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**Parliamentary
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Project II**
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Social Policy Media and Government Communications

PDP II has been working with the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers (SCMU) since 2008. In March 2010, PDP II began to introduce the tools of social media to the staff of the SCMU through two distance learning opportunities with trainers from the Ohio State University John Glenn School of Public Affairs Kiplinger Center for Digital Media.

After that initial training, the SCMU staff asked that the trainers come to Ukraine to conduct training for the Public Outreach Officers of all ministries and executive bodies. That training took place in May 2010. As a result of that training, an interdisciplinary Working Group on Communication Policy was established by the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers. The group was introduced to the Problem Solving method on Policymaking and Legislative Drafting as a guideline for their work. In December 2010, the group requested that PDP II help them in their analysis of the problems they had identified for introducing social media techniques to their work by commissioning research on the use of social media in Ukraine in government, NGO and mass media. The results of that research have been presented to the working group in March 2011.

In the meantime, the SCMU also asked that PDP II conduct training of regional public outreach staff on the use of social media. Four regional trainings were conducted in February-March 2011 for more than 100 civil servants from oblast, rayon and municipal public outreach offices. The training helped to also to identify areas of concern of these officials not only in the use of social media, but also regarding the Law on Public Information passed in January 2011. One of the concepts introduced in the training was that the more information provided proactively by government institutions proactively would ultimately reduce the number of public information requests. Secondly, the training was combined with defining the concept of communication as one that includes providing information, but also listening to responses to that information. It was agreed that social media tools can be a significant factor in improving communication tools.

Subsequent to the regional trainings, at the request of the SCMU, PDP II initiated a distance learning course for more in-depth learning of how to effectively apply the application of social media tools in government institutions. More than 50 civil servants from different regions of Ukraine participated in the six-week online course. Since SCMU and working group members also participated in the course, the questions and concerns of the participants helped the working group to recognize and articulate problems so that these can be addressed in the Social Media Policy Guidelines.

This interactive method, combined with comparative practices and working group sessions has set the course for a policy document to be collaboratively generated with the intention of meeting the needs of the civil servants at all levels of governance. Additionally, it has generated a work mode that encourages horizontal lines of communication as a more effective way to identify policy problems and issues.

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