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European integration of Ukraine. What news agencies say?

Ukraine's way to the EU have began from the January 1996, on meeting of the Council of Europe when the country announced the desire to become a full member of the European Community. Its been 15 years since the Ukrainian society tries to define and agree with their geopolitical priorities. This path is not especially unique, since it already successfully walked through by post-Soviet Baltic countries, former countries of the so-called "socialist camp" – Poland, Bulgaria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and others.

These countries accession success to EU was determined by consensus of political elites, real achievements in democratic reforms and improved living standards of citizens, as well as the effectiveness of information campaigns using various information technology tools. Information providing of citizens was conducted in several ways:

- Information about the EU and its functioning;
- About the benefits and losses when entering the EU;
- About EU membership effect on daily life.

Information campaigns were using almost all forms and tools of informing, advertising, propaganda and agitation. But still the largest percent fell on informing through media, both public and commercial. Opinion polls, believe that Media determinates attitude and the final opinion of Ukrainian populace towards the European Union and the European integration of the country. For example, in April 2008 more than 60 percent of respondents outspoke suchlike point of view¹.

As for the thematic aspects in which Ukrainian audience were most interested, respondents demonstrated pragmatism and concreteness. Foremost, respondents were interested in social standards in the EU (37,8%),

¹ *Європейська інтеграція України: позиція експертів*, "Національна безпека і оборона" 2008, № 6, с. 36.

the consequences of possible accession of Ukraine to the EU (30%), information about living standards (28%), the implementation of socio-economic, education programs and other EU programs in Ukraine. The slightest interest respondents had, were about history of the EU survey, its foreign policy and security policy².

According to survey results, Ukrainian citizens receive information on European topics primarily through the central Ukrainian TV channels, then from the nationwide newspaper, and the local TV channels³. Also the news agencies are future promising channels for disseminating information on European topics.

Active use of information agencies is caused by several factors. First, is the growing role of agencies in the system of media information products and its approximate to the consumer. Secondly, full representation of news organizations on the Internet, and its users that are constantly growing. Thus, according to Bigmir.net "Global statistics of the Ukrainian Internet" the size of Ukrainian Internet users in December 2010 was 20.71 million. Monthly user growth (compared to November 2010) was 6%⁴. Furthermore, the efficiency and the high degree of confidence users have due to news agencies.

So let us review the information related to European themes that consumers receive from Ukrinform (Ukraine) and PAP (Poland) agencies. What Ukraine can actually learn about Poland and how Poland can actually be acknowledged about Ukraine? The choice of news agencies is caused due several reasons: geographical neighboring of the two countries, their common interests (joint participation in the organization Euro 2012), the positive attitude of Poland to Ukraine and its EU membership prospects (Poland and Sweden initiated the Eastern Partnership – a project aimed to strengthen democracy in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus, and assisting in the European integration), and the interest towards PAP shaping European society in Poland. The important thing about both agencies, is that their were founded in one historical period (1918) and existed for a long time in socialist model of journalism. One of the first Polish Telegraph Agencies was located in Lviv. Presently the leaders of informa-

² *Інформаційна складова європейської та євроатлантичної інтеграції: громадська думка, "Національна безпека і оборона" 2008, № 1, с. 45.*

³ *Інформаційна складова європейської та євроатлантичної інтеграції: громадська думка, "Національна безпека і оборона" 2008, № 1, с. 44.*

⁴ *Глобальная статистика Интернета, <http://index.bigmir.net/>.*

tion agencies from both countries are current members of the European Alliance of News Agencies and do have a cooperation agreement.

Ukrainian national news agency Ukrinform accumulates European information subjects in two main thematic sections – “Ukraine – eurointegration” and “Euro 2012” with following subheads: “Ukrinform materials”, “Thematic photo content”, “Useful reference”. Agency materials concerns the diverse relations between Ukraine and EU, the European Commission, and European Parliament activities, as well as tangential problems of international cooperation with our country. For example, on January 27 Ukrinform published 5 materials, relatively the EU: EU to welcome the Treaty Russian State Duma CHO/START ratification, Supreme Court of Ukraine chairman took action in the official opening of the court in Strasbourg, President of Ukraine and UN Secretary-General entered Nuclear and Food security discussion, Ukraine’s preparation for cooperation with the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, furthermore about Ukraine hopes for the future presidency of Poland in the EU⁵.

The last material particularly contains the message that one of the determining factors about modern Ukrainian-Polish relations is to support the European aspirations of Ukraine by Poland and Warsaw constructive approach to a comprehensive dialogue with Ukraine. The agency quoted a Ukrainian Minister Viktor Tikhonov: “We expect maximum support from Polish presidency in the completion of negotiations and an agreement on association and free trade zone Ukraine-EU in ensuring the implementation of the Action Plan on visa-free regime between Ukraine and EU”⁶.

