QUARTERLY ACTIVITIES REPORT

of Civic Network OPORA

for the Period

1 October – 31 December, 2015

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

Civic Network OPORA, which implements the project under Cooperative Agreement No.: AID-121-A-12-00004 with Modification #2 of 22 December 2013, presents a quarterly report on its activities for the period from 01.10.2015 to 31.12.15. During this period, OPORA was focused on implementation of major project tasks and objectives set forth in the agreement.

During the reporting period, our observation activities covered regular local elections held nationwide on 25 October and in 29 cities on 15 November (second round of mayoral elections in large cities), as well as elections in the cities of Mariupol and Krasnoarmiisk on 29 November. OPORA has organized 8 PVTs and deployed long-term and short-term observers throughout Ukraine. All reports and information materials were popular among Ukrainian and international observers, analysts of independent organizations, diplomats and political actors. Besides that, PVT results have influenced legitimacy of the election process, and prevented unsubstantiated political confrontations, which could have been caused by losing parties Besides that, OPORA has prepared and launched a number of products for citizen activists, like an Android application, awareness-rising videos, map of violations with geolocation etc.. The organization has been actively working in cooperation with law-enforcement. As a result of such citizen oversight, over 300 criminal proceedings against voting rights violations were initiated, and 3 enforced court sentences in bribery cases. It is the first precedent in Ukrainian history when organizers of voter bribery were brought to responsibility before the election has finished.

Making legislative amendments during the election process is contrary to the principle of legal stability. Therefore, OPORA has focused during the reporting period on preparation of recommendations to by-laws and Explanations of the Central Election Commission, which have directly influenced the election process. For example, OPORA's position has positively influenced the second round of mayoral election in Pavlohrad, procedure for preparation and conduct of elections in Mariupol etc.

OPORA continued working on strategic planning. For example, we organized 3 meetings with key personnel, prepared a strategic planning session with regional representatives, 2016 calendar plan, and started developing new safety strategy and preparing IT audit.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Political activities reached the peak in October – December. Such intensification was mostly due to the local election campaign, the most active stages of which turned out to be in October-November. Ukrainian Parliament, in fact, stops functioning for this period. According to plenary sittings schedule, MPs are actively involved on election campaigns at sites and don't realize their legislative functions. Campaign agenda has little to do with local self-government. It is mostly focused on national topics, used as a background for popularization of party brands. Besides that, a number of small parliamentary parties assume that the parliamentary coalition might collapse resulting in early

election to the Parliament. This assumption influences key statements of politicians and election campaign messages to the certain extent. For example, Batkivshchyna, Radical Party of Oleh Liashko (has officially left the Coalition), and Samopomich usually step aside from the results of parliamentary majority's work. Taking into consideration the possibility of holding early parliamentary elections, national-level politicians use more populist slogans and make more populist statements. Such increased populism hinders realization of unpopular reforms, as well as implementation of Government's liabilities before the International Monetary Fund.

Minsk negotiations about a peaceful settlement of confrontation in eastern Ukraine don't give any tangible results, while the citizens are demobilized as there is no wide-scale military actions. On the one hand, it is good that the confrontation has eased, on the other hand, however, the public became less active in volunteering, political openness and solidarity. People are tired of political actors. There are no significant success stories in reforms declared by state statesmen. All these facts do influence the election and political processes.

Unfortunately, parties were too much focused on political goals, and failed to secure proper regulation of IDPs rights in social and political sphere. Rights and social protection of 1.5 million citizens turned out to be of the second importance because of safety hazards and war operations in the certain districts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

At the same time, law-enforcement reform reached its peak in November-December, what have improved the reputation of the certain government bodies. However, average citizens don't see results of the reform. Anti-corruption reform brought much disappointment, as long as bodies which are supposed to investigate cases of corrupt officials are being formed too slowly.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Objective 1: Fairness and integrity of key Ukrainian elections improved through domestic monitoring

Peak of civic observation was in October-November 2015. Long-term observers have detected a lot of violations, submitted the biggest number of reports, and visited many events organized by candidates in different settlements. Three days of voting were also in this period, when STO and LTO network of observers worked the most actively, detected and prevented violations throughout Ukraine.

OPORA's analysts and data analysts were summarizing and reviewing information in order to prevent any manipulations with information.

LTOs

Long-term observers visited settlements to which they were assigned, in order to observe the course of election process there. Besides that, they visited territorial election commissions, local headquarters of candidates and parties, local self-government bodies, and State Voter Register maintenance bodies.

Yet in September, OPORA's administrative team developed and disseminated a special handbook for long-term observers containing explanations of law regulations and recommendations on organizational planning. Oblast coordinators and LTOs were collecting information from recommendations and regular reports about planned public and non-public electoral events in oblasts. They were drawing up plans of visits and based their activities upon them.

In October-November, long-term observers of OPORA prepared and submitted information for three interim and operative reports. Thus, national reports were developed and presented on the basis of such information. Besides collection of information for regular reports, observers were entering information in the unified database of violations. They collected such information during regular visits to settlements where they observed the course of elections.

In order to standardize and visualize the information received from long-term observers, OPORA developed an electronic database of electoral violations. Thus, around 2,300 violations were included into this database and, after a coordinator and jurist approved them, into the Map of Violations. Besides that, the database of violations was supplemented with two new services: sending violations to and receiving them from OPORA's mobile application. A special infrastructure was developed for this purpose, consisting of 3 servers used to keep, transfer information, and prevent its stealing or falsification.

OPORA had 144 LTO in the first round, 32 LTO – second round, 2 – in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiysk.

Detected violations and the Map of Violations http://map.oporaua.org

Violations detected per oblasts http://map.oporaua.org/statystyka-porushen

МІСЦЕВІ ВИБОРИ 2015

01559 зафіксовано порушень по всій Україні

Порушення на мапі

Звіти спостережень
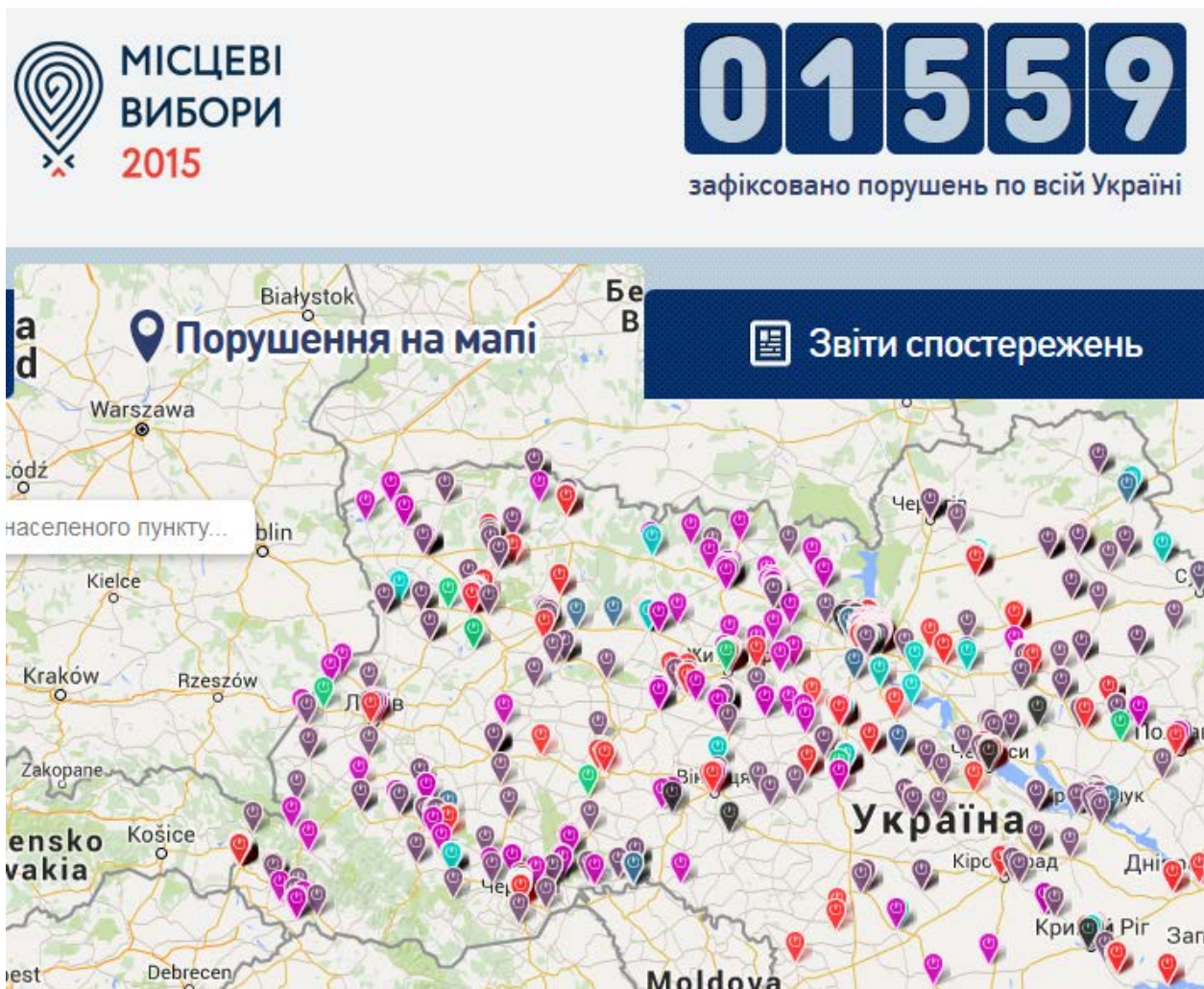
Documents

[STATEMENT ON OBSERVATION RESULTS OF 29 NOVEMBER 2015 REGULAR LOCAL ELECTIONS IN CITIES OF MARIUPOL AND KRASNOARMIISK, DONETSK OBLAST](#)

[STATEMENT ON OBSERVATION RESULTS OF 29 NOVEMBER 2015 REGULAR LOCAL ELECTIONS IN CITIES OF MARIUPOL AND KRASNOARMIISK, DONETSK OBLAST](#)

[Results of the parallel vote tabulation for regular local elections in Krasnoarmiisk](#)

