

DYNAMICS

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U-LEAD CONTRIBUTES TO ALL EIGHT KEY DIMENSIONS OUTLINED BY MINREGION FOR THE YEAR 2019

U-LEAD, MinRegion and the European Union cooperating
on planning for 2019 at the House of Decentralisation in Kyiv
Photo: U-LEAD Archives.

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U-LEAD AND MINREGION WORKING TOGETHER ON PLANNING FOR 2019 AND BEYOND

It was during the fifth U-LEAD with Europe Steering Committee meeting on 14 December 2018 that Ukraine's Vice Prime Minister Hennadii Zubko raised the issue of support for the government's further road map for decentralisation.

"Ambitious goals have been set for the decentralisation reform, and 2019 is a key year for the reform's implementation," he said. "This requires close cooperation between U-LEAD and the ministry," specifically in the form of an operational plan.

As one of the biggest programmes working on supporting the implementation of the reform, U-LEAD contributes to all the road map's eight key dimensions outlined by MinRegion for the year.

The focus is on further progress in the administrative and territorial reform, transferring responsibilities from the state to local self-government and advancing state regional policy. At a coordination meeting with the directors of the 24 Local Government Development Centres on 7-8 February 2019 at the House of Decentralisation, representatives of U-LEAD with Europe discussed its contribution to the MinRegion operational planning.

Both VPM Zubko and Stefan Schleuning, Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation to Ukraine, highlighted the crucial role of the Local Government Development Centres when it comes to supporting the decentralisation and regional policy reforms.

For the key year 2019, priorities and tasks of the government which U-LEAD supports now include formulating perspective plans, legislation-related work, continuing work on merging communities with cities of oblast significance, and further sector decentralisation and implementation of projects.

In terms of cooperative efforts, the planning also envisages a greater level of interaction between the regional Local Government Development Centres and Oblast State Administrations, and creating synergies between the efforts of U-LEAD with Europe and MinRegion.





MARIANA SEMENYSHYN

DEPUTY HEAD
REGIONAL LIAISON DEVELOPMENT UNIT (RLDU)
U-LEAD WITH EUROPE

DETERMINED FOR 2019

U-LEAD with Europe began 2019 with preparations for an ambitious year ahead. Given the significance of the next ten months for implementing decentralisation and regional policy reforms, the Programme discussed its support to MinRegion's Operational Plan for 2019.

U-LEAD will support implementation of MinRegion's eight key dimensions of work outlined for the year. The coordination meeting with the 24 regional LGDC directors on 7-8 February offered a chance for presenting the operational plan and areas of programme support.

At the end of January, Bastian Veigel and other U-LEAD with Europe representatives travelled to the Sea of Azov region in the framework of a high-level visit by Peter Wagner (Head of the Support Group for Ukraine, SGUA) and other EU officials to the area.

The visit aimed at strengthening U-LEAD's partnership in the cities of Berdiansk and Mariupol and the surrounding territories as part of EU efforts to concentrate support to the Azov region that had suffered from the escalation of conflict in November 2018.

Exchanges during the visit were fruitful between U-LEAD, representatives from both cities and with the EU Anti-Corruption Initiative (EUACI), currently active in Mariupol.

Despite difficult socio-economic conditions, Berdiansk and Mariupol are committed to further development, with local economic development marking a priority in 2019 to provide new prospects for the local population.

The hope is that U-LEAD's cooperation with stakeholders in the region will help make sustained growth and prosperity possible.

U-LEAD IN THE SPOTLIGHT



EUROPEAN EVALUATION MISSION

Representatives of the European Union arrived in Kyiv on 11 February to embark on a two-week evaluation mission of U-LEAD with Europe activities. Following a kick-off meeting at the House of Decentralisation, their mission continued to Chernihiv, Zaporizhzhia and Khmelnytskyi Oblasts. The findings of the programme evaluation mission will contribute to the further outline of U-LEAD beyond 2019.