Ukrinform also touched up Hungary’s EU presidency, which began in January this year, namely including Budapest desire among other priorities the work under the initiative of the Eastern Partnership⁷.

“Euro 2012”.

On January 27 the agency released 5 materials relatively Euro 2012: the establishment of agglomeration Rivnensska and Volynska regions under the auspices of USAID, the launch of automated transportation man-

⁵ [http://www.ukrinform.ua/ukr/search/?p\[\]=84](http://www.ukrinform.ua/ukr/search/?p[]=84).

⁶ В. Тихонов, *Україна розраховує на майбутнє головування Польщі в ЄС*, <http://www.ukrinform.ua/ukr/order/?id=982751>.

⁷ Я. Довгопол, *Угорське головування в ЄС посилить співпрацю в рамках “Східного партнерства”*, <http://www.ukrinform.ua/ukr/order/?id=980929>.

agement system in Kiev before the championship begins, about the cultural and entertainment programs for guests of Donetsk, and whilst the decision to increase the number of Polish customs officers at the border with Ukraine for the EURO 2012⁸.

Additional information about European Championship can be found on a certain web site – “Ukraine – 2012”. The online resource has the following sections: “News”, “Clipping”, “Digest”, “Webcasts”, “Web Conferencing”, “Euro – 2012 organizers”, “Host Cities”, “Stadiums”, “Airports”, “Training base”, “Our partner Poland”, “European Championship”, “Blogs”, “Quiz”, and “Links”.

“President of Poland considers Ukraine a country of hope” – is one of the latest publications on website, and, in particular, is about the statement made by the President of Poland Bronisław Komorowski on 7-th Ukrainian lunch in Davos. Komorowski stated that Poland believes in great potential of Ukraine and will support the economic growth of a neighbor. Polish President called Ukraine “a country of hope” and expressed confidence that the joint Euro 2012 will further improve cooperation between countries.

That day another publication concerning Ukrainian lunch was devoted, particularly regarding the statement President of Ukraine has made. He expressed hope towards the Euro 2012 visa-free regime for Ukraine from the European Union will become a reality, “We will do everything in order for this to happen in 2011”⁹.

In addition the resource agency also contains video information such as CNN story comparatively Ukraine’s euro-preparation, and construction of stadiums in Poland. Online section provides the opportunity to observe events at the stadiums in Ukraine and Poland in interactive mode.

Every week news agency posts “Euro – 2012 Through Polish media prism” press-reviews. One of the recent reviews is: “Accusations on Spirosa Maranhosa were baseless”, it retells media attitude towards football figure Cyprus Spirosa Maranhosa, who expressed accusation relatively Ukraine and Poland’s corruption around obtaining their right to carry Euro 2012.

PAP quoted the statement made by UEFA – “Police investigation found no evidence to confirm Spirosa Maranhosa’s accusations”. Infor-

⁸ [http://www.ukrinform.ua/ukr/search/?p\[\]=78](http://www.ukrinform.ua/ukr/search/?p[]=78).

⁹ В. Янукович, *У 2011-му надіємось на безвізовий режим з ЄС*, <http://ukraine2012.gov.ua/publication/news/uefa/29225.html>.

mation agency also recalled that in October 2010 UEFA submitted plea to Cyprus Prosecution against S. Maranhosa, who accused bribing officials in the election organizers of Euro 2012¹⁰.

In addition, Ukrinform quoted its media partner – the Polish Press Agency PAP that informs that the Polish Tourist Organization (PTO) soon will begin a big oversea promotion with slogan “Move your imagination”. The campaign aim is to represent Poland as an “intriguing and original country which has a unique travel benefits, has the spirit of youth, bets on creativity and courageously uses modern solutions”.

Polish press agency’s main page contains reference “New Opportunities – The European Parliament, which takes visitors to the agency Resource Portal (europarlament.pap.pl), which was created under the European Parliament patronage”. This is unique informational and educational resource, supplemented by interesting multimedia capabilities, on which you can find information about European Parliament goals, competencies, structure, messages from Brussels and Strasburg about the ongoing work of European Parliament, on its projects and new rules introduced in the European Union (with expert comments relatively issues most important to poles). Moreover, the information project reviews secular live, European deputies, their hobbies, etc. Presently the emphasis mainly runs through Poland’s EU presidency preparation process.

Ukrainian thematic in PAP information service provided, for example, notifying the former Prime Minister of Ukraine Yulia Tymoshenko’s request to European Union to monitor the situation in Ukraine. According to Tymoshenko, the current government put an end to human rights and freedoms in Ukraine. Under such conditions, said the oppositionist, it is impossible for Ukraine to sign an association agreement with EU¹¹.

“Our euoractioners” project, posted at PAP is meant to attract people to information resource content. Municipalities and counties spend a lot of activities aimed at the development of European thinking, so now citizens have something to share with others. The agency encourages the public to tell reporters about competitions, lectures and meetings related to the

¹⁰ Ю. Банахевич, *Євро-2012 у фокусі польських ЗМІ: звинувачення Спіроса Марангоса виявилися безпідставними*, <http://ukraine2012.gov.ua/publication/poland/29093.html>.