[Results of the parallel vote tabulation for regular local elections in Krasnoarmiisk](#)

[Parallel vote tabulation results for the second round of Dnipropetrovsk city mayor election](#)

[Parallel vote tabulation results for the second round of Dnipropetrovsk city mayor election](#)

[Interim report on observation results of the second round of mayoral election 15 November](#)

On the eve of the second round of local elections: preliminary observation summary by OPORA

On the eve of the second round of local elections: preliminary observation summary by OPORA

Local elections: interim observation summary from OPORA 25 October

Local Elections: Preliminary Observation Summary From OPORA. October 25

Parallel vote tabulation results in Kharkiv

OPORA''s Parallel Vote Tabulation Results in Kharkiv

Results of the parallel vote tabulation conducted by OPORA in election of Dnipropetrovsk city mayor and to Dnipropetrovsk City Council

Results of the parallel vote tabulation conducted by OPORA in election of Dnipropetrovsk city mayor and to Dnipropetrovsk City Council

Results of the parallel vote tabulation conducted by OPORA in election of Odesa city mayor and to Odesa City Council

Results of the parallel vote tabulation conducted by OPORA in election of Odesa city mayor and to Odesa City Council

You may find all the other national reports based on regular reporting of LTOs at
http://oporaua.org/vybory/zvity

STO

Active stage of STO recruiting started in early October. We preferred to hire people who have already worked as OPORA's observers, detected violations and drew up the corresponding documents. We would like to remind that we started recruiting observers in Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Odesa in September. OPORA organized recruiting in a few stages. First wave of introductory trainings started after recruitment was announced and advertised in the media and social networks. These trainings covered the following topics: legislation, electoral procedures, rights and liabilities of electoral subjects. After the trainings, we invited participants who had successfully passed final tests to attend another training, covering practical electoral observation with OPORA. Trainees learned about specifics of observation, reporting, and organization of their work.

Project team had developed and printed handbooks for short-term observers yet before the trainings began. The handbooks contained information about principles of citizen observation, duties, rights and obligations of observers. Every person received a handbook and learned how to use it during the trainings. Some the most significant parts of the handbook were included in OPORA's mobile application for election observers. It was easier to find or read laws through application, and observers could report about detected violations while staying at an election precinct.

A remote simulation training was conducted after the trainings finished. Coordinators instructed STOs on how to type and send two SMS reports using a special format and at the certain time. After the simulation training, we recruited more STOs or provided additional explanations for them. Besides that, we organized 6 local simulations for each of three cities and for newly-trained STOs from oblasts. Each of these simulations helped to improve the quality of reporting and understanding of electoral procedures by observers.

On the election day, short-term observers were sending 7 or 8 regular reporting messages about the course and quality of election at polling stations. Thus, observers have sent around 18 thousand messages on the election day. Besides that, STOs have detected and reported 300 incidents at polling stations on the election day.

OPORA had 1965 STO in the first round of election (in PEC), 648 – in the second round (in PEC) and 146 (in PEC) in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiysk.

PVT

OPORA started preparing to the election day and the parallel vote tabulation on the beginning of active stage of long-term observation. OPORA planned to conduct some parallel vote tabulations simultaneously. Besides nationwide information on the quality of the election, we planned to analyze the course of elections in regions, dividing oblasts into south, center, east, and west. In addition, we planned to conduct PVT in three oblast centers: Kharkiv, Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk.

NDI and OPORA had analyzed all previous observation reports starting from 2010 before the development of an observation plan. We searched for varieties and tendencies in all questions included to the reporting forms. Thus, we selected a number of questions requiring less attention and, on the contrary, issues that need stronger observation efforts. Having analyzed more than 90,000 SMS reports in cooperation with NDI, OPORA developed new reporting forms for STOs, later used in trainings.

Under the plan of preparation to the election day in October, OPORA and NDI developed 8 different samplings to detect potential issues in the largest possible number of regions and by various parameters. All the samplings were either intersected with or included in other samplings. Therefore, we developed special analytical instruments to track possible errors in samplings, and verified all the samplings three times. As long as short-term observers were sometimes included in three samplings at the same time, we needed to find a way to simplify the work of oblast coordinators and STOs, to eliminate any extra efforts. Thus, the database used for receiving and analyzing the reports became more complex. In October, OPORA's team in cooperation with NDI developed the terms of reference for SMS database, which included features used to simplify the work of oblast coordinators and STOs, elements for primary analysis of information integrity, and interface for data collection and analysis.

Besides that, OPORA and NDI developed special forms for detailed analysis of the election day, based in STO reporting forms, in comparison to the previous parliamentary elections. We have also divided the information about observation of parliamentary elections into 8 samplings, in order to compare the results more accurately and quickly.

All this system was also applied in the repeated voting in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiisk mayoral elections to compare the results with the first round, and results of elections in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiisk were compared to both rounds. Additional adjustments were made for each election process by OPORA and NDI, based on previously developed analytical instruments for the election day.

Besides PVT, OPORA and NDI developed a data visualization system based on OPORA's protocols for three cities (Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa). http://map.oporaua.org/pvt-kh-od-dn/ STO managers from three cities were entering information from paper copies of protocols, delivered by STOs. We have also developed a special mechanism for verification of protocol validity, analysis of the situation at polling stations and publication.

Visual material about PVT compared to exit-polls. In three cities
Dnipropetrovsk

Odesa

Вибори міської ради міста Одеса 2015 року

Kharkiv

Вибори міського голови міста Харкова 2015 року

Вибори міської ради міста Харкова 2015 року

Дані ЦВК
Дані ППГ ОПОРИ
Екзит-пол Комітету виборців України

53,64% 53,45% 51,3% — Відродження
11,85% 12,01% 16,4% — Самопоміч
6,76% 6,76% 6,9% — Блок П. Порошенка
6,67% 6,62% 4,5% — Наш край
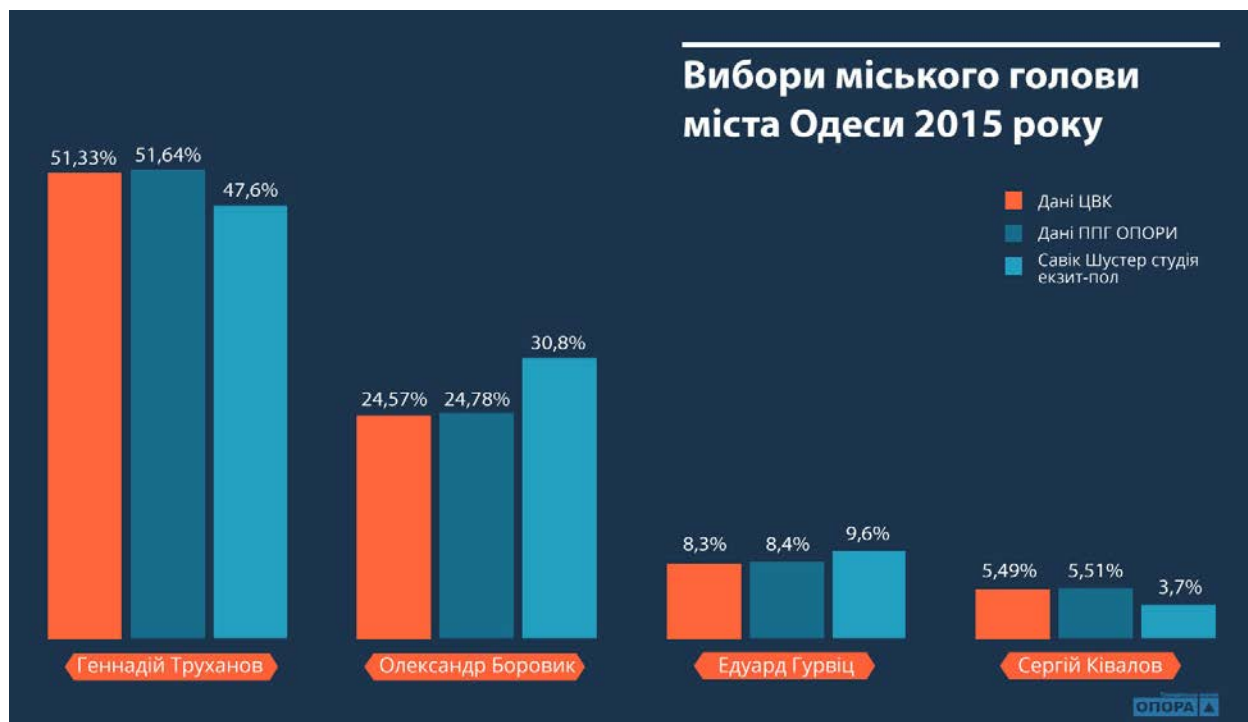
Call-center

OPORA started active preparation of the call-center in October. It included preparation of facilities, securing smooth operation of the equipment, recruiting of call-center operators.

OPORA had also started preparing facilities, which was chosen yet in September, to the election day. Thus, we connected a main and emergency internet wires, ensured technical and physical safety of the facilities, and organized working space.

