



UKRAINE-RUSSIA RELATIONS: THE VIEW FROM UKRAINE

In February, 2001, within the framework of a joint project with the "Russian Public Policy Centre" Foundation, Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies named after Olexander Razumkov (UCEPS) held a nation-wide poll of Ukraine's population on the problems of Ukraine-Russia co-operation[1].

The results of the poll presented below reflect the specificity of the Ukrainian population's assessment of the present state of bilateral relations, the factors that determine their development, the influence of both countries' statesmen on the dynamic of co-operation and priority directions of contacts between Kyiv and Moscow.

UKRAINE-RUSSIA CO-OPERATION TODAY: THE CONCERNS AND EXPECTATIONS

Introducing the new Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine to the Foreign Ministry's Board on October 2, 2000, President L.Kuchma said: "We should finally find an effective algorithm of relations with Russia oriented not to confrontation but to mutually advantageous co-operation". If we take the expressive change of the head of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine as the starting point, indeed, that period has seen an increased intensity of the politico-diplomatic dialogue. It is not by chance that Moscow was the first destination of the new head of Ukraine's foreign office. The recent months saw meetings of Prime Ministers, ministers of internal affairs and emergencies, General Prosecutors and MP groups. Ukraine's President received governors of Sverdlovsk and Nizhny Novgorod regions; in December, 2000, V.Putin and L.Kuchma held working meetings in Moscow and Saint Petersburg.

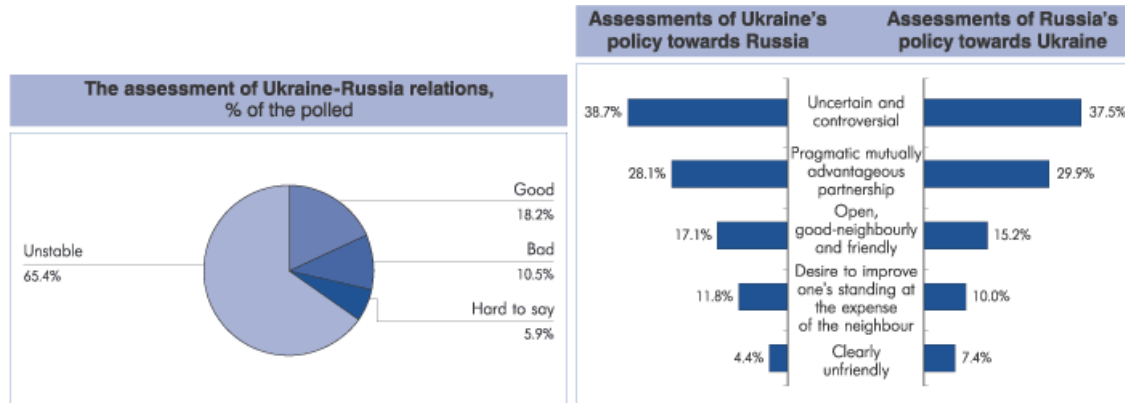
The February meeting of the two Presidents in Dnipropetrovsk was preceded by the Ukrainian visits of Russia's Defence Minister I.Sergeev, Atomic Energy Minister E.Adamov, Chairman of Russia's Security Council S.Ivanov.

In 2000, eight summit meetings were held. According to Russia's Ambassador to Ukraine I.Aboimov, V.Putin has met none of other countries' presidents so often. Such intense negotiations brought some positive results.

The "gas" memorandum was signed, delimitation of the border is nearing completion, for the first time in the recent years, progress has been seen in consultations on the foreign property of the former USSR, some frescoes of St.Michael's Cathedral of the Golden Domes were handed over to the Ukrainian side. In February, a number of important Ukraine-Russia agreements were signed in the aerospace and power engineering sectors. Revival of economic ties was the main thing. Trade turnover rose by \$1 billion and reached \$8.6 billion. The past year also marked a kind of "benefit performance" of Russia's big capital in Ukraine. At their Dnipropetrovsk meeting, the Presidents of the two countries spoke about "a significant change for the better" in the character of economic ties between Ukraine and Russia. At that, V.Putin described the improvement of bilateral relations as "one of the main achievements of the Russian diplomacy in the past year"[2].

