

Head of Ukrainian Civil Service speaks on public service reform

by Olena Krychevska
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WASHINGTON – Tymofiy Motrenko, the head of the Civil Service of Ukraine, discussed the “Transformation of the Ukrainian Civil Service System under Conditions of Political Reform” at the Kennan Institute on June 15. Mr. Motrenko was in Washington on June 11-16 as part of the U.S.-Ukraine Foundation’s Project to Assist Ukraine’s Civil Service Reform.

William Green Miller, former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine and co-chair of the U.S.-Ukraine Foundation’s Politics and Governance Task Force, moderated the event. In his opening remarks, Ambassador Miller underlined the importance of civil service transformation based on the principles of public accountability, especially after the Orange Revolution, which explicitly demonstrated “the

will of people to get rid of favoritism, corruption and the selling of parliament seats, and bribery of judges, and civil service.”

Mr. Motrenko, a philosopher and economist by education, and an experienced public servant, is a key figure in Ukraine’s public service sector reform. He emphasized the need to increase the efficiency, institutional transparency, and clarity of regulations and procedures in the executive branch.

The speaker put the democratization of the civil service into the context of broader political reform. Relative stability under a stronger president has given way to more frequent shifts in political leadership under a stronger Parliament. The government is held more accountable under the coalition principle of Cabinet formation. The central executive powers are reduced and partially transferred to the local authorities, he said.

In this political environment there is a new set of

tasks that the government has to face, stated Mr. Motrenko. The key challenge is to ensure the coherence and high quality of public policy after the change in political leadership – an issue that arose acutely after the staff shake-ups of 2005. During his speech, Mr. Motrenko more than once emphasized the vital importance of enforcing the effective separation of political and administrative powers between ministries and governmental agencies.

In the same vein, he said there should be a clear delineation between the political appointees and administrative posts that carry out bureaucratic functions in order to preserve “institutional memory” and ensure the accumulation and transfer of skills and knowledge.

“Good quality policy recommendations and continuous improvement of policy analysis skills are possible only when civil servants have economic security and are not subjected to political pressure,” noted Mr. Motrenko. In other words, the public service should be depoliticized and independent of political changes.

Mr. Motrenko covered in detail the specific directions and actions of civil service reform. In Particular, he mentioned the adoption of the 2004 Concept to Adjust the Civil Service in Ukraine to the European Standards and the 2006-2010 Action Plan. The Concept outlines functional and structural transformation in the civil service system, democratization of procedures, strengthening of quality control, management and policy analysis skills, and decision-making capabilities.

In 2001, a successful pilot project on establishing policy analysis groups was launched in 10 governmental agencies. It resulted in important recommendations in numerous areas of public administration, he noted.

Establishing a professional bureaucracy will be based on the new progressive legislation. In particular, the draft Law on Civil Service introduces better public regulation of civil service, separation of political and administrative positions, competitive recruitment and protection of civil servants from unlawful actions by the senior leadership. The draft Law on the Cabinet of Ministers, at the same time, increases the Cabinet’s political role by freeing up ministries from administrative responsibilities, Mr. Motrenko explained.

“Civil service plays an important role as an intermediary between the state and its citizens,” concluded Mr. Motrenko. The stable development of Ukraine, its competitive position in the international arena and the well-being of its citizens depend on the quality of work of civil servants. Therefore, the success of public service reform is vital for the success of the Ukrainian state. The U.S.-Ukraine Foundation is committed to assisting Ukraine in its reform efforts to promote greater security and democracy for the citizens of Ukraine. To learn more about U.S.-Ukraine Foundation’s Project to Assist Ukraine’s Civil Service Reform, readers may contact Marta Matselioukh at martam@usukraine.org or 20223-2228, or visit http://www.usukraine.org/foreign_affairs.shtml.



David Hawxhurst/Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

At the Kennan Institute are: (from left) Marta Matselioukh, Oleksandr Demyanyuk, Tymofiy Motrenko, Ruth Whiteside (director of the Foreign Service Institute), Andriy Vyshnevsky, Ambassador John O’Keefe (Foreign Service Institute), Ulyana Panchishin, Vera Andrushkiw, George Sajewych, Christina Redko and Julie Johnson (Program Office at the U.S. Department of State).