Operator recruitment and trainings were launched in early October. Operators were selected from STOs and LTOs of Kyiv, based on their observation experience, as well as practical experience of reporting and detecting violations at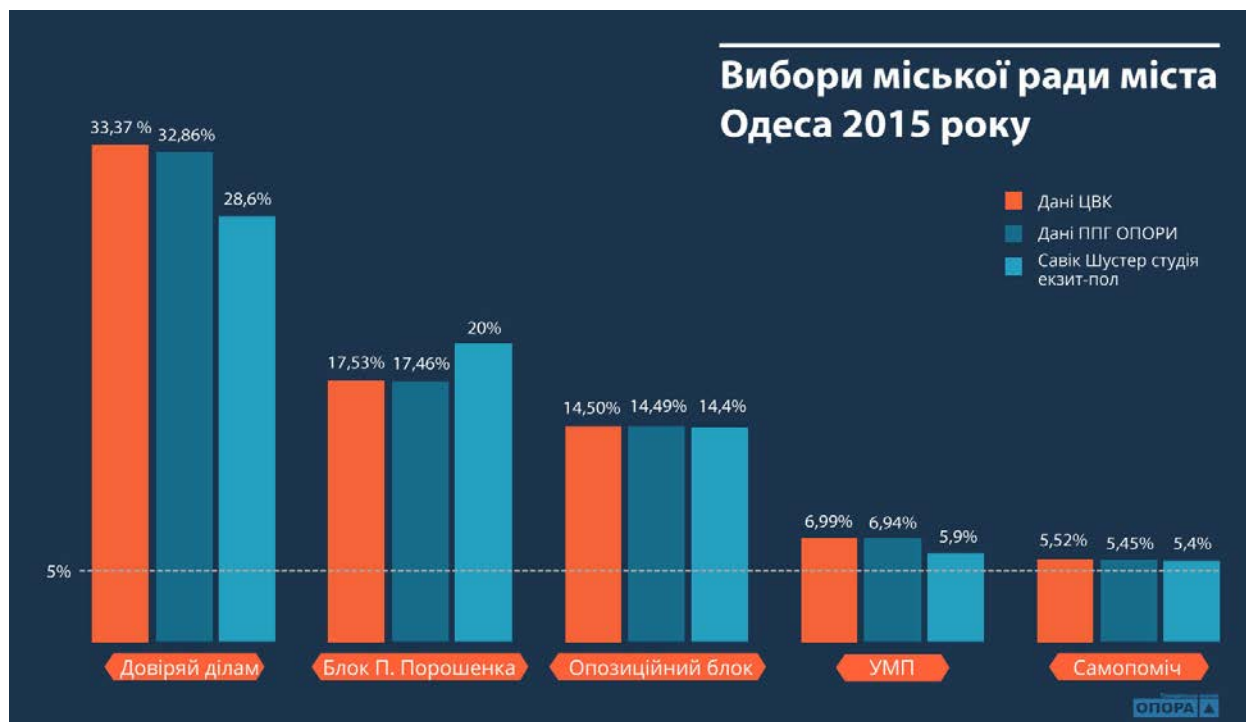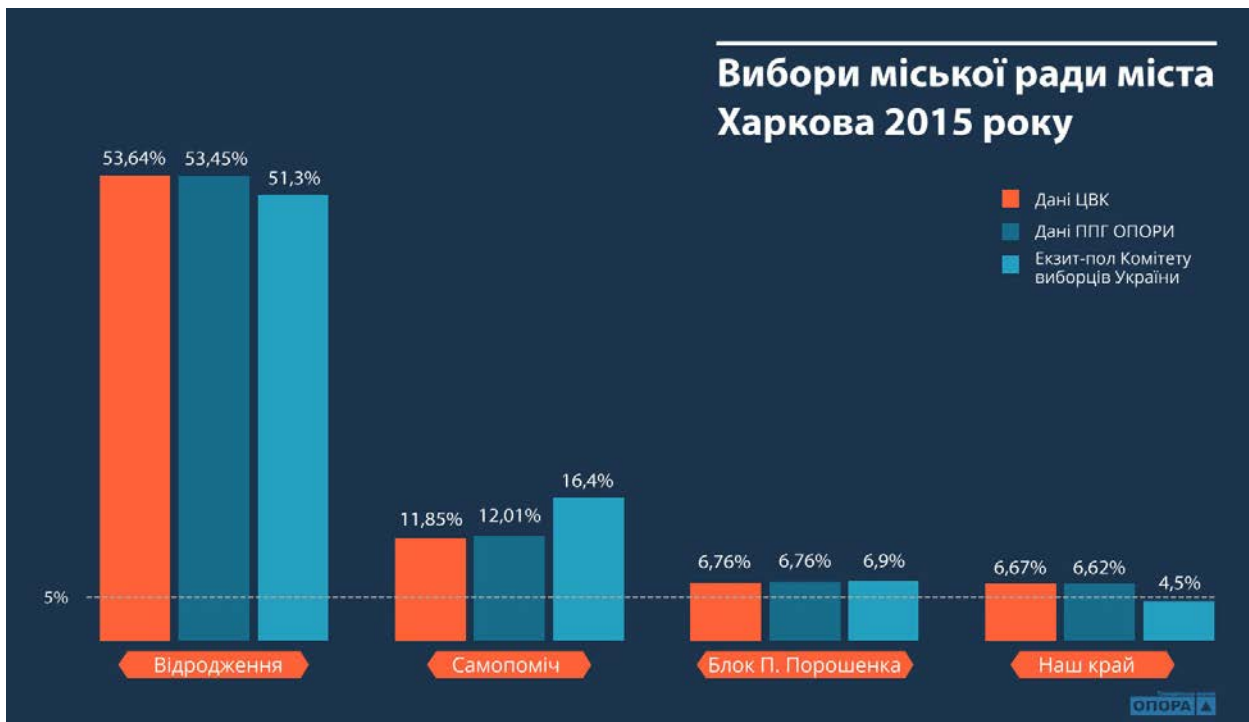 polling stations. After the primary selection of candidates, we conducted a training on call-center functioning, work of STOs in this election and the voting day in particular, with final tests at the end of training. Based on testing results, we selected 31 operators to work on 25-26 October. Operators were divided into 4 shifts to secure prompt collection of information from polling stations. On 25 October, the election day, the largest number of operators were involved.

Besides that, a team of legal advisors worked in the call-center. They were processing information about incidents reported by STOs. After received an information message about an incident, one of jurists called the corresponding observer to specify the details. They also helped to write a report on violation or lodge a complaint if there was such a need. This very team of jurists verified information about violations included in the database of violations.

OPORA also prepared and launched a special call-center for the repeated elections. It was smaller, comprising 25 persons working in shifts for two days. Their functions, however, were the same that

operators had on 25 October. As long as the number of short-term observers was smaller, OPORA selected less operators and conducted additional training for them.

OPORA's call-center in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiisk elections comprised 6 persons, working in cooperation with observers.

The purpose of information activities in the period under report was the impartial, expert, and comprehensive coverage of the electoral process of regular elections of deputies of local councils and mayors of villages, townships, and cities scheduled for October 25, 2015, second round of elections of city mayors (second round of balloting) held on November 15, and regular elections of deputies of local councils and mayors of Krasnoarmiis'k and Mariupol in Donetsk oblast held on November 29, 2015; lobbying for introduction of amendments to subordinate legislation aimed at improving the organization of election process and media support for advocacy activities of Civic Network OPORA in the field of reforming the election legislation.

Objectives of information strategy achieved by press service over the period from October 1 to December 31, 2015:

- Coverage of the run of election campaign at the regular local elections held on October 25, second round of elections conducted on November 15, and the Election Day in Krasnoarmiis'k and Mariupol on November 29.

- Informing the public and the mass media about violations of the election legislation on the part of electoral subjects recorded by public watchdogs, appropriate preventive action and criminal prosecution activities of law enforcement agencies, activities of public authorities on ensuring the exercise of political and electoral rights of citizens, and the activities of election commissions of all levels.

- Organization of public events and establishing cooperation with national and regional television and online media for the purpose of their involvement and participation in covering the activities of Civic Network OPORA, as well as the use of OPORA's information materials and research publications.

- Coordination of activities of teams of regional press officers (25 press secretaries – one press secretary in each oblast and in the city of Kyiv), who received preparatory training, and supervision over accomplishment of their communication tasks within the framework of public monitoring campaign.

- Filling Civic Network OPORA's website: http://oporaua.org/ and the interactive map of violations: http://map.oporaua.org/ with information messages, articles, and regional news items.

- Dissemination of timely "flash" messages, exclusive information materials, and key messages related to Civic Network OPORA's activities through social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter.

- Development and distribution of Android app "Local Elections" for the use of the following services and information systems by observers, journalists, and concerned voters: services "Previous party affiliations of deputies: where did they run in the 2010 local elections and which party nominated them?", and "Search for member of TEC/OEC: party affiliation and involvement in conflicts (1998-2015)", information systems "Local elections in Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa, and Kharkiv", and "The second round of mayoral elections in Dnipropetrovsk: statistical key figures according to the simultaneous ballot counting by Civic Network OPORA".

- Creation and dissemination of awareness-raising and motivational animated video clip "Civic Network OPORA: Read, watch, study, inform. The 2015 Elections" using OPORA's media channels.

- Continuation of collaboration with First Channel of Ukrainian Radio for the purpose of broadcasting of awareness-raising radio program called "A Candidate's Minimum" (Minimum Requirements for a Candidate).

- Support for public and expert discussion on the need to reform the election legislation and enable internally displaced persons to exercise their suffrage rights in the new territorial communities.

A PR-department, composed of PR-manager and two text-writers during the period from October to November and consisting of PR-manager and one text-writer over the course of December, was functioning at the central office in order to ensure the accomplishment of above-mentioned tasks. During the launch of all-Ukrainian long-term observation campaign at the regular elections of deputies of local councils and mayors of villages, townships, and cities, OPORA created a network consisting of 25 regional press secretaries who performed their duties over the period from September 8 to November 30, 2015.

PUBLIC EVENTS

Public events within the framework of observation of regular elections of deputies of local councils and mayors of villages, townships, and cities, scheduled for October 25, 2015

In the city of Kyiv during the period from October 1 to December 31, 2015, Civic Network OPORA held 8 press conferences and three briefings dedicated to election legislation, violations recorded during the conduct of observation campaign at the local elections, and the need for legislative changes in order to improve the organization of electoral process and strengthen responsibility for bribery of voters.

- **On October 8, at the press conference on the topic** "**Local elections: problems with registration of candidates, unregulated "gender quotas" and mass run for seats in local governments by public officials**" (Kyiv, press center of UKRINFORM news agency) Civic Network OPORA's analysts Olexander Klyuzhev and Olexander Neberykut presented a report on key issues and trends in nomination and registration of candidates for mayors and deputies of local councils of different levels, in particular: conduct of conferences of locals organizations of political parties and nomination of candidates, refusals to register candidates, duplicate candidates, quantitative indicators of participation of local organizations of political parties in the elections and observance of gender quotas. Experts noted that the largest number of candidates was nominated by local organizations of "Petro Poroshenko Bloc "Solidarity" party (nearly 28 thousand nominees) and also gave a description of typical mayoral candidate's profile.

