



Reforms in Ukraine: Public Opinion

The national survey was conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Razumkov Centre (on December 19-24, 2014; July 22-27, 2015; and December 16-20, 2016) and Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (on December 15-25, 2015). Each survey polled about 2,000 respondents aged 18+ in all the regions of Ukraine, except for the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Theoretical error margin does not exceed 2.3%.

- Over the last few years, Ukrainian citizens have believed that the government should focus on **three main objectives**: to achieve peace in Donbas; to stimulate economic development, create favorable conditions for business, and raise the living standards of the population; and to fight corruption and corrupt officials.
- **Slightly more than one third of Ukrainians (35%) are ready to tolerate further drop in the life standards for the sake of ultimate success of the reforms** (of which 11% are ready to tolerate as long as necessary, and 24% – for less than a year). However, one in three cannot tolerate it any further because their financial situation is already unbearable, and one in four – because they do not believe in the success of the reforms. One third of the population ready to tolerate financial difficulties for the sake of the reforms has not changed its stand at least since July 2015. However, in December 2014, a larger share of the population – 45% – was ready to tolerate financial hardships.
- The public believes that the **main driving forces of the reforms** are the government (33.5%), the President (29.5%), NGOs, volunteers (23%), the West (21%), and the population (19%). Compared to July 2015, the expectations that it is the Western countries that should drive the reforms in Ukraine have nearly doubled.
- The public believes that it is the oligarchs (50%) and the civil servants (50%) that **demonstrate the greatest resistance to the reforms in Ukraine**. Another five opposing forces are the government (31%), the political parties that form the coalition in the Verkhovna Rada (27%), and the President (26%). Compared to July 2015, far fewer citizens perceive the acting government as a deterrent of reforms (the previous government – 51.5%, the acting government – 31%). The negative role of the political parties that form the majority coalition in the Verkhovna Rada has also decreased in public opinion (in July 2015, 44.5% considered it as a deterrent, while in December 2016 – 27%). The negative opinion about the role of the law enforcement bodies in the reforms has also dropped (in July 2015, 21% of respondents considered it as a deterrent, while in December 2016 – 11%).

- ***It is NGOs and volunteers that enjoy the highest trust of the public in the context of their impact on the reforms:*** 23% of respondents believe that they facilitate reforms, while only 1% – that they resist them. A positive balance on the role of the West in the Ukrainian reforms has significantly increased: from +9 to +19%. Ukrainian population as a whole also enjoys a positive balance: 19% of respondents consider it as a driving force of the reforms, while only 2% – as a deterrent. Scientists, academics (+8%), the government (+2%), and the president (+3%) also play a positive role. The most negative balance of impact on the reforms is demonstrated by public officials (-47%), and the oligarchs (-44%). There is also a negative impact of Russia (-15%), political parties that form the majority in the Verkhovna Rada (-12%), those in the opposition (12%), and the law enforcement bodies (-7%).
- ***39% of Ukrainians have heard of the civil initiative “Reanimation Package of Reforms.”*** 6% know it well, 33% have heard something about it.
- ***According to the public opinion, most aspects of life standards in Ukraine significantly deteriorated in 2016.*** The most negative changes occurred on the level of prices and tariffs – 88.5% of deterioration according to the respondents: in the economic situation of Ukraine (77%), in the level of stability (75%), in the public confidence in the future (74%), in the family well-being (73%), in the relations between the citizens and the public authorities (72%). In addition, most deterioration concerned criminal situation (62%), healthcare (54%), wages (54.5%), social security (49%), pensions (49%), and observance of laws by civil officers (43%). No changes occurred in the aspects such as the status of Russian-speaking population (69%), the status of the Ukrainian-speaking population (70%), the status of religious and ethnic minorities (64%), international relations (64%), the level of freedom of speech (49%), the level of democracy (46%), human rights and freedoms (46%), and education (43%). ***The overall situation in the country, according to 73% of the respondents, has changed for the worse.***
- ***The only aspect which, according to the public, has improved is defense capability of the country*** – 40% of the respondents noted changes for the better (while 21% noted changes for the worse). There is an opinion divide as to the international image of Ukraine: 27% of citizens believe that its image has changed for the better, 32% – for the worse, while 27% think that it has not changed.
- ***Compared to 2014, deterioration of the situation in some areas has not been detected:*** in the international relations (in the end of 2014, 40% of the population said that the situation has worsened, while in late 2016 – 24%; in social security (71% and 49%), in the provision of pensions (63% and 49%), in wages (76% and 54%), in the status of the Russian-speaking population (29% and 17%), in the status of the Ukrainian-speaking population (25% and 16%), and in the status of ethnic and religious minorities (22% and 15%).
- ***Compared to 2014, the respondents noted the biggest changes for the worse in the criminal situation*** (in 2014, 47% of the population said that the situation has worsened, while in 2016 – 62%), pensions (40% and 49%), and social security (40% and 49%).