COOPERATING WITH EU PEERS & PARTNERS

"For regions and small communities, the Peer-to-Peer initiative opened a window of opportunity to establish contacts and further develop their cooperation in vital areas," said Andrej Horvat, Deputy GIZ Programme Director of U-LEAD with Europe, on 13 February in Kyiv. He was speaking at the wrap-up event of the Peer-to-Peer initiative, supported by the European Committee of the Regions and U-LEAD with Europe. Representatives from Kharkiv and Khmelnytskyi Oblasts and from three Ukrainian hromadas talked about their direct cooperation with EU peers from Poland's Wielkopolska region, Hungary's Szabolcs Szatmár Bereg county, Estonia's city of Rakvere, Lithuania's Zarasai municipality and Germany's Barleben municipality. The activities touched upon various sectors, including energy efficiency, education, rural development and economic development and helped establish longer term opportunities for cooperation in the sectors (see success story).



20 COMMUNITIES IN STRATEGIC PLANNING INITIATIVE

20 communities were selected for strategic planning and financial aspects of community-based primary care, a U-LEAD with Europe initiative that will be implemented between March and June 2019. Over 60 applications were received from amalgamated hromadas. The 20 AHs selected will be supported in developing strategic plans for the hromadas in the health sector. The support will also include consulting from specialists in primary healthcare funding.



ADDITIONAL 98 HROMADAS TO ESTABLISH WELL-FUNCTIONING ASCS WITH SUPPORT OF U-LEAD

60 ASCs will be established and 38 modernised in 24 oblasts during the implementation of the second round of the Roll-Out Phase of the U-LEAD with Europe Programme's support to Improved Administrative Service Delivery. The 98 ToRs developed by the programme's experts and approved by the participating hromadas will guide the proper ASC establishment process. Overall, well-functioning ASCs will be established in 210 hromadas in Ukraine within Rounds 1 and 2 of the Programme.



MORE THAN 300 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AS A RESULT OF THE 3RD CALL FOR APPLICATION

More than 300 applications from 22 oblasts were submitted in the 3rd selection round of the U-LEAD with Europe Programme support to Improved Administrative Service Delivery. By 28 February, the Evaluation Commission made up of representatives from MinRegion, the Ministry of Economic Development, Sida and programme representatives will select up to 150 hromadas to be visited and further analysed by experts. Hromadas that confirm their capability to participate in the Roll-Out phase will receive ToRs (Terms of Reference) – roadmaps for establishing well-functioning ASCs, developed by the experts.



VIDEO DEMONSTRATES BENEFITS OF TREMBITA SYSTEM

EGOV4UKRAINE has launched a video in Ukrainian and in English to explain the Trembita system and demonstrate its benefits for the government and citizens of Ukraine. According to Mari Pedak, Team Leader of EGOV4UKRAINE, it is the right time to promote Trembita to Ukrainian decision-makers and officials to raise awareness on how technology can facilitate governance by making it more efficient and transparent. "The Trembita system is ready to connect government information systems and registries in Ukraine. The first organisations that will connect its systems with Trembita are the Ministry of the Interior and the State Fiscal Service," said Mari Pedak.



HOW SHOULD A NEW-FORMAT ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING LOOK LIKE: NEW GUIDE FROM U-LEAD EXPERTS

The forum on "Democratisation of Administrative Buildings in Ukraine: an Architectural View" was held in Kyiv on 30 January 2019. The event was attended by representatives of the architectural community from Stockholm, Lviv, Kyiv, the Government of Ukraine and hromada leaders. The forum also launched the manual on "Experience of physical establishment of ASC within the Inception Phase of the U-LEAD with Europe Programme."

U-LEAD COMMITTED TO COOPERATION IN AZOV REGION



Bastian Veigel meeting Volodymyr Chepurnyi, Mayor of Berdiansk City
Photo: U-LEAD Archives

In November 2018, the world quickly took note of the escalation in conflict in the Sea of Azov. While the world's media were busy reporting on the tensions, the European Union condemned Russian aggression and expressed concern over the tense security situation. What went less reported, however, were the long-term consequences of the escalation.

The port cities of Mariupol and Berdiansk, for example, were left hard hit by the closure of the Kerch Strait to the Sea of Azov and – with this move – of shipping lanes from the Black Sea. The local economies were the first to suffer.

Following consultations with stakeholders from the European Union, U-LEAD with Europe embarked on a first fact-finding mission in December 2018 in anticipation of an EU mission planned for late January 2019.