Presentation of analytical insights was accompanied by demonstration of visual infographics which were later used by mass media. The event was covered by 8 representatives of mass media (including BBC Ukraine, liga.net, Radio Era and others) and attended by representatives of OSCE and non-governmental organizations. A video of the press conference can be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bb4owLhv1j8.

- **On October 17, at the press conference on the topic** "**Local elections: campaign assessment one week before the end of pre-election campaigning**" Civic Network OPORA's analysts Olexander Klyuzhev and expert on legal issues Olga Kotsyuruba gave a description of election campaign in the regions of Ukraine, named major threats to electoral process in connection with judicial proceedings of cases regarding the denial of registration of candidates, and specified common electoral violations which were typical for candidates representing all parties-electoral subjects (illegal campaigning, abuse of administrative resources, indirect bribery of voters). Representatives of Civic Network OPORA also published a second Interim report on the results of OPORA's observation of local elections held on October 25, 2015.

The event was attended by 8 representatives of mass media, including reporters of INTV.ua, Radio Svoboda, Kyiv Regional State Television and Radio Company, online newspaper Kyiv Vechirniy. The press conference was also attended by representatives of the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) and the British Embassy. A video of the press conference can be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvPMiEcF8T0.

- **On October 23, a press conference was held on the topic** "**On the eve of the Election Day: Preliminary conclusions based on Civic Network OPORA's election observation**" (Kyiv, "UNIAN" news agency). At the event, the coordinator of parliamentary and electoral programs of Civic Network OPORA Olga Aivazovska noted that as of October 22 the most common violations of the electoral legislation included illegal pre-election campaigning and indirect bribery of voters. Civic Network OPORA's analysts Olexander Klyuzhev and Olexander Neberykut gave a description of progress of the electoral process region wise and outlined the regions at risk. Representatives of Civic Network OPORA noted that political parties made use of the most expensive means of pre-election campaigning (outdoor and media advertising) instead of adopting the practice of open discussions or debates between the candidates about the prospects for local development. That was also when Civic Network OPORA published its latest report on the eve of the Election Day under the title of "Civic Network OPORA's preliminary conclusions on the electoral process at the local elections held on October 25, 2015".

The event was attended by 19 representatives of mass media, including members of television crew of Channel 5, ICTV, INTV, Gamma, UA.TV, Espresso TV, correspondents of news agencies Interfax, RIA Novyny, Liga.net, Region News, radio Golos Stolytsi, Radio Era, Ukrainian Radio, and Radio Svoboda.

- **On October 26, at the press conference on the topic** "**Local elections: interim results of observation conducted by Civic Network OPORA**" (Kyiv, "UNIAN" news agency) representatives of Civic Network OPORA presented the interim results of observation of regular local elections and the results of simultaneous ballot counting at the elections of city mayors in Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa, and Kharkiv. According to Civic Network OPORA's coordinator of parliamentary and electoral programs Olga Aivazovska and analysts Olexander Klyuzhev and Olexander Neberykut, local elections in Ukraine were held in violation of several international standards and good practices in the organization and conduct of the electoral process, in particular: instability and uncertainty of provisions of the electoral law on some important procedures, violation of the principle of equitable treatment of candidates and equal-weighted mandates in the context of the electoral system, failure to ensure proper level of security of ballot papers, and committed violations which had all the makings of bribery of voters. At the same time, the centralized administrative resources didn't have a systemic impact on the electoral process in Ukraine and they were used several times less than during the 2010 regular elections. Meanwhile, the violations committed on the Election Day, October 25, were not systematic in the vast majority of territorial communities and generally did not influence the election results or the vote counting process, and for the most part the election campaign was

competitive. At the event, representative of Civic Network OPORA urged the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to ensure the rights of citizens and residents of Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k, where the elections due on October 25 were undermined, and adopt amendments to the electoral law aimed at creating proper conditions for the participation of citizens in the local self-government in these cities. (Civic Network OPORA's STATEMENT on interim results of observation of regular local elections in 2015)

The event was attended by 63 representatives of mass media, including the First National Channel of Ukraine, Channel 112, TV Channel 24, ICTV, 1+1, STB, "Ukraine", Channel 5, Espreso TV, Channel 17, News One, Euronews, INTV, GAMMA , UA.TV, Feniks.TV, news agencies UKRINFORM,INTERFAX, RBC-Ukraine, Golos.ua, Ukrainian News (Ukrayinski Novyny), ZIK, delo.ua, Polish Radio, Radio Era, Radio Svoboda, Golos Stolytsi, representatives of the Embassy of Hungary, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Great Britain.

Public events within the framework of public monitoring campaign in the repeat elections of city mayors (second round of balloting) on November 15, 2015

• **On November 13, at the press conference on the topic** "On the eve of the Election Day in the second round of local elections: preliminary conclusions based on Civic Network OPORA's election observation" (Kyiv, "UNIAN" News Agency) the coordinator of parliamentary and electoral programs of Civic Network OPORA Olga Aivazovska noted that the progress of the election campaign process and the regional socio-political context give evidence of high propensity for conflict of the second round of elections and the vote counting process in 14 out of 29 cities, namely, Dnipropetrovsk, Pavlograd, Kryviy Rih, Dniprodzerzhynsk, Nikopol, Zaporizhzhya, Berdyansk, Melitopol, Kramatorsk, Mykolayiv, Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Zhytomyr, Uzhgorod. According to the arguments of Civic Network OPORA's analyst Olexander Klyuzhev, the most dynamic and confrontational election campaigns unfolded in those cities where the results of the first round of voting showed that there was a minimum gap between the first-placed and second-placed candidate, in particular: in Dnipropetrovsk, Lutsk, Zhytomyr, Severodonetsk, Khmelnytskiy, Ivano-Frankivsk, Bila Tserkva, and Melitopol. At the event, representatives of Civic Network OPORA presented the Interim report on the results of observation of the second round of elections of city mayors and urged the President of Ukraine and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to ensure the legally prescribed rotation of the CEC members immediately after the establishment of official results of second round of elections held on November 15 and the regular local elections in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k held on November 29.

The event was attended by 21 representatives of mass media, including journalists and cameramen of the First National Channel of Ukraine, TV Channel 24, "Ukraine", Channel 5, News One, Donbass Public Television, INTV, correspondents of news agencies INTERFAX, RBC-Ukraine, Polish Radio, Golos Stolytsi and others.

- **On November 16**, after the end of second round of elections of city mayors Civic Network OPORA held a **press conference** on the topic "Mayoral elections: the second round. Interim results of Civic Network OPORA's observation of the Election Day" (Kyiv, "UNIAN" News Agency) with the participation of Civic Network OPORA's coordinator of parliamentary and electoral programs Olga Aivazovska and analyst Olexander Klyuzhev. Civic Network OPORA delivered a Statement on the run of events during the repeat Election Day in the second round of elections of city mayors and issued the results of simultaneous ballot counting at the election of city mayor in Dnipropetrovsk. During the event it was noted that observers of Civic Network OPORA witnessed an overall decline in number of violations committed by members of election commissions and other electoral subjects in the second round of elections as compared to the Election Day on October 25. The experts also noted that a decline in voter turnout in the second round of voting reflects the specifics and intensity of the repeat election campaign in some territorial communities and shouldn't be interpreted as a fact of declining public legitimacy of the election results or the growing distrust of the election institution among citizens.

The event was attended by 30 representatives of mass media, including journalists of the First National Channel of Ukraine, Channel 112, TV Channel 24, ICTV, 1+1, Inter, Channel 5, Espreso TV, News One, "Kyiv" TV, INTV, GAMMA, UA.TV, First Business Channel, news agencies RIA-Novosti Ukraine, Golos.ua, Ukrainian News, ZIK, UBR, correspondents of Radio Era, Golos Stolytsi, Ukrainian radio, representatives of the Embassy of Poland in Ukraine and NDI.

Also during the period from October to November, all 25 regional offices of Civic Network OPORA held press events concerning the progress of pre-election process and the results of public observation campaign conducted on the Election Day.

Public events within the framework of monitoring campaign at the regular elections of deputies of local councils and the elections of mayors of Krasnoarmiis'k and Mariupol in Donetsk oblast held on November 29, 2015

- **On November 27**, at the **press conference** on the topic "**On the eve of the Election Day in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k: preliminary conclusions based on election observation conducted by Civic Network OPORA**" (Kyiv, UNIAN news agency) representatives of Civic Network OPORA pointed out that favorable conditions for free expression of will by citizens were created on November 29. According to the coordinator of parliamentary and electoral programs Olga Aivazovska and analyst Olexander Klyuzhev, excessive politicization of activities of territorial election commissions and high level of mistrust between electoral subjects are still the most significant challenges facing the electoral process. At the same time, representatives of Civic Network OPORA urged law enforcement agencies to ensure proper investigation of criminal cases related to the disruption of regular local elections scheduled for October 25, 2015 .; called on the electoral subjects to abandon attempts to destabilize the situation and deliberately delegitimize the election process; urged the Central Election

Commission to respond more rapidly to the problems of electoral process in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k; called on the Donetsk oblast civil-military administration and local authorities to avoid making statements with signs of political assessment of actions of electoral subjects. At the event, experts of Civic Network OPORA presented an Interim report on the results of observation of regular local elections in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k (Donetsk oblast).

- **On November 29-30**, experts of Civic Network OPORA carried out on-the-scene assessment of the conduct of the elections in the Donetsk region. In the run-up to the Election Day in Mariupol, a public press center was opened (at the address: Mariupol, Kharlampiyevska str., 13, "Spartak" hotel, sports terrace) by Civic Network OPORA and Donetsk oblast organization of All-Ukrainian NGO "Committee of Voters of Ukraine". The press center meetings were broadcast live on Donbass Public Television.

  - *November 29. Briefing at 11:00* Information about the opening of polling stations and the beginning of the Election Day. Coordinator of electoral programs of Civic Network OPORA Olga Aivazovska and executive director of the Donetsk oblast organization of "Committee of Voters of Ukraine" Serhiy Tkachenko noted that 16% of PECs started their meetings at the improper time. Deputy Head of the Secretariat of the CEC Serhiy Dubovyk, who attended the event, stressed that the CEC monitors the voter turnout and the run of events on the Election Day in a timely manner. In turn, the head of Mariupol city TEC Tetyana Nedavnya said that if the TEC is unable to certify the election results within a corresponding 5-day or 10-day period, it will delegate its powers to the CEC.

