



Focus on Ukraine

***July 30 – August 5
2012***





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I. Overview of political events of the week.

July 30

The nationwide united Batkivshchyna party made it into the top five Ukrainian parties. The electoral list of the united opposition headed by Yulia Tymoshenko was approved at a congress of the parties' leaders held on July 30. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Anatoliy Hrytsenko, Oleksander Turchynov and Yuriy Lutsenko also made to the top five. Vyacheslav Kyrylenko, Hryhoriy Nemyrya, Serhiy Sobolev, Borys Tarasiuk and Mykola Tomenko took from 6th to 10th place.

The Communist Party of Ukraine headed by Petro Symonenko publicly announced the top five candidates on its electoral list, which includes Petro Tsybenko, Spiridon Kilinkarov, Iryna Spirina and Oleksandr Prysyazhnyuk, the CPU website informed. The CPU also confirmed the candidates for peoples' deputies in the first-past-the-post electoral constituencies. More specifically, candidates are running for a seat in 225 constituencies.

Premier Mykola Azarov is at the top of list of candidates representing the Party of Regions, the leader of the party's faction Oleksandr Yefremov announced to journalists based on the results of the party's congress. Renowned singer Tayisia Povaliy is second on the list, Vice Premier Serhiy Tihipko – third, Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council Andriy Klyuyev – fourth, Yefremov – fifth, Deputy Chief-of-staff Iryna Akimova – sixth, business tycoon Volodymyr Boiko – seventh, Vice Premier Borys Kolesnykov – eighth, MP Leonid Kozhara – ninth and Vice Chairman of the faction Volodymyr Rybank – tenth.

July 31

The united opposition overtook the Party of Regions. If the parliamentary elections in Ukraine were held in July of this year the united opposition comprised of the Batkivshchyna, Front of Changes and Civic Position parties. Such are the results of public opinion poll conducted by the Rating sociological group. If the elections were held in July 2012, 42% of the polled would definitely vote and 32% would most likely vote. Among them 25.5% would vote for the single mandate candidates on the opposition list, 20.3% - for the Party of Regions, 10.6% - for the UDAR Klitschko party, 9.8% for the Communist Party of Ukraine, 4.4% for the Svoboda party and Ukraine – Forward! headed by Natalia Korolevska.

VR Speaker Volodymyr Lytvyn signed the law “On the Principles of National Language Policy”, which expands the use of the Russian language on the regional level. This law has been submitted to President Viktor Yanukovich for his signature, the official website of the Verkhovna Rada informed. Earlier, the speaker of the VR refused to sign the law and tendered his resignation despite the fact that the members of parliament voted against it.

August 1

The Svoboda party announced its top five candidates. Based on the results of the party congress, Oleh Tyahnybok heads the list of candidates running in the parliamentary elections. Bohdan Beniuk is second on the list, deputy head of the party Andriy Mokhnyk – third, member of the



party's political council Ihor Miroshnychenko – fourth and Doctor of Juridical Science (or LL.B) and professor at the Kyiv National University Oleksandr Shevchenko – fifth.

Writer Maria Matios made into the top five of the UDAR party headed by Vitaliy Klitschko. The list of candidates for a seat in parliament was approved at the congress of UDAR. Vitaliy Klitschko took first place, Matios – second, former head of the Security Service of Ukraine Valentyn Nalyvaichenko – third, entrepreneur Oksana Prodan, who became popular during the Tax Maidan, - fourth and Klitschko's party assistant Vitaliy Kovalchuk – fifth.

Leader of the Ukraine – Forward! Party Natalia Korolevska secretly confirmed the candidates on the electoral list of her party and publicly announced them at a press briefing after the party's congress. It was announced earlier that Korolevska will head the party, footballer Andriy Shevchenko is second on the list, Ostap Stupka – third, former Minister of Healthcare Illya Yemets – fourth and President of the Kyiv National Linguistic University Roman Vasko – fifth.

August 2

The Kyiv Tax Police closed the case against Director of the TVi television channel Mykola Knyazhytskiy, the press service of the Kyiv Prosecutor's Office informed. On July 30 the evidence in the criminal case was returned to the investigative division of the tax authority by virtue of which the “criminal case was closed on August 1, 2012”. The tax body also decided to return the confiscated documents to the management of the TV channel.

The police opened a case on the murder of Kharkiv journalist Vasyl Klymentiev. Chief of the Investigation Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine Vasyl Farynnyk announced this in a video conference. A search warrant has been issued for former employee of the Kharkiv Division of the Fight against Organized Crime Andriy Kozar as the main suspect in the murder of the journalist. Klymentiev worked as an investigative journalist and disappeared two years ago. The main presumption in Klymentiev's disappearance is that he was murdered for his professional activity as a journalist.