However, despite the increasing activity of bilateral dialogue in this latest period and the optimistic statements of the two countries' leaders, Ukraine's population rather sceptically views the present state of contacts between two countries. Two thirds of the polled described them as "unstable", every tenth — "bad" and only 18.2% — "good" (Diagram "The assessment of Ukraine-Russia relations").

It is also worth notice that the respondents were rather critical about the present Ukrainian policy towards Russia.



Russia's policy towards Ukraine was assessed similarly. 38.7% and 37.5% of respondents, respectively, called it "uncertain and controversial"; 11.8% and 10% defined it as the "desire to improve one's standing at the expense of the neighbour", 4.4% and 7.4% of the polled termed it as "clearly unfriendly". Ukraine's policy towards Russia was called "pragmatic mutually advantageous partnership" by 28.1%, Russia's towards Ukraine — by 29.9% of respondents; "open, good-neighbourly and friendly" — by 17.1% and 15.2%, respectively (Diagram of comparative assessments of Ukraine's policy towards Russia and Russia's — towards Ukraine.)

Such assessments prove that the increased intensity of Ukraine-Russia contacts and the positive dynamics of trade turnover have not yet influenced the position of Ukraine's citizens formed in the period of certain coolness in relations between our countries.

The last year passed under the sign of acute conflicts around Ukraine's gas debt, and the tension of the dialogue was reduced only with the signing of the mentioned "gas" memorandum. Nevertheless, even now, Ukraine's population cautiously assesses bilateral contacts in the gas sector: 56.5% of the polled consider them to be "unstable", 26.9% — "bad" and only 8.6% — "good".

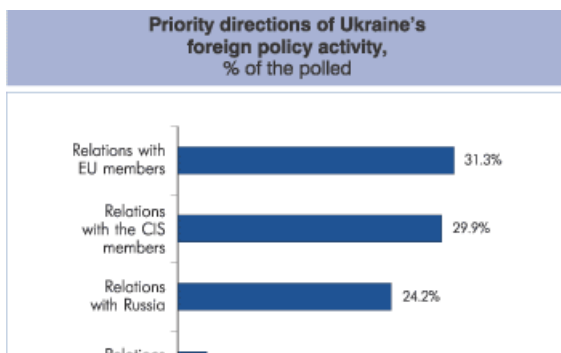
Public spirits will change with the discovery of the algorithm of mutually advantageous relations, first of all, in the economy, when the agreements achieved at the recent meetings of Ukrainian and Russian Presidents give concrete and substantial results.

In other words, the quantity of politico-diplomatic contacts and agreements should be translated into the quality of bilateral co-operation, the concrete results of which are determined not by the number of signed agreements but by the increase in the number of working places, the growth of the living standards of Ukrainians and Russians.

FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES OF UKRAINE'S POPULATION AND ITS STANCE AS TO REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Foreign policy priorities

The stated key directions of Ukraine's foreign policy are: European integration, strategic partnership with Russia and the U.S. Speaking to the representatives of the diplomatic corps on January 15, 2001, President L.Kuchma stressed that "the role of the key, mainstream vectors of such policy in the future will rest with the European integration of Ukraine and the development of strategic partner relations with the Russian Federation and the United States of America"[3].



Foreign policy preferences of Ukraine's population have their specificity. The results of the public opinion poll conducted by Razumkov Centre in February confirm roughly equal distribution of public sympathies among the CIS, Russia and the EU. 31.3% of the polled believe contacts with European Union countries to be of key importance, 29.9% are convinced in the priority of co-operation with CIS countries, 24.2% of respondents give preference to developing relations with Russia and only 3.3% — to strengthening contacts with the USA (Diagram "Priority directions of Ukraine's foreign policy activity").

Therefore, the majority of the people (54.1%) gives preference to contacts with the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Russia. It is worth noticing that such division of public sympathies is rather stable. This is proved by the results of the poll conducted by Razumkov Centre in July, 2000, (the CIS — 31%, the EU — 29%, Russia — 26%, the USA — 5%). So, the past six months saw only minor changes not going beyond the limits of a statistic error.