  - *November 29. Briefing at 17:00* Experts released information about the run of events on the Election Day and minor violations which were recorded at the polling stations of Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k. The event was attended by representatives of city rayon election commissions. The coordinator of parliamentary and electoral programs of Civic Network OPORA Olga Aivazovska pointed out that apart from violations public observers are also depicting different trends that may constitute an attempt to use vote rigging techniques in elections such as "carousel voting".

  - *November 29. Briefing at 20:00* Description of the election process and the run of events on the Election Day given by parties to the electoral process. According to coordinator of parliamentary and electoral programs of Civic Network OPORA Olga Aivazovska and executive director of the Donetsk oblast organization of "Committee of Voters of Ukraine" Serhiy Tkachenko, the elections in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k went peacefully. During the Election Day the police department in Krasnoarmiis'k received five complaints regarding violations of the election legislation and the police department in Mariupol received 67 such complaints, while public observers recorded 20 incidents concerning elections in Mariupol and 2 such incidents in Krasnoarmiis'k. Therefore, these are not direct violations.

- **On November 30**, at the **Post-Election Day press conference** (held at the address: Mariupol, Georgiyivska str., 79, "Reikartz" hotel, conference hall) representatives of public observation campaign delivered a **statement on the results of observation of regular local elections in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k (Donetsk oblast) conducted on November 29, 2015**. Voting in Krasnoarmiis'k and Mariupol, scheduled for November 29, 2015, went peacefully, in compliance with legal requirements, and with no centralized and systematic violations of electoral law. The vote counting process also deserves a good mark, except for some polling stations. At the same time, according to experts of Civic Network OPORA, a few isolated cases of gross violation of electoral law require immediate and politically unbiased response from law enforcement agencies.

In addition, during the reporting period the coordinator of electoral and parliamentary programs of Civic Network OPORA Olga Aivazovska took part **in press briefings of the Ministry of Internal Affairs concerning the response to violations committed at the local elections**, including press briefings held on October 20, 25, 26, November 12, 15, 16, and December 1. At these events Olga Aivazovska emphasized the need to improve the provisions of Criminal Code on determination of the nature of bribery and consider the corresponding draft law, which was developed by electoral experts back in summer and submitted to the President for approval.

INFORMATION MESSAGES

Over the period from October 1 to December 31, **1745 information messages** related to observation campaign at the regular elections of deputies of local councils and elections of mayors of villages, townships, and cities were posted to **Civic Network OPORA's website**, including news, articles, reports, press releases, infographics, and video content.

It is important to emphasize that all the national reports on observation campaigns at the elections of People's Deputies of Ukraine and a considerable part of main articles, press releases, and statements concerning elections, were posted to the website of Civic Network OPORA **in English version** as well.

According to Civic Network OPORA's estimates, a total of **6268 publications and video plots with references to Civic Network OPORA** and using comments of Civic Network OPORA's activists as well as information of organization **appeared in mass media** over the reporting period.

Press Releases sourced from Civic Network OPORA

The Central office of Civic Network OPORA informed the mass media using press releases on the topics listed below. For the most part, regional offices of Civic Network OPORA spread information related to local specifics of election process and distributed nation-wide press releases.

- The mess with application of gender quota requirements in local elections is a direct results of unsystematic law-making in the parliament - OPORA
- Court has ensured the rights of OPORA observers
- Rotation of members of territorial election commissions
- Adherence to gender quota requirements in local elections: QUICK DATA
- 16 heads of oblast state administrations and 24% of all heads of rayon state administrations in Ukraine are nominated to oblast councils. - OPORA
- Public appeal to the President of Ukraine and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine
- Report. Nomination and registration of candidates: key issues and trends
- Local elections: problems with registration of candidates and poorly regulated gender quota requirements
- Kharkiv oblast election commission lost an appeal in court and is obliged to register official observers of Civic Network OPORA
- "Petro Poroshenko Bloc "Solidarity" surpasses all parliamentary factions by number of candidates in every macro region except Donbas
- Research. The results of focus group discussions with voters.
- Election system is still a puzzle for citizens – research by OPORA
- Election monitoring made even easier thanks to OPORA: download the "Local Elections" app for Android
- OPORA's interim report on observation results of local elections scheduled for October 25, 2015
- OPORA's interactive map of violations "2015 Local Elections": What, where and how parties and candidates violated (constantly updated information)
- Social video ad "What do ballots for 25 October local elections look like"
- Local Elections: 3 times more international observers are coming to Ukraine compared to 2010
- REPORT. Preliminary observation summary of 25 October 2015 local elections by OPORA
- On the eve of the voting day: Preliminary observation summary by OPORA (infographics)
- Statement on refutation of false information published on October 24
- Democracy feast: Ukrainians are voting in local elections today
- Preparatory meeting and beginning of the voting process. Summary by OPORA.
- Voter turnout in local elections as of 12 PM is 18.5%, according to OPORA
- Inconsiderable procedural violations reported by OPORA observers as of 12 PM
- Voter turnout in local elections as of 4 PM is 36.2%, according to OPORA
- Statistics on violations detected by OPORA as of 4 PM
- Voter turnout in local elections as of 8 PM is 46.5%, according to OPORA
- Statistics on violations detected as of 8 PM. Local elections: interim observation results by OPORA
- Statement on interim observation results of 2015 regular local elections
- OPORA's parallel vote tabulation results in Kharkiv

- Results of the parallel vote tabulation conducted by OPORA in election of Dnipropetrovsk city mayor and Dnipropetrovsk city council
- Results of the parallel vote tabulation conducted by OPORA in election of Odesa city mayor and Odesa city council
- Explanation of the CEC on the second round of mayoral elections violates the principle of legal certainty and must be reconsidered – OPORA
- EXCLUSIVE per each oblast: the progress of vote tabulation and determination of election results in local elections
- Information system "Local elections in Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa and Kharkiv": voting results and turnout according to the parallel vote tabulation conducted by OPORA
- Mayoral elections: second round. Who are the candidates in your city (OPORA's map)
- OPORA's statement on candidacy for new composition of the CEC
- In Chernivtsi three students were sentenced to three years in prison for bribery of voters
- On the eve of the second round of local elections: preliminary observation summary by OPORA
- Interim report on observation summary in the second round of elections of city mayors
- Day X: mayors in 29 cities will be elected in the second round today
- Local elections: second round. Voter turnout as of 12 PM
- The voting process corresponds to law requirements as of 12 PM
- Local elections: second round. Voter turnout as of 4 PM
- Taking photos of ballot papers is the most widespread violation in Dnipropetrovsk. Statistics on recorded violations as of 4 PM
- Local elections: second round. Voter turnout as of 8 PM
- A small number of violations recorded at the polling stations over the 16:00 to 20:00 period
- Parallel vote tabulation results for the second round of Dnipropetrovsk city mayor election by OPORA
- Mayoral elections: second round. Interim results of the Election Day observation conducted by OPORA
- Statement of the Civic Network OPORA on the second round of mayoral elections
- Second round of mayoral election in Dnipropetrovsk: statistics on the results of parallel vote tabulation conducted by OPORA
- OPORA's STATEMENT on CEC explanation of the election process regulations for Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k
- Second round of 2015 mayoral elections: first and second round results of mayoral election winners. Infographics
- Results of parallel vote tabulation conducted by OPORA in the election of city mayor of Dnipropetrovsk
- Interim report on observation results of regular local elections in the cities of Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k, Donetsk oblast

- On the eve of Election Day in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k: preliminary observation summary by OPORA
- Elections in Mariupol to be assessed by OPORA's experts on site
- Preparatory meetings and the voting process in Krasnoarmiis'k and Mariupol have started without disruptions
- Voter turnout as of 12:00 PM, Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k
- Voting process in Krasnoarmiis'k and Mariupol is held in accordance with the law as of 12:00 PM
- Voter turnout as of 4 PM, Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k
- Voter turnout as of 8 PM, Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k
- Only minor procedural violations were recorded during the voting process in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k
- OPORA's STATEMENT on observations results of 29 November 2015 regular local elections in the cities of Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k, Donetsk oblast
- Krasnoarmiis'k PVT mayoral election results – OPORA
- Results of the parallel vote tabulation for regular local elections in Krasnoarmiis'k

Main information trends
over the period from October 1 to December 31, 2015

- The mess with application of gender quota requirements in local elections is a direct results of unsystematic law-making in the parliament - OPORA
- 16 heads of oblast state administrations and 24% of all heads of rayon state administrations in Ukraine are nominated to oblast councils. - OPORA
- "Petro Poroshenko Bloc "Solidarity" surpasses all parliamentary factions by number of candidates in every macro region except Donbas
- Election system is still a puzzle for citizens – research by OPORA
- Local Elections: 3 times more international observers are coming to Ukraine compared to 2010
- Explanation of the CEC on the second round of mayoral elections violates the principle of legal certainty and must be reconsidered – OPORA
- EXCLUSIVE per each oblast: the progress of vote tabulation and determination of election results in local elections
- Mayoral elections: second round. Who are the candidates in your city (OPORA's map)
- OPORA's statement on candidacy for new composition of the CEC
- In Chernivtsi three students were sentenced to three years in prison for bribery of voters

- OPORA's STATEMENT on CEC explanation of the election process regulations for Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k

- Second round of 2015 mayoral elections: first and second round results of mayoral election winners. Infographics

- Elections in Mariupol to be assessed by OPORA's experts on site

- Elections in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiis'k (CHRONICLE OF EVENTS)

ORGANIZATION RECOGNITION IN MASS MEDIA

The run of information campaign

According to the results of monitoring conducted by Administrative office and regional representative offices of Civic Network OPORA, a total of **6268 publications, television and radio reports with references to Civic Network OPORA** and **using comments of Civic Network OPORA's activists as well as information of organization** appeared in mass media over the period from October 1 to December 31, 2015**.**

**6708
media
references
to OPORA**

The largest number of media references to Civic Network OPORA's activities over the period from October 1 to December 31, 2015, were as usual recorded in **online media** – 5067 references or 80,8% of all media references.

