

Залучення Сходу Європи: український виклик

Проект здійснювався з грудня 2010 по липень 2011 року за підтримки German Marshall Fund. Його основною метою було визначення шляхів допомоги інтеграції України до європейських інституцій.

Випуск № 6

Ukraine-EU Summit

UKRAINE-EU SUMMIT

14th Ukraine-EU Summit held in Brussels on November 22 brought to the Ukrainian side a long coveted prize – Action Plan on Visa Liberalization. According to the Summit's documents, it defines technical conditions that should be fulfilled by Ukraine to ensure progress towards establishing a visa free regime for the short-stay trips of Ukrainian citizens. This process is viewed by the EU side as a long-term perspective being directly dependent upon Ukrainian Government's ability to achieve goals set by the EU in the following fields: document security, including biometrics; illegal migration, including readmission; public order and security; external relations and fundamental rights.

Successful implementation of the Plan will be impossible without allocation of considerable financial and other resources and capacities, as well as consistency and political will on the part of Ukrainian leadership. It might be presumed that largely technical issues, such as production of new passports, or problems related to the improvement of migration management, strengthening minority rights and anti-discrimination legislation would not create insurmountable obstacles for Ukrainian authorities, while anti-corruption and law-enforcement efficiency goals will be much more difficult to achieve. Thus, there is a visible difference of opinion between Kyiv and Brussels, when visa free travel of Ukrainian nationals to EU will become a reality: though Ukrainian officials are thinking in terms of 1.5 to 2 years, Eurocrats are extremely cautious. Quite tellingly, Action Plan does not mention any time frame (in EU speak it long term perspective usually means, at least, 8 years) and decline automaticity in decision making: it envisages rigorous evaluation of Ukraine's progress in the fulfillment of each set of benchmarks.

A number of Ukrainian experts have noticed that Action Plan stipulates that final proposal of the European Commission to the European Parliament and the Council for the lifting of the short-stay visa obligations for Ukrainian citizens will take into account the overall relations between the EU and Ukraine. As underscored in the Summit's Joint Press Statement, depth of these relations will depend upon implementation of reforms and further strengthening of common values. President Van Rompuy made no secret that freedom of the media and assembly, democratic values and rule of law, protection of human rights activists, as well as EU concern over recent local elections in Ukraine were important topics of discussion.

However, it appears that human rights agenda was not determining the tone and the substance of the Summit. Ability of the new Administration to ensure adoption of the relevant laws and regulations, improved delivery on the commitments taken by Ukraine before the EU, promise of reforms, pledge not to allow natural gas delivery disruptions, confirmation of allegiance to the course of the European integration still strike a responsive chord in Brussels. President Barroso expressed his belief that negotiations on the comprehensive free trade area between Ukraine and EU might be completed by summer 2011 opening the way for signing Association Agreement. It is still to be seen whether this optimistic scenario will materialize, but common desire to speed up negotiations was present at the Summit. The Parties also signed the Protocol on Ukraine's participation in EU programs and agencies and the document summarizing five years of Ukraine – EU energy dialogue (Ukraine-Russia-EU meeting on energy issue was held on the margins of the Summit).