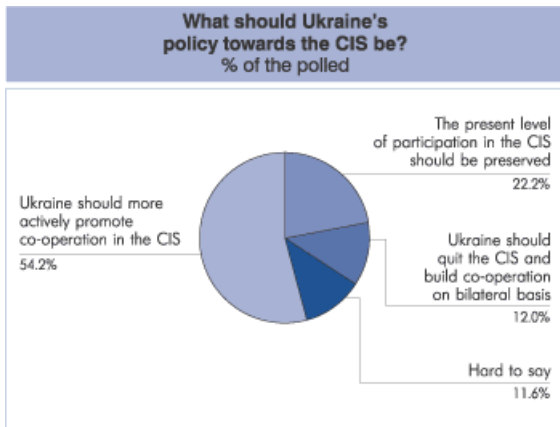
Attitude towards regional integration

The lack of coincidence between the positions of the Ukrainian and Russian leadership as to the directions of integration of countries in the post-Soviet space probably presents one of the strongest problems in bilateral



relations. This relates to the establishment of GUUAM. The Ukrainian initiatives of regional integration were supported by the U.S. Administration and caused constrained anger of Russia. The Ukrainian leadership was cautious towards the formation of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) in the post-Soviet space. Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine express concern that introduction of such rules by EurAsEC members against other states may significantly hinder economic integration within the framework of GUUAM, in particular, introduction of a free trade area[4].

The past year was favourable for strengthening Russia's positions in the post-Soviet space. On the one hand, the "hard core" of the CIS is being formed — the Russia-Belarus Union plus EurAsEC, on the other — attempts are made to diminish the alternative influence of GUUAM. Evidently, Russia's position may be viewed as one of the objective and subjective reasons that led to the postponement of the March summit of GUUAM in Kyiv.



Nevertheless, despite the clear division between various groups of countries within the CIS and new conflicts in the post-Soviet space, the majority of the people (54.2%) believes that Ukraine should more actively promote co-operation in the CIS, and 22.2% are convinced that the present level of participation in the CIS should be preserved (Diagram "What should Ukraine's policy towards the CIS be?").

Such views may be explained by a number of reasons. First, there remains some inertia of post-Soviet spirits in a significant part of the Ukrainian population. Second, people do not see any substantial results from the course of European integration proclaimed by Ukraine's leadership. (It should be added that the relations with the EU are developing not in the best manner. The January PACE debates about the problems of the freedom of speech in Ukraine did not add the authority. In turn, the European Commission has recently imposed antidumping sanctions against Ukrainian manufacturers. Additionally, in the beginning of the year Ukraine along with Russia was put on many international "black" lists). Third, the population seems to be insufficiently informed about the processes taking place within the Commonwealth. For instance, approximately half of the polled (48.8%) could not answer whether Ukraine's membership in GUUAM influences the development of Ukraine-Russia relations. Fourth, it can be assumed that strengthening of co-operation with the CIS is generally associated with the development of contacts with its leader — Russia, where, according to the majority of the polled, people live better than in Ukraine (see below).

By the way, the mood towards further rapprochement with Russia was revealed by the answers to the question "Should Ukraine join the Russia-Belarus Union?": 50.6% said "yes", 33.4% — "no" and 16% of the polled could not give a definite answer.

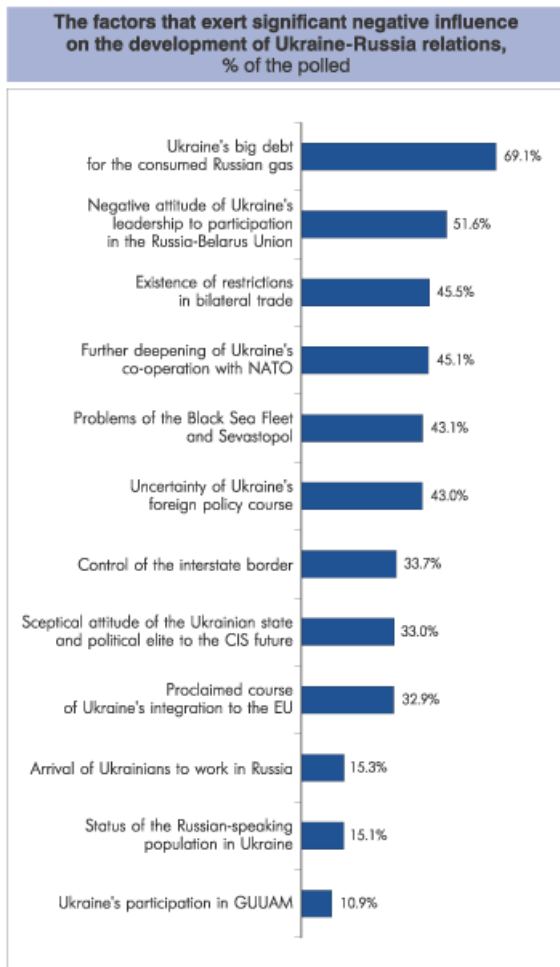
Therefore, the majority of the population believes that Ukraine should strengthen contacts with the CIS and develop co-operation with the Russian Federation.