News agencies account for 9,6% of all media references (603 references) this time round. We assume that news agencies played a more significant role in the distribution of OPORA's information, since a large part of mentions in other media sourced from information published by news agencies. In most cases we detected media references in the following national news agencies: UNIAN, Ukrinform, Ukrainian national news, RBC-Ukraine, Interfax, RIA Novosti Ukraine, ZIK. Among regional news agencies special mention should go to news agencies in Volyn oblast (Volyn Media), Zhytomyr oblast (Vsi novyny), Mykolaiv oblast (Prestupnosti.NET, Inshe TV), Sumy oblast (Regionews), and Kharkiv oblast (Status Quo).

Civic Network OPORA was mentioned 405 times in **TV reports** (6.5% of all media references) during the monitoring period. There was an extensive coverage of Civic Network OPORA's activities on TV channels, OPORA's activists were often invited to TV programs, interviewed by members of TV crews. Civic Network OPORA's activities were most frequently covered by the following national channels: Channel 112, the First National Channel of Ukraine, TV Channel 24, Hromadske TV, 1+1, ICTV, and Inter.

Invitation of representatives of Civic Network OPORA in the role of experts on electoral matters to sociopolitical TV programs with highest ratings shown on national TV channels such as ICTV (TV show "Svoboda Slova") and 1+1 (TV program "The right to power") as well as their participation in TV programs shown on Channel 5, TV Channel 112 , Espreso TV, TV channel 24 speak for the fact that Civic Network OPORA enjoys a good reputation for possessing expert information and as a center for shaping public opinion. Representatives of Civic Network OPORA visited the studios of national TV channels 18 times and attended 2 briefings of MIA on the Election Day and during vote tabulation process on October 25-26, while on November 15-16 they visited TV studios on 14 occasions and also attended 2 MIA briefings.

At the same time, we assume that in fact there could be dozens of times more media references to Civic Network OPORA's information on television.

Our press service also recorded 75 cases of media references to Civic Network OPORA in **print media** (1.2 /1%). However, we have a good reason to believe that this data is incomplete, since there were many more print publications that published the information fed by Civic Network OPORA, and due to impossibility of complete control over this channel of information, print media were not entirely covered by monitoring activities. We found media references to Civic Network OPORA's activities in the following national print publications: "Dzerkalo Tyzhnya", "Novoye Vremya", "Segodnya", Kyiv Post and also in regional print publications "Doba" and "Chas" (Chernivtsi oblast), "Vgoru" and "Hryvnia" (Kherson oblast), "Galychyna" and "Dzerkalo Kolomii" (Ivano-Frankivsk oblast), "Den'" (Mykolaiv oblast), "Rivne Vechirnye", "Vechirniy Kharkiv" and others. However, we have a good reason to believe that this data is incomplete due to impossibility to fully explore the print media.

Also during the reporting period OPORA's activists were aired 77 times on the radio (1.2% of all media mentions), in particular on the Ukrainian radio, Radio Era-FM, Radio Svoboda, Radio Vyesti, Golos Stolytsi, Hromadske Radio, Luhansk oblast radio, Vinnytsya radio broadcasting station "Misto nad Bugom", radio waves of "ODTRK Karpaty" in Ivano-Frankivsk, "Kalush 107FM", Rivne radio broadcasting stations "Radio Track", "Rhythm TV" and others.

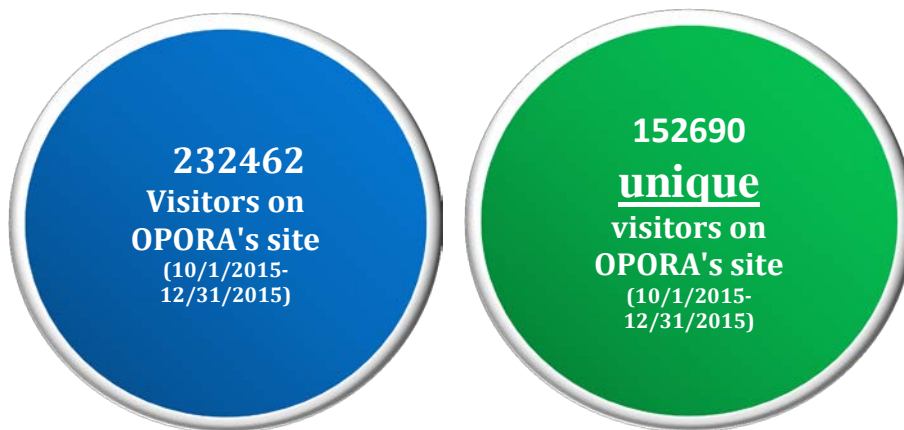|		
Online media	5067	80,8%
Television	405	6,5/7,3%
Radio	77	1,2%
Print media	75	1,2%
News Agencies	603	9,6%
Others	41	0,7%
Total	**6268**	**100%**

References in the media by region

The most extensive coverage of Civic Network OPORA's activities in the regional media, excluding the city of Kyiv, was recorded in Ivano-Frankivsk oblast - 764 media references, Mykolaiv oblast - 722, Kirovohrad oblast - 570, Volyn oblast - 524, Rivne oblast - 497, and Zakarpattya oblast - 482.

WEB-RESOURCES

Evaluation of OPORA's website

From 1 October to 31 December 2015, 232,462 users visited OPORA's website at http://oporaua.org (+68% compared to the 3rd quarter of 2015), including 152,690 – unique visitors (+69% compared to the 3rd quarter of 2015). In general, visitors watched 509704 pages on the site, what is 63% more than in the third quarter of 2015.

232462
Visitors on
OPORA's site
(10/1/2015-
12/31/2015)

152690
unique
visitors on
OPORA's site
(10/1/2015-
12/31/2015)

181,904 (88.25%) users entered OPORA's site from computers; 50,558 (21.75%) – from smartphones and tablets.

It should be mentioned that most of users entered the site from Ukraine – 93, 21% of the total number, and other users entered the site from abroad.

Statistics on the Map of Violations

From 1 October to 31 December 2015, 22,649 users visited the Map of Violations: http://map.oporaua.org/, 16,971 of them were unique. The total number of viewed pages on website is 57,566.

22649
visitors on the
Map of
Violations
(10/1/2015-
12/31/2015)

16971
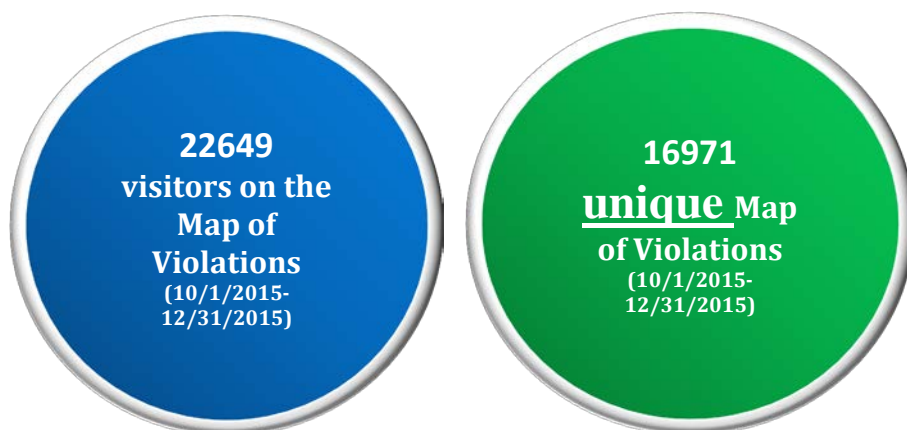**unique** Map
of Violations
(10/1/2015-
12/31/2015)

18,770 (72.87%) users entered OPORA's site from computers; 3,879(17.13%) – from smartphones and tablets.

It should be mentioned that most of users entered the Map from Ukraine – 90, 48% of the total number, and other users entered the site from abroad.

Social media, Facebook,Twitter, and Youtube

Social media were used the most actively for spreading information. In particular, press-service daily published news on Facebook page of the Civil Network OPORA and Twitter.

The most active visitors of OPORA's page on **Facebook** are young men and women from 25 to 34 years old, which make up 21 % of all visitors of the page. Not only Ukrainians are subscribed to the page, but also people from Poland, USA, Russia, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, Georgia, and France.

The page was liked by many new people, who had also subscribed to is. Thus, OPORA's audience on Facebook has increased in **12,65%** or 1,361 people. OPORA had 9,404 subscribers, and this number started increasing on 21 October, reaching over 10,000 likes on the election day. As of 31 December 2015, OPORA's page on Facebook has **10,765 followers**. The highest feedback level on Facebook was noticed on 25 October, when the readers gave 1,001 likes for status updates. To compare, the corresponding number reached 432 likes on November 15. We would also like to mention that users had been liking updates on Facebook quite actively till the end of the year.

As for the **Twitter**, the number of OPORA's followers has increased in **6.4%** if compared to the third quarter of 2015. Thus, OPORA has **9,724 followers** on Twitter as of 31 December 2015. The number of followers has increased in October the most (+352), and in November-Decembers quite less (+159 and +97 respectively). OPORA's tweets were often retweeted by journalists of leading media companies and statesmen, and some other mass media used these retweets to make news.

From 1 October to 31 December 2015, videos on OPORA's **Youtube** channel were viewed **96 527** times, what is in **844,68%** more than in the previous reporting period. The following videos were the most popular: "OPORA detects ballot box stuffing in Zhytomyr" (41 296 views), "How ballots for 25 October elections look like" (23 499 views), "Kyiv oblast: a conflict between OPORA's observer and Tetiivka REC" (5 623 views), "Cherkasy: the voters are transferred by buses to polling station" (5 426 views).

OPORA'S AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Android application, animation video, special services

Starting from September, OPORA had been realizing a complex of measures to help the voters take a well-weighted decision based on facts. The awareness campaign was realized through: dissemination of information about serviced developed by OPORA in mass media and social networks; creation and broadcasting of animation videos; creation and promotion of the Android application Vybory 2015.

OPORA has developed two services on the beginning of October: "Previous party affiliation of MPs: place of nomination and nominating entity in 2010 local elections" and "Search for a TEC/DEC member: party affiliation and conflicts (1998-2015)". The first service allowed to learn party affiliation of the candidates in the past in addition to information available in campaign materials. The second one provided information about professional path of TEC/DEC member.

