

POLITICAL CORRUPTION: ESSENCE, FACTORS, COUNTERMEASURES



Mykola MELNYK,
Legal expert

Corruption as a social phenomenon has a clear political tint: on one hand, it is a product of the authorities' activity, on the other – it directly influences formation and operation of the governance institutes, and largely shapes the essence of public authority.

Since public authority by itself is primarily a political institute, corruption as a form of abuse of that authority is primarily a political phenomenon. Under such approach, it may be said that any corrupt acts committed by representatives of state power or local self-government bodies have a political meaning and may be considered political corruption.

Meanwhile, it makes sense to distinguish a specific category of corrupt acts, for its “special political essence”, i.e., to distinguish a specific kind of corruption – political. Its rationale is attributed to three main factors: the status of corrupt offenders, the thrust and motives of their unlawful activity, and the nature of its effects. Distinction of political corruption is also necessary for informed understanding of the social essence of corruption as a phenomenon and enhancement of the effectiveness of its fighting.

Actors of political corruption

By the status, termed as actors of political corruption may be the persons immediately involved in formulation and implementation of the state policy in different sectors and on different levels.

On the national level – first of all, state and political figures, including the head of state, heads and members of supreme bodies of state governance, heads of central executive bodies, MPs, leaders of political parties. That category of actors should also include heads and members of state bodies that do not belong to any branch of state power and, possessing a constitutional status, act as independent bodies (the Central Election Commission, the Higher Council of Justice, the Accounting Chamber, etc.). Proceeding from the legal status and actual influence on the exercise of powers by state and political figures, actors of political corruption may also include state servants of the first and, to some extent, second categories (such as deputy ministers and heads of other central executive bodies, advisors and aides to top officials).

On the regional level (province, city), such actors may include heads of local bodies of state power and local self-

government bodies, as well as members of regional and city councils, that is, those tasked to provide support for implementation of the state policy on the regional level. Reference of those persons to actors of political corruption is rather conventional, since they are not politicians. However, they represent the state power in a region or city and are the main bearers of the state policy in the country's regions.

Hence, such (political) status of said persons *a priori* imparts their corrupt acts a political nature, even if they are committed with purely personal (not political) motives. In that case, the official status of the offender is decisive, as it envisages his possession of political and/or huge executive (public) resources. Due to the possibility of unlawful use of political and state powers, political corruption may be considered a specific form of power abuse. Political corruption entails (unlawful) exchange of political and public resources for resources of a different kind: political support, material wealth, other personal and political benefits.

Depending on the actors, the sphere of political corruption may be identified – it is the sphere of politics and the top level of state and regional governance.



Goals of political corruption

Another indicator of political corruption is presented by political trend of corrupt offences. Political corruption involves clearly politically motivated acts. In a wide sense, political corruption may be defined as abuse of power for political goals (at least, such goals should prevail over others). Such *goals* mainly include: (1) obtaining power; (2) its keeping, strengthening or enhancement (expansion of powers).

Another goal (secondary or primary) of political corruption may lie in enrichment or other material benefits. The world and domestic experience proves that in most cases that goal still remains the key objective of corrupt politicians, for whom political and state power is only a means to satisfy personal interests. I.e., the end result of the activity of politically corrupt officials lies in conversion of political and administrative resources they possess into material values and other personal benefits. In fact, there is only one thing that differs them from other corrupt officials – the scope and scale of administrative capabilities for personal enrichment and other benefits.

Corrupt officials can obtain (and keep) political power, expand administrative powers and illegally enrich themselves through most varied unlawful corrupt acts.

Power (political influence) is taken in a corrupt way mainly in course of formation of state power bodies and other political structures of the state. The same may be achieved through redistribution of powers at passage of laws and other legal acts (e.g., giving an official or a body powers not granted to them by the Constitution or legal status). In fact, it deals with unlawful appropriation of state power, its seizure through appointment of “own people” to political and state posts, building the system of governance not on democratic and lawful principles but on the basis of personal devotion and political affiliation. This results in a situation where political and state institutes, formally preserving their public status, are in fact used in the interests of separate persons and certain political forces (Parliament passes laws favouring a certain political force; the Government passes decisions to the benefit of some business structure; a city council allots land or grants/leases out property to a “required” person or entity).

If some actors of governance in a corrupt manner appropriate powers not delegated to them, assume ruling functions not intrinsic in them, concentrate in their hands state power breaking the legal principle of division of power, they in fact usurp power.

