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FIGHTING CORRUPTION IN UKRAINE: UKRAINIAN STYLE – ROUND TABLE

PARLIAMENT MEMBERS ATTEMPT SOFTENING PROVISIONS OF ANTI-CORRUPTION LAW AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO SATISFY PERSONAL NEEDS – EXPERTS

The Gorshenin Institute held a round table discussion Fighting Corruption: Ukrainian Style, where experts discussed the problem of corruption in the country and the ways to combat it.

The participants in the round-table discussion said that the corruption-fighting shall be managed by authorities independent from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and working on different principles than the Ministry.

Opening the discussion, the first deputy head of the Ukrainian Parliament's committee on combating the organized crime and corruption, **Hennadiy Moskal**, said that the parliamentary majority was attempting to soften as much as possible the provisions of the draft law On Principles of Preventing and Fighting Corruption in Ukraine to satisfy their personal needs. The draft law was submitted by Ukrainian President **Viktor Yanukovych**. In particular, Moskal recalled that one and a half years ago the Ukrainian parliament already approved a package of laws aimed at fighting corruption, however the enactment of the laws was postponed three times and later the laws were cancelled. Moskal also said that members of parliament are trying to do everything possible to keep their personal interest intact. That is why the draft law submitted by the president, if approved, will not be accepted in Europe.

The MP, member of Parliament's Committee on Justice, **Serhiy Vlasenko**, said for his part that the mentioned anti-corruption law 90 per cent reproduces the earlier approved and cancelled law and "the remaining 10 per cent makes the earlier law softer". According to Vlasenko, if the law does not include a provision obliging officials' relatives to declare their expenses, the law won't work effectively. "There will be mothers-in-law in our country worth of tens of millions dollars," Vlasenko said. He also said that today corruption means bribery to people while bribery is just an element of corruption. Vlasenko is convinced that it is necessary to change the ideology of fighting corruption in the country. "The main problem of fighting corruption in Ukraine is that there is no strategy and ideology for doing that," Vlasenko said. In particular, Vlasenko said it is necessary to introduce a mechanism to make it impossible for a bribe-taker to spend the illegally received money. Vlasenko also said that without attention from public, media and European institutions it will not be possible to change the state of corruption in Ukraine.

The chairman of the International Association of Officers Combating Organized Crime, **Oleksandr Davydenko** said that openness and transparency of authorities in charge of enforcing the state policy in this field will help fighting corruption and organized crime. "If the responsible persons are unknown it means that there is no responsibility," Davydenko said. He also said that now the names of those who develop the methods of fighting corruption and organized crime and control their implementation are not known.

Ukrainian Federation of Employers Board Member **Yuriy Bohuslavskyy** said that corruption decreases Ukraine's competitiveness. "Corruption creates monopoly. This affects the country's competitiveness. As a result, Ukraine may soon end up with the level of competitiveness of African countries," - Bohuslavskyy said.

The chairman of public organization Ukrainian Anti-Corruption Committee, major-general **Andriy Koval**, said that there is a need for a more active cooperation between NGOs and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and State Security Service of Ukraine.

LB.UA Internet Portal Chief Editor **Sonya Koshkina** said that one month ago LB.UA decided to support Ukrainian President Yanukovich's initiative on fighting corruption. "Over the past year, Yanukovich repeatedly said that corruption interferes with our life. Yanukovich said this when talking to the nation on TV on the first anniversary of his inauguration, this phrase was also heard a number of times over the last year. When Yanukovich meets people they complain him of being demanded bribes in polyclinics or in the Odessa sea port to load lorries with grain. But when the president asks people to give him specific facts: names, positions, addresses and office numbers, people become confused. We decided to help the president learn these facts and addresses: we set up a special section called Corruption-STOP at our web-site. This is a sort of a coordination office where people may send their complaints, both unanimously and publicly. We already have several hundreds of complaints, and what is more, most of them tell about major abuses. These are violations by tax authorities, large bribes. We process the complaints and forward them to respective authorities - the National Security and Defense Council, Prosecutor-General's Office. In other words, we inform the government on the events at a local level, - Koshkina said.

Koshkina also told about another activity within the Corruption-STOP project: journalistic investigations. "We had a series of publications prepared based on letters and investigations in the Odessa sea port. We received information about corruption in the area of land management in Kharkiv Region, we are about to finish the journalistic investigation on this issue. We decided to involve ourselves in this subject as people began complaining to us. Because if we do not make these facts public nothing will ever change," Koshkina said.

Reference:

In 2010, Gorshenin Institute conducted a telephone survey on the topic "Corruption in Ukraine." Its results show the following trends:

1. Ukrainians recognize that corruption is rampant in Ukraine

The majority of the respondents (86.0%) believe that bribery is common in Ukraine. As many as 54.8% of them think that it is «very common,» while nearly a third of the respondents believe that it is «common.» According to 8.8% of the survey participants, bribery is not common in Ukraine. Among them, 7.4% expressed their confidence that it is «not very common» and 1.4% said it was «not common.» Approximately 5.2% of the respondents did not give an answer to this question.

2. Although Ukrainians have a negative attitude towards the phenomenon of corruption, they resort to it to solve their problems.

As many as 68.8% of the Ukrainian citizens had to give money or gifts to the people, who could solve their problems. Almost one fifth of the respondent did not have such an experience (18.9%), while 12.3% did not answer the question.