PROBLEMS OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

The agenda of Ukraine-Russia negotiations remains actually unchanged from year to year. This is explained both by the "durability" of problems and lack of coincidence of positions on a number of issues, and by the "formalisation" of implementation of the taken decisions, poor effectiveness of work of interstate co-operation mechanisms and extreme politicisation of some negotiated issues.

As a matter of fact, the list of the main problems in the bilateral dialogue was confined to "gas" debts, situation around the Black Sea Fleet and Russian-speaking population, contacts with NATO, participation in the CIS, delimitation of the border, foreign property of the former USSR and return of cultural values.

It should be recalled that a year ago, the "Russian Public Policy Centre" Foundation in co-operation with Razumkov Centre held an expert poll of Russia's state and political elite (100 experts were polled). Then, the hierarchy of the negative factors in bilateral relations was lined up as follows: deepening of Ukraine's co-operation with NATO (84%), problems of the Black Sea Fleet (84%), border control (79%), status of the Russian-speaking population (77%), gas arrears (71%), inconsistency of Ukraine's foreign policy course (55%), negative attitude to the Russia-Belarus Union (50%), etc.



What is noteworthy is that the present assessments of the factors that exert negative influence on the progress of bilateral relations (data of the February poll held by Razumkov Centre) by Ukraine's population generally coincide with the opinion of the Russian experts. (At that, the consequence of the problems was somewhat different, and the issue of the Russian-speaking population was second-rated).

The majority of the Ukrainian citizens believes that the main problems lie in the gas sphere (Diagram "The factors that exert significant negative influence on Ukraine-Russia relations")[5].

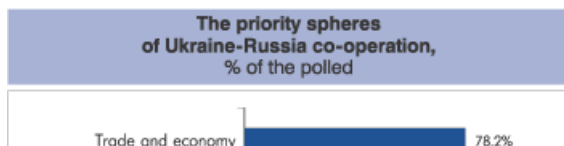
This list is also topped by geopolitical problems. First of all, among the factors that exert the most negative influence on bilateral relations, respondents mentioned the negative position of the Ukrainian leadership as to participation in the Russia-Belarus Union (the public opinion on this subject was discussed above). Second went contacts with NATO. Last year's survey of Razumkov Centre revealed sceptical and cautious attitude of a significant part of the population to the North Atlantic Alliance.

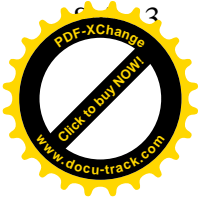
Almost half of the polled pointed out negative effects of the barriers in trade relations. Problems of the Black Sea Fleet were traditionally mentioned.

The lower part of the list of the negative factors is also interesting. The population does not consider Ukraine's participation in GUUAM a problem in relations with Russia. (We mentioned thought that almost half of the polled could not answer this question).

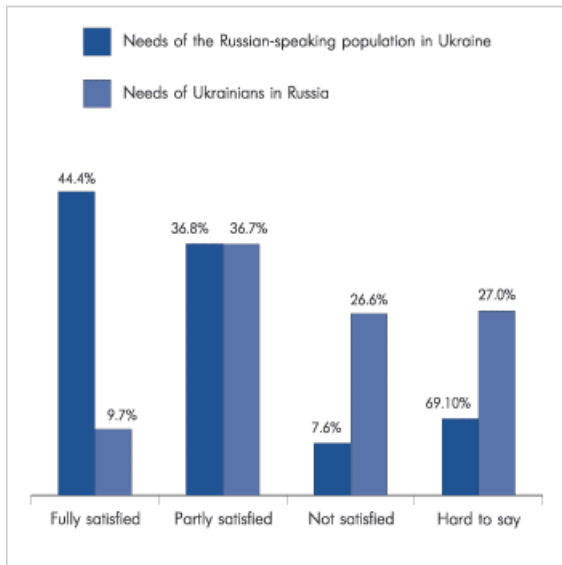
As for the problems of the Russian-speaking population, only one in six polled pointed to the negative effect of that factor, while almost half of the polled (46.8%) does not consider this to be a problem in relations with Russia.