August 3

Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council Andriy Klyuyev announced that a majority of members of the Party of Regions on the list of candidates for a seat in parliament plan to go on vacation during the elections after they are registered with the Central Election Commission. “All ministers, myself included, will go on vacation the day after the candidates for a seat in parliament are registered,” Klyuyev assured.

The Kyiv Prosecutor General's Office closed the criminal case against the Internet site Lb.ua. As the press secretary of the PGO informed, such a decision was approved based on the results of audit initiated by President Viktor Yushchenko and the instruction of Prosecutor General Viktor Pshonka. In addition to that, in the resolution on closure of the criminal case it was noted that the “violation of the law by the Internet site in this particular case did not cause any serious damage”.



II. Analytical reference

✓ Democratic processes

PRE-ELECTIONS PARTY LISTS: SURPRISES AND EXPECTATIONS

On July 30, the day of the official start of the parliamentary election campaign, the top three leading political parties in Ukraine held congresses – the Batkivshchyna national unification, the Party of Regions (PoR) and the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) – at which they confirmed their electoral lists. Two days later there was a second wave of party congresses at which the parties UDAR of Vitaliy Klitschko, Svoboda and Ukraine Forward! announced their candidates for a seat in parliament. The nature of holding these congresses and the public announcement of candidates gave serious reason to consider the prospects of these political forces in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

*Did the political parties not surprise anybody by their electoral lists of candidates?
What are the realistic prospects of gaining the votes of the electorate?*

First echelon

Batkivshchyna was the first to initiate and complete its party congress. All of the candidates the party announced on a proportional and first-past-the-post basis evoked dual sentiments. On the one hand, the leaders of Batkivshchyna were bold enough to sweep off its party list many odious members that might in the best case scenario incite an ambiguous reaction of the electorate and civil society. Indeed, there are practically no major businessmen such as David Zhvanya and individuals that are associated with corruption such as Oleksandr Tretyakov.

On the other hand, the presence of many notable oppositionists on the party's list – Anatoliy Hrytsenko, Vyacheslav Kyrilenko and Borys Tarasiuk – is the party's strong point and is testimony to its consolidating effect. One of the party's greatest achievements is the inclusion of the Chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People Mustafa Djemilev, which allows one to speak about the potential of the party's unification in the inter-racial dimension.

Finally, the inclusion of journalists and civil activists with untarnished reputations

Mykola Knyazhytskiy, Kostyantyn Usov and Tetyana Chornovil as candidates representing the Batkivshchyna party was an added bonus for the party's reputation and its chances of victory.

At the same time, there remain many unanswered questions as to the candidates on party lists in first-past-the-post constituencies. First of all, there were no places left on the list of Batkivshchyna for certain politicians that are popular among the electorate, in particular Oles Doniy and Taras Stetskiv. Their absence among approved first-past-the-post candidates is not likely to gain points in favor of the unified opposition and is an unpleasant testimony to the under-the-carpet games that the party's leaders are playing.

Secondly, by striking the most odious figures from the list the leaders of Batkivshchyna added a whole slew of candidates that are suspected of nepotism, for example, Tetyana Donets, who is the daughter of a former colleague of Yulia Tymoshenko.

Thirdly, the obvious absence of new faces on the publicly announced list of candidates will have a negative impact on the ability of this political force for self-revival. Be that as it



may, the list of first-past-the-post candidates of Batkivshchyna captured the greatest attention of political analysts. The low number of candidates that are familiar to the electorate and therefore have a chance of winning in their constituencies indicates that there are serious flaws in the distribution of candidates among the composite of proportional and first-past-the-post.

The results of the pre-election congress of the ruling Party of Regions were much more anticipated. In particular, the participants of the congress were forced to blindly vote on their own party list without knowing where they would end up. This was clear testimony to the low level of democratic culture of this political force.

The part of the list of PoR candidates made public in the mass media was also not very optimistic. First of all, its make-up did not significantly change from the previous elections and to this day has a full list of candidates with a dubious reputation starting with Volodymyr Maltsev, the personal chauffeur of Rinat Akhmetov, to the shady oligarch Yuriy Ivanyushchenko.

Secondly, the practice of nepotism on the part of the PoR has taken on greater proportions. Indeed, the son of President Viktor Yanukovich and the son of Premier Mykola Azarov will run in the same constituency. By the same token, new faces in the PoR such as Tayisia Povaliy, who took second place on the party's list, casts doubt on the signer's professionalism.

The way in which the PoR held its congress was equally unpleasant for outside observers. The building in which the congress was held was guarded by the state security service and every attendant was thoroughly frisked and searched. Moreover, representatives of the mass media were not given access to the hall in which the congress was held and were not given the lists of confirmed candidates when the congress ended.

