



IFES Ukraine

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Election news (April 28 – May 10, 2016)

[OPORA collects signatures for petition seeking replacement of CEC members with expired terms](#)

On April 25, 2016, OPORA began collecting signatures as part of a [petition](#) to the President of Ukraine seeking to replace twelve out of fifteen CEC members whose terms expired in June 2014. By May 10, the electronic petition was signed by almost 5,000 citizens, out of 25,000 needed to necessitate a response from the President. The required number of signatures must be collected within 90 days following the date of its posting on the President's website.

The same day, 23 civil society organizations (CSOs)—including OPORA Civil Network, the Committee of Voters of Ukraine, Internews-Ukraine, the Electoral Law Institute, CHESNO Civil Movement, and the Reanimation Package of Reforms signed a [statement](#) calling on Ukraine's President to replace the CEC members with expired terms. The petition to the President is based on that Statement.

OPORA issues monitoring report on campaign finance in Kryvyi Rih mayoral elections

On April 27, OPORA issued a monitoring [report](#) on campaign finance covering the Kryvyi Rih mayoral election held on March 27, 2016. In that election, Yuriy Vilkul, who was elected mayor in 2015 local elections, won with 74% of votes cast.

According to OPORA, only 5 out of 15 mayoral candidates submitted their post-election campaign finance reports in time. Yuriy Vilkul, the elected mayor, spent more money on his campaign than any other mayoral candidate, namely UAH 1.1 million. Of note, he was reported to have donated UAH 50,000 to his own election fund, while remaining donations were made through private donations (over 70) at the amount of UAH 13,780 per donation. Vilkul's closest competitor, Semen Semenchenko of *Samopomich*, received UAH 968,000 through private. One donation to the Semenchenko's election fund, in violation of the Local Election Law, was made by a legal person. The lion's share of election funds in mayoral elections was spent on paid TV/radio and outdoor political advertising.

The Political Finance Reform Law, adopted in October 2015, provides for administrative and criminal sanctions for violating campaign finance regulations, including failure to submit pre- and post-election campaign finance reports in time and the funding election campaigns by impermissible donors. However, the provisions of that Law will enter into force only in July 2016 and, therefore, could not be enforced during the Kryvyi Rih early mayoral election.

IFES releases public service announcements on political finance reform in Ukraine

In an effort to increase public awareness on and understanding of sweeping changes to the regulation of political finance in Ukraine, IFES recently released two public service announcements (PSAs) explaining these changes and their implications for the country.

The [first](#) PSA explains the significance of the Political Finance Reform Law that was adopted by the *Verkhovna Rada* in October 2015. This PSA, with English subtitles, is available [here](#).

In the [second](#) PSA, IFES Ukraine Senior Legal Adviser Denys Kovryzhenko explains the objectives of political finance reform; good practices and international standards in regulating the role of money in politics; and steps needed to ensure the effective implementation of reform in Ukraine.

Roman Bezsmertnyi leaves Political Sub-Group under Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine

On April 28, Roman Bezsmertnyi, Ukraine's representative to the Political Sub-Group established under the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine, [announced](#) his resignation. Bezsmertnyi did not provide reasons for his decision to leave the Political Sub-Group, media outlets have speculated a possible link to his [uneasy](#) relations with the President Poroshenko.

The Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine was established based on the Minsk Protocol, signed on September 5, 2014, by the representatives of Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE. The Political sub-

group of the Trilateral Contact Group was established to address political issues affecting peaceful reconciliation and was a platform for discussing modalities for local elections in those areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts where 2015 local elections were not held.

According to Roman Bezsmartnyi, holding elections in Donbas in 2016 and even in 2017 would be a [difficult task](#), given the security situation in Donbas, poor implementation of the ceasefire agreement, and lack of Ukrainian banking institutions in the areas controlled by the Russian-backed separatists to transfer funds for elections. Also, he noted the difficulty in adopting a law on modalities of the Donbas elections given the divided opinions within the *Verkhovna Rada*.

This Election Bulletin was prepared by IFES Ukraine. To unsubscribe, please contact IFES Administrative Assistant Iryna Pushchuk at info@ifesukraine.org.