In the executive branch this primarily takes the form of payment for posts (purchase and sale of posts), appointments not on the basis of a candidate’s performance but solely (or mainly) on political and personal grounds. This way of formation of the executive branch in Ukraine is facilitated, in particular, by the absence of political responsibility for human resources management and no competition at appointment to the top executive posts on the state and regional levels, along with very poor public control of the executive branch.

There is a wide range of corrupt methods that may be used at formation of the judicial branch. In particular, they include bribery during selection of candidates for the positions of judges, their passage of qualification commissions and the Supreme Council of Justice, at election of judges for an indefinite term. Politicisation of

the process (in particular, political bias of the Supreme Council of Justice, prevalence of the political component in the activity of the concerned parliamentary committee and Parliament in general) enable enhancement of the influence of political corruption on the formation of the corps of judges. This is witnessed by instances when judges were not indefinitely elected or were dismissed for evidently political reasons (of course, disguised under formal legal pretexts), as was the case, in particular, during the political crisis of 2007.

Corrupt influence on the formation of representative bodies results in violation of fundamental principles of organisation and conduct of elections:

- illegal funding of political parties and election campaigns;
- bribery of voters, candidates, members of election commissions, representatives of the authorities;
- “purchase and sale” of parliamentary seats by payment for “likely-to-pass” ranks in election lists of parties (blocs);
- abuse of powers during canvassing; falsification of election results;
- obstruction (and even barring) of the right to elect and be elected.

Bribery and use of the administrative resource (both essentially being manifestations of corruption) emasculate the essence of elections and produce the result needed for the ruling team. In fact, representative bodies are no longer formed by the people but produced by the authorities themselves instead. In that way, it is the authorities who decide the result of elections – at the final stage, it is recorded by election commissions formed by them, and ensured during the election process by all state and public institutions, including law-enforcement bodies influenced by the authorities.

The election process in fact follows the rules practiced by society. If Ukrainian society has long lived under the rules far from lawful, if it cultivated the law of power, dual standards of behaviour, grey business, bureaucratic arbitrariness, etc., the same rules and approaches were applied in the election process, specifically, in 1999, 2002 and especially in 2004. More than that, political corruption is practiced at elections not at random, not spontaneously – falsification of election results is preceded by the authorities’ insistent attempts to restrain society, curtailment of democratic principles of its operation, political persecution of the opposition, monopolisation of the economy and its going grey, growing dependence of mass media and the judicial branch.

Such was the case in Ukraine for many years, especially showily – before and during the presidential elections in 2004. Those elections differed from previous (e.g., in 1999 and 2002) not by their essence but by the scale, nature and methods of falsifications. For the first time, falsification of elections bore a systemic, total and aggressive character. At those elections, falsification (in the wide sense) ceased to be a local and spontaneous matter but was organised on the state level, employing its key institutes. The whole state machinery worked to produce the desired result of the elections.

The present scale of political corruption, huge problems with civil society development and building a law-ruled state witness that the danger of falsification of election results persists.



Summing up the examined goals of political corruption, it may be concluded that the main tasks underlying the whole basic activity of corrupt authorities are self-enrichment, self-preservation and consequent organisation of public life.

Notion of political corruption

Having identified the essence of political corruption, lying in the abuse of power in the process of getting and exertion of public authority, along with its actors, goals and sectors, we may produce the general definition of political corruption.

Political corruption means abuse of office by actors vested with political power (political and state figures, public servants of the top level), aimed at attainment of political goals (keeping and entrenchment of power, expansion of powers) and/or at enrichment.

It should be noted that the definition of political corruption makes sense only from the viewpoint of its perception as a specific socio-political phenomenon, identification of the reasons and conditions facilitating its spread, and planning of general, social and special, criminological measures at its countering and prevention.

Meanwhile, such definition is insignificant from the legal viewpoint, namely – for establishment of legal grounds for responsibility of corrupt politicians. After all, grounds for legal responsibility for corruption are the same for all actors – presence of elements of the relevant corrupt offence in their actions (taking bribes, abuse of authority, plunder by abuse of official position, unlawful support for business activity, illegal interference in the work of other official persons or bodies, breach of oath, etc.) that, dependent on the character of such offence, involves criminal, administrative, constitutional, disciplinary or civil responsibility.