¹¹ J. Junko, *Tymoszenko chce od UE monitoringu sytuacji na Ukrainie*, http://europarlament.pap.pl/palio/html.run?_Instance=cms_ep.pap.pl&_PageID=1&_menuId=17&_nrDep=26481&_Checksum=1287826345.

European Parliament, the experience of European studies in schools, combining games and learning.

General PAP Newsfeed regularly adds interviews with Ukrainian politicians, and their issues about Ukraine integration. For example, the agency has quoted Minister's of Foreign Affairs Konstantin Grischenko opinion, given in an interview to Polish newspaper "Gazeta Wyborcza", where he assured that "European integration is Ukraine's national idea, which is supported by the majority and the leading political force". Ukrainian Minister also added that the improvement of Ukrainian-Russian relations will not detriment EU integration, but vice versa – shall promote.

PAP pages highlight issues that indirectly affect the European integration of Ukraine, for instance, information about Eastern Partnership policy. As already emphasized, the strategy of European Union relations with neighboring countries was proposed by Poland and Sweden, therefore it concerns Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The agency quoted the Polish European parliamentarian Marek Siwiec that after March meeting in Strasbourg, EU may propose Partnership to individual countries that are actively engaging their internal reforms, to participate in other EU political projects. "This may be the promotion that shall be actively applied, let's say, for Ukraine".

Since the future presidency of Poland in the European Union, PAP pays more attention to Eastern Partnership. As confirmation – Deputy of Prime Minister of Poland, Waldemar Pawlak interview. Minister believes that the highest priority after presidency will be the Eastern Partnership. "The significance of this trend will grow. This is a chance for Poland to build not only good economic relations with its neighbors, but also strengthen the position of the European Union"¹².

In addition to conducting joint Euro 2012, Ukraine and Poland combined some other sporting event – the boxing match in September 2011 between Tomasz Adamek versus one of Klitschko brothers at one of the Polish stadiums built for the UEFA Euro 2012. There is an assumption that this event will be held at the National Stadium in Warsaw, or the new stadium in Wrocław.

An interesting form of influence on public opinion concerning Ukraine's integration into the European community – a survey conducted by

¹² W. Pawlak, *Partnerstwo Wschodnie priorytetem polskiej prezydencji w UE*, http://europarlament.pap.pl/palio/html.run?_Instance=cms_ep.pap.pl&_PageID=1&_menuId=17&_nrDep=1594&_Checksum=2019444617.

PAP: "Ukraine and the European Union: membership or partnership?" Polish citizens were able to interactively express their views on the prospects of Ukraine's EU membership. A significant percentage of Polish society treats favorably the issue concerning Ukraine's membership in the EU, and inclined to believe that its integration – is a matter of time.

Getting Ukrainian citizens to know the results of this survey probably would positively affect their hopes and instill the hope that Ukraine will soon be part of Europe, not only geographically, but institutionally.

Perhaps, involving news agencies to inform the Ukrainian and foreign citizens about European integration process has its untapped potential.

According to sociological poll citizens of Ukraine want to get information about social and living standards in Europe, about Europeans themselves and about EU membership consequences. Information agencies of Poland and Ukraine – Ukrinform and PAP – can expand cooperation, if activating information exchange on topics that consumers have most interest in.

In addition to sharing overall coverage of events related to the Euro – 2012, agencies should establish information and other educational projects which introduced the Ukrainian society of experience shaping public opinion on EU membership.

National information agency Ukrinform should borrow the experience of highlighting the EU institutes from PAP, particularly European Parliament, and not only talk about its history but also about the secularity of euro commissioners, and to make a closer view on European opinion leaders. It is an appropriate idea to involve citizens on European integration highlighting contest.

Then the component of information integration will contribute to Ukraine joining the European community and simultaneously form the attractive image of Ukraine for Europeans.

Integracja europejska Ukrainy. Co mówią agencje informacyjne?

Streszczenie

W artykule omówiono kwestię integracji europejskiej Ukrainy, z perspektywy relacjonujących tę problematykę agencji informacyjnych. Autorka analizuje zawartość wybranych materiałów (w tym dotyczących EURO 2012) pochodzących z ukraińskiej agencji państwowej Ukrinform oraz z Polskiej Agencji Prasowej. Zwraca uwagę na rolę agencji prasowych w kształtowaniu poglądów na temat funkcjonowania Unii Eu-

ropejskiej. Podkreśla, że ze względu na znaczący wpływ mediów – publicznych i prywatnych, na proces kształtowania poglądów na tematy europejskie, rośnie rola agencji informacyjnych, które stanowiąc źródło informacji dla tychże mediów, pośrednio wpływają tym samym na opinię publiczną, tak w Polsce jak i na Ukrainie.