For instance, when asked about "the degree of satisfaction of the national-cultural needs of the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine", 44.4% said that those were "fully satisfied", 36.8% — "partly satisfied", and only 7.6% — "not satisfied". In other words, the majority of respondents believes that the threat of forced Ukrainisation of the 11 million Russian-speaking Ukrainian residents is, to put it mildly, exaggerated. Meanwhile, the status of Ukrainians in Russia was assessed less optimistically. Only 9.7% believe that the national-cultural needs of Ukrainians in Russia are "fully satisfied", 36.7% — "partly satisfied", 26.6% are sure that they are not satisfied at all (For the comparative assessments, see Diagram "The degree of satisfaction of the national-cultural needs of the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine and Ukrainians in Russia").

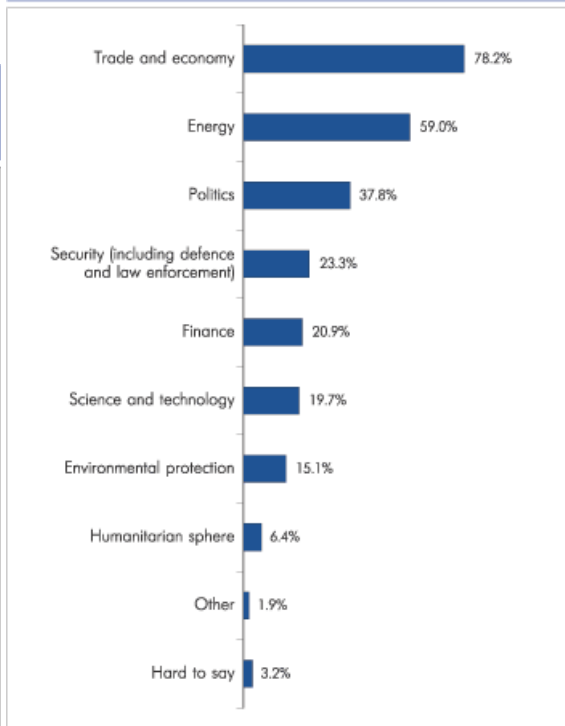




The degree of satisfaction of the national-cultural needs of the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine and Ukrainians in Russia, % of the polled



The priority spheres of Ukraine-Russia co-operation, % of the polled



We stress that this problem is the most politicised. In recent years, its discussion has seriously overshadowed the bilateral dialogue. "Humanitarian" pressure on Ukraine was exerted in a co-ordinated, consistent and single-minded manner. Last year witnessed repeated aggravation of the "language" problems in bilateral relations.

It is worth notice that the majority of Ukrainians does not attach priority in Ukraine-Russia relations to humanitarian contacts; in their opinion, they should not determine the spirit and character of bilateral dialogue: 78.2% of respondents gave priority to economic contacts, 59% — to the energy sector, 37.8% — to the political sphere, 23.3% — the sphere of security, 20.9% — finance sector, 19.7% — science and technology, 15.1% — environmental protection, and only 6.4% of the polled gave priority to the humanitarian sphere (Diagram "The priority spheres of Ukraine-Russia co-operation").

The majority of Ukraine's population believes that the dialogue between our two countries should concentrate on economic problems.