In other words – no special or additional legal grounds are needed to bring corrupt politicians to legal responsibility. In most cases, there is no special procedure of bringing them to such responsibility either – one exception being the persons that have some immunity against criminal or administrative responsibility (e.g., the President, MPs, city mayors).¹

The fact that corrupt politicians, as a rule, avoid legal responsibility has one explanation – their official status, political, administrative and financial influence, that, in absence of the law-ruled state and developed democratic society, neutralise actions of law-enforcement bodies and courts against actors of political corruption. More than that, in such situation, corrupt politicians can use law-enforcement bodies and courts for their unlawful goals (including in political struggle for power) and dispatch law-enforcement officers detecting and investigating their corrupt acts.

It may be said that political corruption tops the corrupt pyramid of power. By contrast to so-called “small-scale” corruption, specific of the lowest level of public service, dealing with issues insignificant for the public, political corruption is inherent in the activity of the most influential political and state actors shaping the state policy on the

level of laws and other legal acts, and deciding the lines and methods of its implementation.

So, it may be concluded that political corruption presents the determinant of corrupt processes within the state. Since it is inherent in actors generating the factor fundamental for state-building – political will, the degree of their affection with corruption determines the essence and content of the state policy in all domains of public life, including in the field of fighting corruption. The current state of affairs in the country, the main trends and prospects of political, economic and social development, results of fighting corruption (or, rather, their absence) also give grounds for the conclusion of the extremely high, critical level of corruption of the actors personifying political (state) power in Ukraine.

Political effects of corruption

Effects of political corruption are seen mainly in the political sector and lie in that it: changes the essence of political authority, impairs its legitimacy both within the country and beyond its borders; breaks principles of formation and operation of the institutes of governance, democratic fundamentals of society and the state; undermines the political system; brings estrangement of the authority from the people, reducing dependence of the state on its citizens; destabilises the political situation; subordinates state power to private and corporate interests, including interests of corrupt groupings and clans.

Figuratively speaking, corruption turns all functions of the state and exertion of public authority upside down: power, whose bearer and the only source is the people, is used not in the interests of entire society, not in the interests of the people but in the interests of separate persons or a group of people. In other words, corruption involves employment of public authority in private interests. A corrupt person or other persons in whose interests a corrupt act is committed, unlawfully (by bribery, in violation of the established procedure, in absence of grounds for that, etc.), exceptionally through unlawful use of granted powers or official duties by a corrupt actor, get certain gains, preferences, advantages or other benefits.

With the extreme spread of political corruption, state governance far departs from democratic principles and easily comes into the hands of corrupt officials, with their simplistic idea of authority, its essence and social destination, their own official status, viewed as a means to secure personal interests. Rank-and-file citizens and representatives of the authorities are changing their idea of the role of public authority in society management.

Corruption results in the shift (deformation) of the main policy goal – instead of securing public interests, policy pursues attainment of private and group interests.

Systemic political corruption substantially weakens the state (which we now see in Ukraine). It undermines respect for the state, makes people mistrust political authority. Citizens see the authorities not as an exponent of their interests and their defender but as a source of danger for their rights and freedoms. And such is the case, indeed: today, the greatest threat for the Ukrainian statehood,

¹ It should be noted however that such immunity is necessary in Ukraine, since, first, it enables the state activity by the President, MPs and city mayors, protecting them from political persecution, second, in a civilised state, such immunity cannot be an obstacle for accountability, in presence of sufficient legal grounds for that.



legal and democratic principles of its development, constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens is posed by the corrupt authorities.

Spread of political corruption

Political corruption poses problem No. 1 for the country development. Long enough (roughly, since mid-1990s), it has been exerting decisive influence on all key processes – economic, political, social, legal. All the key problems now faced by Ukraine mainly have a corrupt origin.

Now, few people doubt that policy in Ukraine is formulated and implemented, proceeding mainly from the personal interests of the key political actors – the head of state, heads of supreme bodies of state power and political parties, council members, actual “masters” of political entities (parties, factions). Therefore, it contains in its very basis a corrupt element, ever deeper rooted in Ukrainian politics.

Inability to find a political compromise or political solution of an urgent social problem, endless treason, permanent cheating of political partners, political persecution of opponents using punitive bodies, betrayal of national interests in strategic sectors (e.g., energy), passage of evidently lobbyist state decisions, resort in political activity to bribery as a method of attainment of political goals – all this proves that bearers of political power are guided by the desire to get personal benefit (material or political, later also converted into material).