In the middle of October, Android application Local Elections became available for observers, journalists, and conscious voters. The applications contains a compilation of laws, CEC resolutions, instructions for observers, sample complaints and appeals against election law violations, tips on how to protect the rights of observer and journalist, how to verify protocols.

In order to promote our services and attract the public, we developed and disseminated an informational and motivational animation on OPORA's Youtube channel: "OPORA: Read, Watch, Study, Inform. 2015 Elections". The animation informed about functions ofAndroid application Local Elections and the Map of Violations.

Weekly radio program "Candidate's minimum"

A joint project of the OPORA and Ukrainian radio was realized in October. In particular, it was a weekly radio program "Candidate's minimum", launched on September 4. Program "Candidate's minimum" was broadcasted on the First Ukrainian Radio Channel on Fridays at 5:10 PM. **Hosts from OPORA and Ukrainian Radio were covering the course of local elections at the national scale, tested representatives of two political parties, and discussed nationwide topics in narrower local contexts.** Radio programs were broadcased on 2, 9, 19, and 23 October.

THE QUALITY ASSESSMENT METHOD USED FOR EVALUATION OF MATERIALS PREPARED BY OPORA'S OBLAST PRESS-SERVICES

During the observation of 2015 regular local elections, OPORA's press service has applied a method of quality assessment to evaluate news and articles prepared by OPORA's regional press-services for the second time. This method established precise criteria to raise quality of information materials.

Thus, the quality of each material was assessed by 6 criteria (the highest score is 10 points):

- formatting of a material (maximum 1 point);
- promptness of news coverage (maximum 2 points);
- importance/significance (resonance and influence on the course of election process for the certain community) (maximum 2.5 points);
- comprehensibility (maximum 2.5 points);
- availability of 2 or more comments and references to the law (maximum 1 point);
- availability of photo or video evidence (maximum 1 point);

After the assessment of each material, points are included in an online form to calculate the average number of points. Points in the chart were automatically calculated and opened in a shared Google excel document for coordinators and press-secretaries. The end of a month, the average number of points was calculated in decimals. For example, the average score is 7.5 points, thus, the number was counted as 0.75. The maximum score for a material was 10, counted as 1 (100%). This number was multiplied by a number of materials published on the site. Example: Average score - 7.5, number of materials 15. Thus, we receive 0.75*15-11.25 – the assessment of oblast press service. Besides that, a plan for preparation of materials was established: 16 points each month would be equal to 100%.

OPORA's press-services in Zakarpattia, Kirovohrad, Rivne, Khmelnytsk, and Chernivtsi oblasts have exceeded the plan by more than 150% over 2.5 months of observation campaign. However, there were oblasts which have prepared the smallest number of materials (not including the voting day), particularly Donetsk, Cherkasy, and Zaporizhia oblasts. On 25 October election day press-services in Odesa, Luhansk, and Mykolaiv oblasts worked the most actively. On 15 November, press-services in Donetsk, Poltava oblasts and Kyiv city were the most active.

In general, application of quality assessment method has improved the quality of election process coverage secured by regional press-services. It should be mentioned that the average score for a material was 8 of 10 points for the whole observation campaign, and the plan for preparation of materials was overfulfilled – 117,19% (not including the voting day). However, press-service efficiency varies from oblast to oblast. Thus, we must continue organizing trainings on journalist skills and implementation of communication strategies to improve OPORA's press-service.

LEGISTATION REFORMS

As long as regular local elections in Ukraine were at their peak stage during the reporting period, OPORA's major public and media activities were aimed at coverage of the election campaign and adherence to the effective legislation. Thus, OPORA's media activities shifted more from "Legislation Reforming" to the component "Elections: observation campaign".

Informational occasions

However, reforming of electoral legislation remained topical and OPORA's representatives were constantly emphasizing this fact on public presentations, as well as in reports and statements.

• **On October 7, OPORA published on its site an [Open appeal to the President of Ukraine and Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine](#)** concerning inadmissibility of indirect discrimination of internally displaced persons and supports of the Law #2501a-1 on Amendments to Some Legislative Acts Guaranteeing Voting Rights of Internally Displaced Persons. The appeal was signed by *Electoral and Parliamentary Programs Coordinator Olha Aivazovska and* **41 representatives of analytical non-governmental organizations, organizations protecting human rights and helping internally displaced persons to overcome the crisis.**.

• Activities under "Legislation Reforming" component continued after a long break in the late December. Civil Network OPORA organized a **public discussion titled [“Problematic aspects of elections in Ukraine: a view from inside and outside”](#)** (held on 21 December in Kyiv, Radisson hotel). International experts **Shephen Galling (Berlin, Germany)**, **Elena Nizharadze (Tbilisi, Georgia**), **Anton Shekhovtsov (Vienna, Austria)**, representatives of six NGOs and MP of Ukraine Nataliia Veselova discussed which mechanisms secured implementation of constitutional rights of Ukrainian citizens in Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts despite the armed conflict, *which risks may appear if Ukraine's internally displaced persons are deprived of electoral rights, and hat is a politically motivated observation, and which "fake" international missions have been functioning in Ukraine. Event participants discussed the existing international standards guaranteeing general and equal suffrage for IDPs, successful international practices which may be applied to solve this issue in Ukraine, improvement of other gaps in electoral legislation.*

We have noticed **15 references to activities of Civil Network OPORA** in this direction. Most of them were in online resources.

Major trends:

- Voting rights of internally displaced persons: expert thoughts and estimations
- The CEC received and list of settlements to be excluded from the election
- The CEC registered 205 international election observers
- The voters hate new ballots: easier to toss than to understand

- Although the new Law on Local Elections was adopted 1.5 months ago, Ukrainians are still unaware of innovations established by the document.

Information provided by the Civil Network OPORA for mass media

- Election system is still a puzzle for citizens – research by OPORA
- Research. Results of focus group discussions with the voters.
- Social video ad "How ballots for 25 October elections look like"http://www.oporaua.org/novyny/9127-vyborcha-systema-zalyshajetsja-zagadkoju-dlja-gromadjan-doslidzhennja-opory
- Problematic aspects of elections in Ukraine: a view from inside and outside.

RESULTS OF ACTIVITIES

- Public interest in the election process, particularly regular elections to local councils and village, settlement and city mayors and OPORA's activeness have triggered an increase in the number of visitors on OPORA's website. This number has raised in 68% reaching 232,462 users, and the number of visited pages has raised in 63%reaching 509,704 pages. At the same time, the number of unique visitors had increased in 69%. The Map of Violations was also actively used. Thus, from 1 October to 31 December 2015, 22,649 users visited the Map, including 16,971 unique visitors, who watched 57,566 pages;
- In October-December, OPORA published on its website 1,745 materials about the local elections, detected violations, activities of election commissions, and response of law-enforcement bodies. The Map of Violations had 1,559 short messages in this period.
- Infographics created by OPORA's designers was actively disseminated by journalists and users in Facebook and Twitter.
- Mass media gave references to OPORA or quoted its publications on website, Facebook and Twitter, visited public events, and invited OPORA's experts to the air. Thus, there were 6,268 references to OPORA's component "Elections" in the media and 15 references to component "Legislation Reforming".
- **Almost all references to OPORA were neutral, i.e. texts were simply copied, or journalists referred to OPORA as a reliable source of information, or used comments of activists.**
- The number of Facebook followers has increased in 12.65% if compared to the III quarter of 2014, and the number of Twitter followers has increased in 6.4%.
- OPORA was actively collaborating with the media. Our experts guested programs on national and regional TV channels, radio programs, commented on political processes. Such activeness promoted OPORA as a professional and unbiased source of expert information about political processes as well as operative information about the election process.
- Thanks to collaboration with Ukrainian Radio, we realized a joint project – weekly radio program "Candidate's minimum".

- **The vast majority of information messages disseminated by the OPORA among mass media companies, were re-published or used in their publications. It means that information agencies, TV channels, printed media and newspapers of national and regional levels trust information provided by the organization and consider it reliable.**

- We made branded accessories for OPORA representatives working in regular local election observation campaign: badge straps, notebooks, pens, stickers and fabric bags. These accessories accentuated our unbiased observers, and mass media representatives and members of election commissions noticed our branding immediately.

Objective 2: Political process legislation developed and implemented in a more inclusive and transparent manner and better conforms to European standards.

In October-December 2015, OPORA was working on improvement of legislation regulating election processes in Ukraine. In particular, the organization was providing state authorities with expert recommendations on solution of topical problems in local elections.

Taking into consideration that new Law of Ukraine on Local Elections is far from being perfect, inconsistencies in election procedures and lack of legislative framework for important stages of the election process were constantly emerging. The Central Election Commission, as a body authorized to determine how electoral procedures must be implemented, had to promptly respond to all gaps in the legislation. Legal uncertainty had put the CEC in a position when it was not only establishing the procedures lacking in the Law of Ukraine on Local Elections, but also facing public risks when taking ambiguous or prompt decisions. External expert assessment of electoral issues, provided by independent and politically unbiased monitoring organizations, was extremely important in such circumstances.

In October – December 2015, OPORA provided expert assessments and recommendations on the following aspects of the election process in Ukraine:

> **1. When 25 October 2015 regular local elections in the cities of Krasnoarmiisk and Mariupol (Donetsk oblast) were disrupted, OPORA published official statements and reports, recommending the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to urgently schedule new elections, which would allow citizens of these two cities elect their local self-government bodies.**

For example, in a Statement on interim results of regular local election observation campaign, OPORA stated that disruption of elections in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiisk (Donetsk oblast) resulted from political schemes applied by electoral subjects, who ignored legal mechanisms established by Ukrainian legislation[1]. As a result of acute confrontations between different electoral subjects, the

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[1] http://map.oporaua.org/zviti-sposterezhen/2041-zayava-shchodo-promizhnykh-rezultativ-sposterezhennia-za-cherhovymy-mistsevymy-vyboramy-2015-roku

functioning of territorial election commissions became absolutely unstable, proving that political parties had excessive influence on TEC members.

Taking into consideration overpolitization of elections in Krasnoarmiisk and Mariupol, resulting from political strategies of nationwide political parties around situation in Donbas, OPORA's analysis of events and their succession in these two cities, as well as responsibility of all parties to the conflict, played an important role in the search of adequate legal mechanisms called to restore electoral rights of citizens.

