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**Parliamentary  
Development  
Project II**

Legislative Policy Development Program for Ukraine



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## The Parliamentary and Central Executive Agencies Youth Internship Program in Ukraine

*The Parliamentary and Central Executive Agencies Youth Internship Program* is one of the most successful examples of cooperation between the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. It promotes a regeneration of human resources at public agencies, raises the level of political and legal culture of the youth, and opens unique career opportunities for young Ukrainians in politics and civil society.

The Program allows young people of Ukraine to take an active part in the lawmaking and decision-making processes. Program participants (interns) undergo a 10-month internship with secretariats of Verkhovna Rada (VR) committees and departments of the VR Secretariat, Ministries and the Presidential Secretariat. In addition to the traineeship, interns take courses such as the public policy analysis, gender policy, lawmaking and law-drafting techniques, the Rules of Procedure, mechanism for cooperation between governance structures and the public, etc. They develop their leadership capacities at meetings with famous politicians, opinion leaders and scientists.

The Program opens doors for young specialists to both politics and civil service. For example, both MP Ostap Semerak and the Deputy Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers Illya Shevlyak are alumni of the program.

Over the past 14 years, 923 young people have completed their internships with the Ukrainian legislature and other public agencies of Ukraine. About 10% of them work for civil society organizations. Andriy Mahera, Deputy Chairman of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine, a 1998 alumnus, believes that his internship gave him the incentive to pursue a career in civil service. According to him, “the Parliamentary Internship Program is the perfect ‘launching platform’ for young, smart, ambitious students and graduates. The youth gets an opportunity to shape their future on their own, to find their own vision of how the state should develop in the future.”

The Parliamentary Internship Program of Ukraine was founded in 1995 by the United States Association of Former Members of Congress in conjunction with the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. In November 2000, the Program administration was transferred to the Parliamentary Development Project for Ukraine administered by Indiana University. Since September 2008, it has been administered by the Legislative Policy Development Program for Ukraine (PDP II) implemented by Ohio State University. Within the framework of the PDP II, the internship program was expanded to the central executive agencies, including individual ministries and the Secretariat of the President of Ukraine.

Cooperation with executive agencies proved to be fruitful. For example, Iryna Yarema, who will complete a ten-month internship at the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine in July 2009, has been offered a position as the main specialist of the International Cooperation and European Integration Department of the Ministry. Speaking about her experience, Iryna says: “My internship allowed me to take part in top-level professional conferences, seminars, training sessions and negotiations with foreign counterparts. Such executive experience demonstrates the relevance of continuous professional development and striving for better performance, because the state’s image depends on such efforts, both on the domestic and international stage.”

In recent years, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has contributed significantly to the maintenance and development of the internship program. For example, the Internship Program has an office within the Parliament Committee buildings, and the General Secretary Valentyn Zaichuk has supported the program through finding appropriate dormitory accommodation in Kyiv for interns from out of town. In 2008, an Alumni Association was created to develop the program





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further, find additional sources of support and to create a strong professional network of program alumni. By May 2011, it is expected that the Internship Program will be fully supported by Parliament and/or Ukrainian sponsors.

