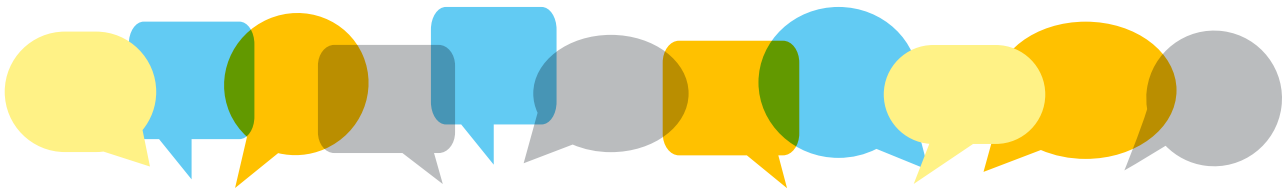


OTHER PERSONS

- For many, it is important to discuss with other people the problems of the society, state, local news, changes in administration, reforms so as to be aware of the situation and choose their line of conduct, actions.

General attitude towards the mass media

- express their dissatisfaction with the condition of the media scene in Ukraine - too much negative stuff, untrue information, lack of qualitative analytics, stories of successful practices;
- Most of the respondents do not trust mass media believing that they are politically biased;
- Young people, as a rule, try to protect themselves against "information noise currently available everywhere", "influence of panic-driven negative stuff putting pressure on the psyche";
- "The state's awareness campaign is badly lagging behind the actual reform processes".



Missing information

- demonstration of achievements, successful steps on the way of implementation of reforms;
- coverage of the possibilities of dealing with obstacles when solving specific problems of communities;
- positive results of activity of local self-government bodies (reasons behind such success);
- analytical materials, experts' explanations / comments regarding the content and mechanisms of the implementation of reforms, as well as expected results with strict time limits;
- clarification of laws, rights of communities, etc.