As could be seen in the southern parts of Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk Oblasts, U-LEAD has long been active in its cooperation in the greater region. 84 training events, nine study trips and eight forums on decentralisation had already been conducted in that vulnerable region of Ukraine. Berdiansk amalgamated hromada is one of all 878 AHs supported by U-LEAD with Europe in Ukraine, and Mariupol is currently in the process of amalgamation. As the mission found out, the region still showed demand for support in amalgamation, business and tourism development, e-governance, waste management, energy efficiency and sustainable mobility.

In the framework of a high-level visit by Peter Wagner (SGUA) and other EU officials, U-LEAD with Europe paid another visit to the region between 28 and 31 January. Joining the mission was Bastian Veigel, GIZ Programme

Director, who reaffirmed the programme's commitment to supporting both Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk Oblasts and specifically cooperation in the port cities of Berdiansk and Mariupol with targeted activities.

At a meeting in the Mariupol City Council with Secretary Stepan Makhsma and Deputy Mayor Mykhailo Ivchenko on prospects for cooperation, the issue of amalgamation with neighbouring territories was raised. Parties agreed that amalgamation of hromadas is prerequisite for development, specifically for business.

Communities are keen and open for business support and are willing to take advantage of opportunities to bring business back to the region.

Despite the challenges it currently faces in creating its AH, Mariupol demonstrated great willingness to further its amalgamation process in cooperation with the Local Government Development Centre.

In Berdiansk, Bastian Veigel met Mayor Volodymyr Chepurnyi and discuss strengthening working together to help overcome the challenges caused due to the proximity of the conflict. As a new member to the club of amalgamated hromadas, Berdiansk has great interest in developing territories next to the city as part of the AH development strategy, as well as ensuring local economic development to create better job prospects for the population.

One idea that could pave the way for sustainable growth and revitalisation in the region was to establish platforms for business cooperation opportunities abroad, for example, by opening markets towards Europe and beyond.



Bastian Veigel and other U-LEAD managers visiting Zaporizhzhia Local Government Development Centre

Photo:U-LEAD Archives

GEORG MILBRADT

SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT FOR THE UKRAINIAN REFORM IN THE AREAS OF GOVERNANCE AND DECENTRALISATION



Q: Professor Milbradt, Milbradt's list of draft laws is central to decentralisation in Ukraine – what are these laws?

In Ukraine, the decentralisation process is up to now combined with voluntary amalgamation of small villages to form capable communities. Decentralisation brings new responsibilities for the local level. To support the reform, together with MinRegion and the international donors I drew up a list of important laws to achieve a comprehensive functional and territorial reform of local self-government.

Here I am currently operating with backing from U-LEAD with Europe. The first steps of the reform have led to a range of questions that require answers; for example, how the functional and territorial reform of the local level affects tasks and size for the next level, the rayon level. For this comprehensive reform, Ukraine needs a lot of new laws and regulations

Q: Does U-LEAD with Europe transfer knowledge primarily or does it also do the work of convincing too?

That brings us back to the tasks of the decentralisation reform. It is not enough to introduce new laws and structures. These laws have to be implemented. Here U-LEAD is strongly involved by providing consulting in the regions for amalgamation and what prerequisites are needed for this process. After implementation, training of personnel is a key process to create understanding of what self-governance really means.

To make the new system function not only a new form of administration is needed, but also a change in the mindset of people, politicians and administrators. After the legislation phase will be finished, U-LEAD will concentrate more on training for civil servants in local government, to make decentralisation fully successful.

THE U-LEAD WITH EUROPE INTERVIEW

UKRAINE'S DECENTRALISATION WITHOUT HISTORICAL COMPARISON

Q: You engineered a similar process in Germany's reunification. How do the two countries differ and resemble each other?

The transformation in former East Germany brought similar challenges that needed to be solved. The territorial and functional reforms, allocation of new tasks, introduction of self-governance, financing of communities, there are similar problems in Ukraine. However, Germany had the advantage that an existing system and functioning structures could be copied. Even though Ukrainian problems are not so different, Kyiv needs its own solutions. Ukraine cannot simply introduce a new system based on new rules by copying other European countries, as it has its own character and history and has to find its own way.

You have to convince people and stakeholders. On top of that, I know of no other country that decentralised during a state of war; normally, a country would centralise. Therefore, the situation in Ukraine is without historical comparison in this respect.

Q: What sort of backing do you receive from U-LEAD with Europe?