Political corruption is so widely and deeply embedded in the national political activity that the leading figures of the present political community, even if they wish (which is not the case), will find it very difficult to bail out of the web of political corruption, making their political activity fair and legal.

First, it may be reasonably assumed that many actors came and still come to politics using corrupt links and means. And judging by the actual state of affairs in the country, this trend is on the rise.

Second, essentially corrupt relations and rules of conduct get ever more spread in politics. The scale, nature and influence of corrupt processes on public life witness that:

- corruption has become a systemic element of state governance, and the present so-called political elite cannot effectively solve urgent social problems in the interests of society;
- the political structure of the state is largely built and rests on corrupt ties and relations; political and state figures in their everyday activity regularly resort to means that may be directly or indirectly deemed corrupt.

A great deal of the state machinery works like that. If those means are removed from the political and state activity, that machinery will fail – it will require their immediate replacement with other, legitimate means.

Such replacement requires either the replacement of the current bearers of political power, or amendment of the present rules of political activity. Its need is objectively required – the existing social problems can be solved only through radical changes, first of all, of the anticorruption trend. The absence of the required key changes (in the

political, economic, social, legal sectors, etc.) led to the grave political crisis, obstructed positive developments in the country.

Changes are not made mainly for personal reasons. *First*, none of the current bearers of power is eager to part with it voluntarily, neither are they willing to let a new political generation to the political “pool”. *Second*, life of many of the current “high and mighty” under different rules (that is, in all fairness and according to the law) will mean the end of their political career and the status of political outcasts.

Nevertheless, they must realise that an exodus of corrupt relations bearers from politics and establishment of legitimate rules of conduct in politics and other sectors are imminent. Attempts to mark time only complicate the general political situation and the country’s future. Furthermore, this may lead to the situation where settlement of the problem can take not evolutionary but revolutionary forms – as it happened, say, during the presidential elections in 2004, when political corruption (in particular, in the form of mass falsification of the election results organised by state actors) was one of the main drivers of the social crisis and public movement in defence of election rights – the Maydan.

In today’s Ukraine, corruption hit all sectors of formulation and implementation of the state policy, all branches, all state bodies without exception. The main danger however stems from politicisation of corruption – it becomes intrinsic in the key centres of political and state decision-making, determinant for functioning of public authority, distribution and use of public resources (funds, land and other immovable property, state orders, investments, etc.), implementation of the principle of the rule of law, establishment of social justice.

Factors of political corruption

Political corruption in Ukraine enjoys highly favourable conditions for growth and enhancement of influence on public life. This process is facilitated by a set of political, economic, organisational and managerial, legal, ideological, moral and psychological factors.

If we speak only about the key factors of political corruption, at the current stage of the country development they mainly include the following.

Political instability. It is manifested, in particular, in the instability of the main existing political institutes, involving ineffectiveness of their operation, substitution of legal principles of activity with political expediency. Such instability and its “protracted” course are especially evident in the “political war”, waged not only and even not as much against (formal) political opponents as against political allies (also formal). Such war *a priori* involves unlawful use of powers and systemic abuse of authority in political and personal goals, making the essence of political corruption.

Absence of political reforms and their faulty ideology. *First*, reforms needed by the country are not regularly implemented. *Second*, episodic and selective changes are not socially motivated and oriented – they have mainly personal motivation and pursue personal or narrow party (corporate) interests of the key political actors (getting and keeping state power, expansion of powers, and various gains of staying in power – hence, those interests actually entirely coincide with those inherent in political corruption).



This explains the long and tough political struggle “without rules” and imparts the corrupt component an important role in that process, as without it, an unrighteous war cannot be won (this refers, in particular, to unlawful funding of political campaigns, employment of the administrative resource for that purpose, use of law-enforcement bodies for persecution of political opponents, unlawful influence on courts, including Constitutional).

As a result, escalated political problems are either not solved at all, slowing down society development, or are solved in an inadequate and legally inadmissible way (in particular, through bribery of politicians, judges, passage of unlawful decisions), encouraging further spread of political corruption and complicating the socio-political situation in the country.

