



**Outline of recommendations
made by the European peers from the CoE member-states
participating in the Council of Europe Peer Review
on the Reform of the Ukrainian National Training System for Civil Servants**

At the invitation of the NACS, a peer review on the subject of the reform of the national training system in Ukraine, with particular emphasis on the training of local authorities, was organized by the Council of Europe¹ on 22-23 May.

At the end of the exercise, according to the Council of Europe's peer review methodology, the peers presented to the NACS an outline of their recommendations, which appears in the current document.

A full report, including detailed analysis of the current situation and challenges and precise recommendations prepared based on written contribution from the peers and be transmitted to the NACS.

The peers from the CoE member-states thanked the Ukrainian authorities, in particular the NACS, for the invitation to organise a review. They believe that there is an immediate necessity to reform the Ukrainian training² system for civil service in general and the arrangements for training local servants in particular and are happy to see that there is high-level commitment to do so.

The peers have examined in depth the current situation, problems and challenges and have discussed confidentially with most Ukrainian and international stakeholders. They fully understand that the situation is complex, that there are many legitimate concerns and no easy solutions or models. However, they will try to formulate a number of recommendations which, in their mind, will substantially help to improve the current training system.

¹ The Council of Europe Programme "Decentralisation and Territorial Consolidation in Ukraine" in co-operation with Steering Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG).

² In the context of this particular document, "training" means not only training but also re-training, specialization and advancing qualification.

As general findings, peers believe that Ukraine has a highly educated people; however, this concerns mainly initial, theoretical education and the less practical, on the job training. There is also a big difference between the qualification of local servants, as well as the available employment pools of potential staff in big and small local authorities and hope that this problems may be alleviated with the progression of the municipal amalgamation process.

Ukraine has a strong body of legislation, institutions and practice. The question is about making new arrangements which would create an environment which creates a virtuous circle of high demand and high quality training offer.

It is not proposed that the current work be stopped while reforming the training system: institutions which have started to reform can continue to do so, while taking account of a larger vision to be formulated for the whole of the training system. The international assistance can continue to offer projects and trainings where gaps exist; a better co-ordination between various international actors is however desirable. Trainers can and should continue to be trained on modern techniques and new and effective training modules and curricula can and should continue to be developed.

With these considerations, these are the some general recommendations of the peers.

1. **The demand for training should be stimulated.** Training should be taken into account when evaluating the performance of individual servants and should be seen as an advantage for hiring or promoting when the choice is to be made between several equally qualified candidates. Some (limited) correlation between training and annual bonuses could also be considered.
2. The training system needs to be modernized, as the current training offer does not fully correspond to needs. **The first and most important measure to be taken is to broaden the training market by allowing new private training actors to be set up.** A competitive training environment can create the basic incentives to ensure that each provider has an interest in the continuously improvement of their training offer, in making it more modern, more efficient, more practical, better adapted to needs.
3. In order to ensure quality, transparency, fairness and to avoid corruption, **any training providers should disclose in full information about itself, including potential conflicts of interest, into a registry** that could easily be consulted by any authority which intends to order training services.
4. Before the market shows its competitive pressure effects, **particular attention should be given by established training providers to making their offer more practical;** this also concerns traditional education, which is normally not the subject of this review. The international community can offers substantial support in this respect.