OPORA have publicly stated that there the Law of Ukraine on Local Elections doesn't provide a legal ground for holding the repeated vote in Krasnoarmiisk and Mariupol (Donetsk oblast) and, therefore, a single-time use mechanism should be established to restore the violated electoral rights of citizens. This position was important when some political parties were urging their representatives in territorial election commissions to announce the repeated election despite there were no legal grounds for that, what could have complicated the restoration of electoral rights of citizens. Besides that, OPORA emphasized that regional government bodies must not initiate establishment of military and civilian administrations in Krasnoarmiisk and Mariupol, because the corresponding local self-government bodies were not elected.

Besides that, OPORA proposed to schedule a new election process in Krasnoarmiisk and Mariupol starting with nomination of candidates, taking into consideration the precedent of previously scheduled repeated election of MPs in five problematic districts in 2013. Such legal solution would have been helpful in prevention of previous confrontations in these two cities of Donetsk oblast, allowing both citizens and candidates to participate in a properly organized election campaign.

OPORA's public activities and expert opinions have influenced Ukrainian Parliament's decision to schedule elections in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiisk for 20 November 2015. However, it chose different solution. In fact, the Parliament decided to continue the election process from the stage it was disrupted. OPORA's expert and informational campaign urged Ukrainian Parliament to promptly adopt the Law of Ukraine on Peculiarities of the Voting Process in Regular Election of Members to Krasnoarmiisk City Council in Donetsk Oblast and Mariupol City Council in Donetsk Oblast, as well as Krasnoarmiisk City Mayor and Mariupol City Mayor on 25 October 2015, regardless of how MPs perceive events in Donetsk oblast in political perspective.

1.1. Improvement of legislation regulating production of ballot papers

In the context of Mariupol and Krasnoarmiisk events, OPORA emphasized to legal subject of legislative initiative that ballot papers production regulations need improvement. After law-makers ignored public propositions concerning strengthening of oversight procedures in regard to ballot paper production, electoral subjects in different cities and regions of Ukraine expressed their fears about the appropriate number of produced ballots, proper destruction of wastage and reliable

storage of ballot papers. Moreover, the abovementioned issues resulted in further worsening of political confrontations in Krasnoarmiisk and Mariupol.

2. OPORA's recommendations concerning cancellation of some statements in CEC Explanations concerning application of the Law of Ukraine on Local Elections in organization and conduct or 25 October 2015 regular elections of local council members and city mayors in Krasnoarmiisk and Mariupol, to be held on 29 November 2015 (Resolution #570 of 11/19/2015).

The CEC has established in the paragraph 8 of this Explanation that election campaigning shall not be held in election of local council members and city mayors on 29 November 2015 in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiisk. However, after the CEC published its Explanation, OPORA suggested to **change** the document and allow the candidates campaign until 12 am of the last Friday before the election day**.** OPORA had mentioned in its special statement that the CEC decision was taken when election campaign in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiisk had already restored after 25 October 2015. Besides that, the prohibition of campaigning before 29 November was passed in conditions of legal uncertainty and, therefore, its practical implementation is under a big question mark. Besides that, CEC Explanations could hazard the principle of equal opportunities when some candidates observe the restrictions and other don't observe, but there are no efficient sanctions established neither by the Explanations, nor by the current legislation.

According to the assessment of OPORA's observers, legal uncertainty in regard to election campaigning in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiisk has affected the interaction between candidates and voters. Besides that, some candidates had been campaigning in these cities even after 25 October 2015 and till the last Friday before the election day. When candidates have decreased the intensity of their election campaigns from 25 October to 29 November 2015, it had adverse effect on the level of citizen awareness about the planned election day.

It should be mentioned that paragraph 8 of the CEC's Explanations was canceled by the court, and election campaigning in Krasnoarmiisk and Mariupol was held in a proper manner from the legal standpoint.

3. OPORA's recommendations on revision of CEC's Explanations concerning application of some regulations of the Law of Ukraine on Local Elections when determining the voting results in mayoral election (Resolution #515 of 10/27/2015).

The CEC has explained in the corresponding document that if voter lists at polling stations contain less than 90 thousand voters, what may become apparent even after the election day, the second round shall not be conducted (according to the Law of Ukraine on Local Elections, elections of city mayors in cities having 90 thousand of voters and more shall be held under absolute majority election system).

Thus, OPORA made an official statement containing an analysis of grounds or the absence of grounds for CEC's Explanations, and took a legal position concerning its reconsideration. OPORA stated that this Resolution of the CEC is against the principle of legal certainty, which is one of the main principles of the rule of law and is the key characteristic of a law-governed country. According to the Article 2 (7) of the Law of Ukraine on Local Elections, information about the number of voters registered within territory of each city, and the voting system to be used for mayoral elections, shall be published by the CEC on its official website and in nationwide and/or local media not later than 5 days before the electoral process begins, and the CEC published the corresponding information. CEC's resolution, in fact, allowed to change the electoral system after the voting day, what undermines basic principles of the election process and negatively influences the constitutional rights and freedoms of voters and candidates.

As a result of public statements, discussions, and court challenges against CEC's Explanations concerning application of some regulations of the Law of Ukraine on Local Elections when determining the voting results in mayoral election, it was reconsidered.

It should be mentioned that OPORA continued emphasizing in October-December 2015 that CEC's explanations concerning loose observance of gender quota requirements in registration of candidates for local elections was not appropriate. The organization had already taken such position in September 2015, and the consistency was essential to prevent ignorance of gender problem in future amendments of legislation.

Thus, Civil Network OPORA assisted in improvement of legislative acts regulating organization and conduct of local elections in Ukraine by providing independent examination of by-laws adopted by the CEC, and developed mechanisms for restoration of citizen electoral rights in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiisk. Expert opinions, recommendations, and statements of the OPORA helped to avoid application of illegal or questionable decisions, which could have affected electoral rights of citizens.

Objective 3: Increased organizational and technical capacity of Civic Network OPORA

OPORA had the following tasks under the Objective 3 during the reporting period:

To develop 2016 work plans;

To conduct IT audit of organization activities and update IT policies;

To develop Training programs for regional offices of the OPORA.

In December 2015, we started developing an updated strategic plan of the organization for 2016-2019. All regional offices and program directors of the OPORA base their activities on this plan. Besides that, we are planning to present the strategic plan to our partners, donors and NGOs in the first quarter of 2016.

Moderators and contractors for organization and preparation of nationwide planning were already selected. We chose the PRO.MOVA Expert Company, a leader in providing assistance to non-governmental and commercial organizations in assessment of organizational capacity and planning. Key personnel of the organization has been working in the following tasks during the reporting period:

1) Managing the changes that may influence activities of the organization, including different types of analysis:

- analysis of demands and resources;
- development of a strategy for making changes (what needs to be changed, what to start with etc.);
- engagement of the interested parties, detailed interviewing of potential planning participants;
- implementation of the changes (direct introduction inside of the organization);

2) Discussing the mission of organization;

3) Discussing the image of organization both in program activities and the overall structure;

4) Discussing determinant values of the organization;

5) Drafting organizational development plan and work plan for 2016.

In general, key personnel has started preparing the strategic session, which will have regional offices involved in the main part.

Besides that, we started developing a training plan for key personnel of the network, which includes assessment of qualifications necessary for the organization. We will also select a number of personal trainings/courses required for narrow qualifications of the certain team members.

The training course will include:

- resource and operation management for further development;
- efficient internal communication and communication with target audiences;
- collaboration with the media etc.

We inquired key personnel in the office concerning IT safety needs, and organized a mini training to guarantee efficient work in the office. In particular, it was determined that the following risks may take place:

- Financial and operational information leaks;
- Leak or theft of information during electoral campaigns;
- Infection of computers or information carriers with viruses;
- Theft of information from e-mails, mobile phones or messengers;
- Deletion of information necessary for current activities, which is difficult to restore.

IT safety specialists have proposed the certain solutions for these issues, and prepared a training program to be realized on the beginning of 2016.

RESULTS FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD

1) The organization conducted efficient long-term observation of regular local elections, which results were actively used by Ukrainian and foreign media, diplomats, international missions and citizens;

2) We organized a nationwide parallel vote tabulation (PVT) to secure oversight of electoral procedures on 25 October, 15 November (second round in 29 cities), and 29 November (elections in Mariupol);

3) OPORA conducted and published the results of parallel vote tabulation to verify election outcomes in Odesa (25 October), Kharkiv (25 October), Dnipropetrovsk (25 October and 15 November) and Krasnoarmiisk (29 November);

4) Results of short-term observation campaign were extremely resonant, and were not questioned neither by electoral stakeholders, nor by foreign observers, nor by the media;

5) OPORA has prepared and disseminated a number of mobilizating and awareness-rising videos, mobile applications containing data useful for observers, journalists, voters, commission members, and electoral stakeholders;

6) Press Service of the OPORA worked especially actively and effectively during the election process, and the number of references in the media to information gathered by observers has significantly increased compared to 2014;

7) OPORA has managed to get law-enforcement system working more actively during elections, and secured success stories when organizers of voter bribery were brought to responsibility by the court;

8)	OPORA's recommendations, statements, or critical assessments were taken into consideration by the Central Election Commission when preparing explanations of law regulations or adjustment of the certain procedures.

PLANS FOR THE 1 QUARTER OF 2016

- To prepare and conduct a national strategic planning session for 2016-2019;
- To develop an efficient training program for activists of the network and key personnel;
- To complete development of organization's safety policies;
- To prepare documentation to financial audit for 2015;
- To conduct long-term and short-term observation campaign of Kryvyi Rih mayoral election, elections to districts councils in Kyiv, and election of MPs of Ukraine in single-member majoritarian districts on 27 March 2016;
- To organize 2016 Spring Election Camp, which includes mobilization of activists for short-term observation of Kryvyi Rih mayoral election;
- To develop a Road Map for 2016-2017 electoral legislation reform;
- To finish developing a number amendments to legislative acts guaranteeing voting rights of internally displaced persons and migrant workers in elections at all levels, and register them in the Parliament.