Imbalance of functions and powers of branches and breach of the principle of division of state power. The existing imbalance in powers of different branches stems from the unaccomplished political system of the state, continued attempts of its leaders to get additional powers. For a whole decade (1994-2004), Ukraine witnessed a trend towards unreasonable elevation of the executive branch over the other two, descent of the legislative branch, immaturity of the judicial branch, not strong and independent enough. The trend was largely formalised and continued by the Ukrainian Constitution of 1996 that substantially cut the powers of Parliament, in particular, in the field of parliamentary control. In course of regulation of the political crisis in 2004, accents in political influence were shifted towards Parliament and the Government, which seems to be barely tolerated by the current President. This led to another round of struggle for powers bordering on attempts, by way of accomplished fact, contrary to the Constitution, to appropriate powers that cannot be vested in the concerned official or body by their status or already ruled unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court. In this connection, one should just recall provisions of the Law “On Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine” or the Bill “On Judiciary and Status of Judges” submitted for the second reading, whose provisions conflict with at least 30 provisions of Ukraine’s Constitution.

Regarding the problems of establishment and development of the judicial branch, that process sees serious conflicts, irregularity, incompleteness, and at the current stage – also, insistent attempts to legislatively establish control over courts, get extra tools of influence on their rulings, politicise the judiciary.

Departure of the main political actors from democratic principles. The Ukrainian reality already sees signs that the democratic way of formation and operation of bodies of power is replaced with authoritarian and/or corrupt methods (during elections, appointment/election to official posts, passage of critical decisions). There are cases of organised information blockade of publicly important events that involve criticism of the current authorities. So far, all this seems irregular, but with toughening political struggle, recurrences of the information policy of 2003-2004 may well come back.

On top of all, control of mass media and PR manipulations can bring to nought anticorruption efforts in the policy domain.

Let alone other factors of political corruption (not less important than political), it makes sense to dwell upon one more thing. We mean the factor being legal, social, political and psychological at a time and dealing with escape from criminal responsibility by ideologists and sponsors of large-scale political corruption that took the form of unprecedented abuses and falsifications at presidential elections in 2004 and was actually aimed at seizure of state power in a corrupt way. Such escape became possible, because despite great many criminal cases brought for falsifications at those elections against immediate doers (over 1,500), the investigation failed to reach the top level of organisation of election results falsification. The likely reasons may include the difficulty of proof of their guilt and low skills of law-enforcement officers, along with arrangements of such persons with the new rulers about their immunity (being the most likely), not least of all enabled by corrupt ties between them.

Three conclusions may be drawn. *First* – after the latest presidential elections, the old system of governance was not replaced entirely. *Second* – there remains a practical probability of recurrence (maybe on a smaller scale, and adapted to the new conditions) of “elections 2004”. *Third*, and the main – this proves that the country is ruled not by laws but by other rules, including rules of political corruption.

Main means of countering political corruption

Corruption in general and political corruption in particular can be effectively fought on the condition of a systemic approach, combination of preventive, law-enforcement and repressive measures. In presence of many elements (a proper anticorruption legislation, its full and effective application, priority of preventive measures, etc.), the anticorruption policy can be effective only in presence of the political will of the state leadership. It is the political will that determines the content and, respectively, the effectiveness of other factors of fighting corruption and, therefore, the effectiveness of fighting corruption in general.

Political will means *true* intention of the country’s political leadership to *effectively* oppose corruption in all its forms and on all levels of state governance. Demonstration of political will suggests that in presence of legal grounds, the law should apply to any person, irrespective of the post, political likings, proximity to the political leadership of the state and other subjective circumstances. The key role in formulation and implementation of political will, as a rule, belongs to the head of state who usually has the greatest powers in the field of national security, leadership and coordination of activity of law-enforcement structures.

Demonstration of political will is conditioned by a set of outside and inside factors: personal qualities of the state leadership, the existing political system, the character of social psychology, legal consciousness of citizens, development of democratic institutes of the state, principles of functioning of the judicial and law-enforcement systems. And by one more critical factor – corruption in the top state leadership (which, in turn, depends, among other things, on the method of its coming to power, principles of its exercise, goals of stay in power). The fact that for a long time (at least, the last decade) the country’s political leadership demonstrated



no true intent to effectively oppose corruption gives grounds at least to question the legal purity of its activity and socially-oriented goal of its stay in power.

And if we speak about the main countermeasures for political corruption at the present stage of the country development, they are mainly confined to the following.