In the regions, U-LEAD with Europe provides important support through the Local Government Development Centres (LGDC). For communities diving into the deep end, it is important to have someone who can impart the required knowledge, specifically with problems connected with a process like decentralisation. And that can clarify issues at an early stage.

I also believe that the experience and information from the LGDCs are helpful for MinRegion. U-LEAD has very good experts of Ukrainian law too. For me, U-LEAD is very important as for my work I need information on what is going on in the country, not just in Kyiv. I use the experience from U-LEAD and the other international donors to better understand the problems and challenges as well as the legal issues and to find appropriate solutions together with the Ukrainian stakeholders.

Questions prepared by Oliver Koehler.

DECENTRALISATION DYNAMICS

BY MID-2020, ALL RURAL RESIDENTS SHOULD LIVE IN AHS

"All we see in hromadas – new schools, kindergartens, roads, new transport, lighting, new clubs, stadiums – is the result of decentralisation," said Volodymyr Groysman, Prime Minister of Ukraine, on TV at the end of January. He was referring to a new government phase of decentralisation. Later, in February, at the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers, he explained what had been achieved. Due to budget decentralisation, in 2014-2018, the local budgets have increased by 3.3 times. "Local budgets have money to build and repair," he added. The government action plan for up to 2020 therefore foresees that all citizens will be living in cities or amalgamated hromadas and "that 100% of Ukraine, 100% of citizens receive new opportunities, new funds."

A LIBRARY FOR EVERY 500 TO 800 HROMADA RESIDENTS

On 6 February 2019, the Ukrainian government passed a resolution "On Approval of State Social Regulation for Provision of Population with Public Libraries in Ukraine". The purpose of the regulation, developed by the Ministry of Culture, is to determine minimum needs for library services. The result is to establish a network of public libraries in rural areas. The norm states that there should be a public library for every 500 to 800 AH residents, with distances between libraries not exceeding three kilometres. The regulation will help preserve public libraries in villages, ensuring equal access for both urban and rural populations.

FIRST HROMADA POLICE OFFICERS BEGAN STUDIES

In Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, 40 law enforcement specialists embarked on their new studies as part of a new pilot project for police officers of hromadas. They will receive training in state-of-the-art methods in security and safety for residents of the oblast's AHs. The practical course will last for 2.5 months and is supported by the Dnipropetrovsk Local Government Development Centre (LGDC). As Olena Tertyshna, Director of the Dnipropetrovsk LGDC, explained on 20 February, "Over six dozen amalgamated hromadas in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast require a special safety system. These district police officers will keep residents safe." The greater part of the training course is devoted to practice and simulations of actual situations.



SUCCESS STORY

Working side by side for energy efficiency
Photo: U-LEAD Archives

P2P WITH THE EU

"The alternative energy development and resources conservation is a step into the future. We should understand that resources of the Earth are not unlimited and it is necessary to look for an alternative to them," says Oleksii Diachenko, Deputy Head of the Vesele Village Council on Economic Development and Investment. Veselivska amalgamated hromada (AH) of Zaporizhzhia Oblast was represented by him in a peer-to-peer project with an Estonian partner. As a result, the village was able to develop energy efficiency projects and apply for funding from a state fund. The Peer-to-Peer initiative was launched by the European Committee of Regions (Brussels) and supported by U-LEAD with Europe to build partnerships between local and regional authorities in the EU and Ukraine, share experiences and foster regional development. The initiative selected two regions in Ukraine and two regions in the EU, as well as three Ukraine's amalgamated hromadas – and three European municipalities as partners.

Veselivska AH was selected to partner with the town of Rakvere in Estonia in the field of energy efficiency. The amalgamated hromada was facing infrastructure challenges. After amalgamation, Veselivska inherited social and cultural buildings and facilities, where the last major repairs had been carried out back in the 1980s. To carry out much needed maintenance and repair work, there was little to no practical knowledge in the field of insulation, energy saving or proper use of energy resources available – despite the fact that the development strategy of Veselivska AH until 2025 had outlined complying with energy-saving measures in the hromada as a priority task. In addition, there was a shortage in staff that could effectively manage energy efficiency projects needed for the village facilities.