The incident of physical violence against journalist Mustafa Nayyem by the security

forces that has yet to receive a reaction of members of the ruling party before the public supplemented the full picture of what is truly happening in Ukraine.

Youth gone wild vs. the old guard

The congress of the UDAR party caught the interest of Ukrainians as up until its emergence not many could guess as to the filling of the party's electoral list. Just as in the case with the party's electoral ally Batkivshchyna, the party and first-past-the-post lists of UDAR incited different reactions.

Most likely, the fact that representatives of civil society joined the two parties elicited the most positive reactions of activist of the Tax Maidan Oksana Prodan and a circle of political analysts Pavlo Rozenko, Rostyslav Pavlenko and Viktor Chumak, whose professional traits can be a benefit in the country's future parliament.

The biggest surprise was that second on the list writer Maria Matios was given a controversial assessment. While some welcomed the renowned member of the Ukrainian literati, others cast doubt on her ability to bring benefits as a member of parliament.

It is also difficult to justify the inclusion of the former head of the SBU Valentyn Nalyvaichenko, who is remembered more for his unsuccessful political maneuvering than effective work, and former representative of the current president Serhiy Kunitsyn in Crimea.

Furthermore, members on the list of the party of Vitaliy Klitschko have yet to respond to two critical questions: what will be the ideological program of his parliamentary factions and how politically stable are its future members.

The congress of the Communist Party of Ukraine, which practically guaranteed itself a seat in the next parliament, was to a certain degree quite intriguing. The nucleus of the party's list remains unchanged and was only partially supplemented with two new faces in



the top five that the party will exploit to appeal to the young generation of Ukrainians: Dr. Iryna Spirina and the head of the Komsomol organization (Committee of Socialist Youth) Oleksandr Prisyazhnyuk.

Clearly, the CPU has the least leverage in filling its list among all potential members of the future parliament seeing as its election campaign will traditionally be based on the dogma of communist ideology and the nostalgic attitude of some Ukrainians towards the Soviet Union. In this vein, the party congress of the CPU was a simple formality.

Back-up airfield

The situation with the national party Svoboda, the main ideological opponent of the CPU, is quite similar. On the threshold of winning seats in the parliament Svoboda needs qualitatively new methods in the election race that could have been used during the party's congress.

Instead, the congress was a continuation of the previous line of the party's development. The traditional radical rhetoric of certain participants of the congress, which makes a bad impression on the majority of Ukrainian voters and consequently lowers the rating of the party, is testimony to this fact.

Besides that, the list of candidates that the Svoboda party nominated came as no surprise and the professional aptitude of certain candidates, for example, the former sports columnist Ihor Myroshnychenko, is rather doubtful. The only notable exception is the fifth candidate Oleksandr Shevchenko, an esteemed professor of the Kyiv National

University, who unlike the overwhelming majority of his colleagues on the list of candidates is not a party functionary. Given this, it is quite obvious that this will not be enough to expand the electoral base of Svoboda.

The congress of yet another party that is close to surpassing the 5% barrier – Ukraine – Forward! – became the object of active discussion a few days before it took place. On July 29, it was publicly announced that the distinguished Ukrainian football star Andriy Shevchenko, who officially retired from his professional sport, joined the political team of Natalia Korolevska. This immediately drew a wave of criticism against Shevchenko for ostensibly joining Korolevska's party and against its leader in an attempt to dupe Ukrainian youth that constitute the majority of Shevchenko's to give their votes in favor of her party.

The congress of the Ukraine – Forward! Party further strengthened the nature of its artificiality. During the public part of the congress voting for the electoral list was not held and certain previously known participants could not comment on the course of events.

Along with splitting the opposition camp and the constant presence of subliminal political advertising on state TV channels the absence of a publicly announced list of the party of Natalia Korolevska became yet another argument substantiating the pro-government nature of this political project: many assessed the project as testimony to the fact that candidates of the Ukraine – Forward! Party will continue to be recruited by the Presidential Administration.

Conclusions

In closing, the recently held pre-election congresses of Ukraine's main political parties demonstrated their level of readiness for the upcoming parliamentary race. The reactions to the publicly announced lists of two of Ukraine's most powerful opposition parties – Batkivshchyna and UDAR –



and the potential candidates with dubious reputations were rather ambiguous. The Party of Regions, whose leaders compiled its electoral list without informing its members, the Communist Party of Ukraine, which paid much less attention to its list of candidates than to its pre-election campaign, and Svoboda, which continued to play the role of the pro-right wing party, came as no surprise. Meanwhile, the congress of the Ukraine – Forward! Party stood out among the rest as journalists and the general public were unable to find out about the list of candidates running for this party.

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