First – democratic and fair elections that guarantee conscious and free manifestation of the will and true establishment of voting results. The experience of the past election campaigns witnesses huge problems with key elements of such elections – informed choice and adequacy of its results to true political attitude of society. The ways of attainment of the “required” result are being modernised: while previously, it was secured mainly by primitive criminal methods (coercion to vote “as required”, obstruction of the candidates’ activity, falsification of commission protocols, etc.), now, the same is done in a more “civilised” and “refined” manner – using manipulations of information, voter brainwashing, wide employment of technical candidates and parties, outwardly legal forms of the administrative resource usage as state and public activity. As we noted, the probability of falsifications at the future elections remains high enough (as witnessed, in particular, by attempts of an organised information blockade (actually, censorship), recorded recently, attempts of unconstitutional appropriation of powers, that can be used as the administrative resource).

Only presidential and parliamentary elections based on democratic and legal principles, guaranteeing true manifestation of the will of citizens and unbiased establishment of its results will create systemic political and legal preconditions for reduction of political corruption and change of the nature of its manifestations.

Speaking of elections as a democratic form of countering political corruption, one should specifically note the need of amendment of legislative regimentation of political party funding – both during the election process and beyond it. The experience of the most recent election campaigns in Ukraine undoubtedly proves that: *first*, self-declared party funding is clearly untrue; *second*, in reality, it is performed out of other than officially reported sources and in different volumes; *third*, illegal funding of political parties and, respectively, election campaigns presents one of the main factors of political corruption in this country.

Second – effective (true) separation of politics from business. Contrary to the announced plans of such separation, over the past five years politics and business have actually merged together (melted) in uncovered, often – evidently brutal forms (almost undisguised funding of election campaigns of political parties and separate candidates by businesses, “purchase” of presence in election lists, passage of evidently lobbyist decisions to the benefit of some business structures by state authorities and local self-government bodies, purely formal repudiation of politicians from doing business, etc.). Business (personal material interest) dictates policy, motivates politicians, their behaviour and decisions. In that way (in most cases because of various corrupt relations), politicians serve private business, not society.

Third – establishment of the independent, competent and unbiased court. Such court is the main tool and

safeguard of democratic development of societies and establishment of a law-ruled state. At the same time, it presents an extremely strong and effective anticorruption tool, since it can legally correct any, so to speak, political deviation, stop a concrete instance of political corruption and restore law and order in the policy domain. Instead, the latest events concerning the national judicial system witness toughening of political struggle for the court, fraught with complete loss of its independence and impartiality. Particularly dangerous, the process involves the head of state who officially supports legislative proposals aimed at enhancement of the court’s dependency, its politicisation, granting officials (including the President) and separate institutions (e.g., the Higher Council of Justice) unconstitutional powers in the field of judiciary. This gives grounds to reasonably assume the desire to unlawfully establish control of the activity of judicial bodies and in that way obtain additional tools for employment of the administrative resource at the future elections.

Fourth – introduction of effective public control over the activity of politicians and guarantee of political and legal responsibility for their asocial, amoral and unlawful acts and decisions. This, in particular, envisages creation of preconditions for the existence of independent and impartial media, and an effective law-enforcement system. But today, the level of political corruption and corruption in law-enforcement bodies not only effectively obstructs their anticorruption activity in the policy domain, but also lets corrupt politicians use them in political struggle under slogans of fighting corruption.

Fifth – strengthening of moral and psychological immunity of society to corruption, and anticorruption motivation of citizens. This is the main and at the same time the most difficult line of the anticorruption activity, involving a fundamental shift in the views and values of the people. Measures at its implementation should transfuse the whole anticorruption activity, but this, in turn, depends on two things: *first*, the political will, mentioned above; *second*, the existence of a specially developed, scientifically based programme of anticorruption socio-psychological “recovery” of Ukrainian society.

A question, instead of conclusion

Political corruption is the main reason for the situation, in which Ukrainian society and state appeared. The level of socio-economic development, the quality of people’s life, the degree of their legal protection in the modern world are largely determined by the organisation of public life. That organisational function is vested in the public authorities. It is evident that neither the previous nor the present authorities can properly organise public life in Ukraine. Such inability is caused, in the first place, by the domination of personal interests in their activity, incompetence, excessive political engagement and large-scale corruption.

There is one way out: fundamental change of the principles of formation and operation of power institutes, democratic change of the main bearers of state power, that is – urgent qualitative changes in the national authorities.

And there is one question, too: who can do that in the near future, and how? ■