In 2018, Oleksii Diachenko and his partners from Estonia started cooperating on sharing and integrating good practices in the municipality and region. As he explains, a first step was to see what is possible in terms of energy efficiency, "Thanks to the study tours I could participate in, both inside Ukraine and abroad, I gained positive experience and learned about best practices of implementing energy-efficient activities." Ultimately, the exchange resulted in adopting a more energy efficient and sustainable approach with a Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP) strategy.

Cooperating with the EU peer also greatly contributed to implementing specific examples in this field. A land plot with a total area of 32 hectares was allocated for building a solar energy plant, and priority actions were set for decreasing CO2 emissions. Veselivska AH is also preparing a project to sanitise Vesele's gymnasium in line with energy efficiency standards, including replacing the roof and insulating the ceiling.

AZOV SEA REGION: U-LEAD WITH EUROPE'S SUPPORT TO IMPROVED ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

29 well-functioning ASCs will be established or modernised with the Programme's support as a result of implementation of 2 out of 4 rounds of the Roll-Out Phase:

390 workplaces will be created/ ASC employees will receive the training from the Programme

4988 items of technical equipment and furniture will be provided

4 electronic queue management system will be installed

2807 hours of institutional support that hromadas will receive from the Programme

 1 new ASC building will be constructed (construction is done by hromada)

 1 mobile ASC will be provided

> 500 000 residents will receive the access to high-quality administrative services as a result of implementation of 2 out of 4 rounds of the Roll-Out Phase

ASC – Administrative Service Centre
IMC – Inter-municipal cooperation
ToR – Terms of Reference



KHERSON

Round 1.

4 ToRs elaborated

2 Stationary ASCs: Nova Kahovka AH, Bilozirska AH
2 Joint ASC: Chaplynska AH, Vysokopilska AH

Round 2.

5 ToRs elaborated

3 Stationary ASC: Zelenyi Pid, Stanislav, Khrestivka
1 Joint ASC: Kalanchak
1 ASC based on IMC: Muzykivka

Round 3.

Number of applications received – 16

DONETSK

(only institutional and staff training support)

Round 2.

7 ToRs elaborated

5 Stationary ASCs: Novohrodivka, Toretsk, Chasiv Yar, Soledar, Vuhledar
1 Remote workplace: Myrnohrad
1 ASC based on IMC: Shakhove

Round 1 and 3. Non-applicable

ZAPORIZHZHYA

Round 1.

9 ToRs elaborated

4 Stationary ASC: Bilenkivska AH, Komushyvaska AH, Komush-Zoryanska AH, Berestivska AH
4 Joint ASC: Orihivska AH, Tokmak AH, Chernigivska AH, VelukoBilozerska AH
1 Mobile ASC: Gulyajpilska AH

Round 2.

4 ToRs elaborated

1 Stationary ASC: Pryazovske
3 Joint ASCs: Kamianka Dniprovska, Prymorsk, Mykhailivka

Round 3.

Number of applications received – 14

U-LEAD VOICES

Administrative Service Centres are, first and foremost, the face of the authorities. In this context, every Ukrainian applying to an ASC should receive services that are fast and comfortable. In total, 779 ASCs were opened in Ukraine (44 new ASCs in 2018), and I am thankful to international partners who help us, together with local authorities, to create and modernise the ASCs, both architecturally and institutionally.

Hennadii Zubko,
Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Regional
Development, Construction, Housing
and Communal Services of Ukraine

Due to joint projects, we will be able to extend European borders and strengthen the EU position, spread democratic values and best practices in Europe. Working together with the EU Committee of the Regions, we want to focus more on the exchange of best practices in the field of local and regional development and strengthening of territorial cooperation.

Vyacheslav Nehoda,
First Deputy Minister of Regional
Development, Construction, Housing
and Communal Services of Ukraine

The peer-to-peer project has not only built exchanges between local and regional government from Ukraine and EU member states. It has also contributed to an increase in exchange, cooperation and partnership between Ukraine and the EU in general.

Benedikt Herrmann,
First Secretary and Policy Officer,
EU Delegation to Ukraine

There is no need to be scared of the reform. It now clearly meets people's wish to live better. A better life is created not in Kyiv, it is created in small settlements. This reform is a fundamental change in the state, which should also launch other mechanisms: educational and healthcare reforms in the countryside.

Yuriy Bova,
Head of Trostianetska AH, Sumy Oblast

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