5. **While many elements are common between central and local government officials, there are also many differences** which should be taken into account when devising a national training strategy. The peers were happy to see that the new law on service in local government makes a clear distinction between elected representatives and appointed civil servants (while maintaining a category of elected officials working full time for local authorities). Training needs and systems are obviously different for elected and appointed officials and they should be dealt with separately. For example, **the international community is called upon to upgrade the capacity of national associations of local authorities to offer training to elected representatives** of their members.
6. **It is strongly recommended that, at least for local government, the decision about who should be trained, on what and by whom, should be taken by heads of institutions** (depending on the size of the municipality, respectively mayors, heads of administration or directors of human resources). This is also very much in line with Art. 6 of the European Charter on Local Self-Government. But regardless of international obligations, a system can only be effective if staff is managed (including in respect of training needs) by those who know them, who have authority over them and accountability over the results of their work.
7. It is also strongly recommended that the funding arrangements be completely revised in order **to ensure that training is funded by institutions instead of by central government**. This is of particular importance for local authorities. Funding by the local budget would make its cost clear and would stimulate local decision makers to try to derive the most benefits from it, i.e. to select the best value for money. This would also create incentives for training providers. **A funding as a percentage of the salaries, like in France or Latvia, is recommended**. While giving some autonomy to local decision makers to adapt the level of training to local needs, a minimum and maximum threshold (e.g. 1% and 3%) could be established centrally.
8. **General Training Needs assessments of local self-government authorities should be conducted regularly** (e.g. every two, or maximum three years) at national or regional levels; they could identify general needs and trends and would be very helpful both for the decision makers and for the training providers to adapt their offer and to avoid being behind the curve.
9. **Identification of training needs of each civil servants should also be done at least on a yearly basis** as part of a system of managing individual performance via, at the very least, objective setting, evaluation and feedback mechanisms.

10. **It is recommended that professional profiles be prepared for local government civil servants;** this could serve to classify tasks and training profiles as well.
11. **A national register of local civil servants should be prepared;** such register should be relatively detailed and have various level of access rights. It would be helpful to manage human resources, but also to see any structural differences between required competences and existing skills for various job profiles in various types of local authorities. Such registry would also track evolutions in training and could provide very useful information for any Training Needs Assessment. Council of Europe has helped Albania to prepare such online registry.
12. **It also recommended that a (easily accessible) registry of training programmes be created.** Such register should among others include training provided by the international community and any free-of-charge training (it is to be noted that such training, while having no impact on local budgets, do have a cost in terms of staff time invested). Such registry should be effective in avoiding duplications.
12. It is strongly recommended that a co-ordination body (a sort of national training council for local civil servants) be established, under the leadership of the NACS. Such body could include CabMin Secretariat, MinRegion, Ministry of Education, VR Parliamentary Committee, Presidential Administration, NAPA and associations of local authorities...).
13. **It is strongly recommended that a co-ordination body (a sort of national training council for local civil servants) be established, under the leadership of the NACS.** Such body could include CabMin Secretariat, MinRegion, Ministry of Education, VR Parliamentary Committee, Presidential Administration, NAPA and associations of local authorities...).
14. Ukrainian authorities should look into the interest and feasibility of introducing systematic practical induction training (lasting a few weeks, depending on the level and position) for all new civil servants;
15. When civil servants benefit from free long-term post-graduate professional training, they could be asked to reimburse its cost if they decide to leave the civil service before a set length of time.

In respect of the various institutions and in the light of the various comments and suggestions formulated by the local stakeholders, the peers underline that all of them can become very useful if the system is updated and made more competitive:

- NACS may abandon some of its functions but will gain others, in particular in co-ordinating and maintaining the various registries proposed (of local staff, of training providers, of training programmes); it would also be the main driver of the reform and will be in charge of making proposals for reform, launching and co-ordinating Training Needs Analyses and any revision of the National Training Strategy...
- NAPA should continue to play a major role in the training environment. Its ambition to create an ENA-inspired section for the very high central government civil service positions (in particular for the future prefects) is accepted by the peers. In such a narrow market (100-150 trainees per year) competition is not indispensable if enough attention is given to the quality of the training. However, NAPA should not have a monopoly in the other training sections, but be exposed to the same competitive pressure as other service providers. NAPA's function in respect of methodological co-ordination is also highly debatable.
- The current regional centres of training seem to have been inherited without much resources or capacity; they could usefully be upgraded and enabled to offer highly practical training to local authorities.
- The newly established network of U-LEAD funded Centre of local government represent an interesting temporary solution; it is recommended that, while offering some urgent and indispensable training, they should invest into building the capacity of more long-term structure such as the above-mentioned centres.