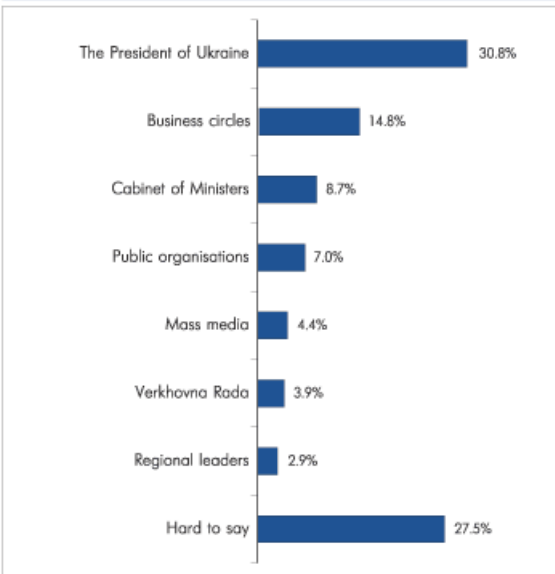
THE ASSESSMENT OF INFLUENCE OF UKRAINE'S AND RUSSIA'S STATESMEN ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

The results of the February poll conducted by Razumkov Centre show a very interesting picture of Ukrainians' perception of the influence of some representatives of the state political establishment of the two countries on the development of Ukraine-Russia relations.

First of all, we should mention certain traditionalism of the public perception of the roles and functions of actors in bilateral dialogue. Interstate relations are developed by authorised officials, partly — business circles, while the public seems to take an observer position. This is explained by the traditional stereotypes in human consciousness, the weakness of civil society institutes and, accordingly, the low level of their influence on important foreign policy decisions.

It is no wonder that when assessing the level of the greatest positive influence on the development of bilateral relations, the population unconditionally gives preference to the President of Ukraine (30.8%) whose influence was estimated higher than the aggregate influence of the Cabinet of Ministers, public organisations, mass media, Parliament and regional leaders (Diagram "Actors that exert the most positive influence on the development of Ukraine-Russia relations").

Actors that exert the most positive influence on the development of Ukraine-Russia relations, % of the polled



The poor performance of mass media, Parliament and regional leaders strikes the eye. The assessment of the media was probably influenced by their subservience to the authorities and financial-industrial groups (witnessed by the not very comforting results of the January Verkhovna Rada hearings devoted to the freedom of speech in Ukraine. PACE produced a very negative assessment of the situation with Ukrainian mass media, too). The low trust of the people in the present Parliament and the diametrically opposite positions of its factions as to Ukraine's Russian policy tell on the assessments of the Verkhovna Rada influence. Public scepticism about the positive influence of regional leaders (meaning heads of regional state administrations) may probably be attributed to the high centralism of the negotiation process. Regional representatives actually have no say in the process of planning and adoption of critical decisions.

It should be noted though that interregional co-operation presents the most promising channel for the development of bilateral relations. To the point: in 2000, trade turnover between border regions grew by almost 80% and made up over \$1.5 billion, or roughly one fifth of the total trade turnover between Russia and Ukraine.

Last February, the Programme of Interregional and Cross-border Co-operation between Ukraine and Russia for 2001-2007 was signed. Its implementation will be determined by the level of involvement of regional leaders of the two countries in the process of trade and economic, science and technology, and humanitarian co-operation between Ukraine and Russia.

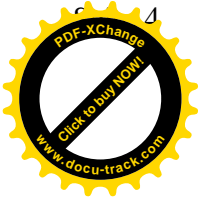
Another thing that strikes the eye is that more than a quarter of the population experienced difficulty producing their assessment. They are either indifferent to the problems of Ukraine-Russia relations or very critical about them. (Running ahead, we note that 14.8% of the polled reported their absence of interest in Russian affairs).

Now, let us turn to personalities. The nomination of "positive influence" was led by President L.Kuchma (60.6%), followed by Prime Minister V.Yushchenko (52%) (Table "The influence of Ukrainian statesmen on the development of Ukraine-Russia co-operation", p.286).

The lead position of the President is quite lawful. First of all, the above-mentioned traditional stereotype of perception of the post works — "the President decides everything". Indeed, the most important Russian-Ukrainian decisions are taken on the presidential level. Second, the increased intensity of Ukraine-Russia top level contacts and media attention to the subject of the "clear Russian turn" in Ukraine's policy are important

here. Recollect just one telling move — removal of "pro-Western" B.Tarasjuk.

The influence of Ukrainian statesmen on the development of Ukraine-Russia co-operation, % of the polled					
	Positive	Negative	No influence	Unfamiliar with his activity	Hard to say



The influence of Ukrainian statesmen on the development of Ukraine-Russia co-operation, % of the polled					
	Positive	Negative	No influence	Unfamiliar with his activity	Hard to say
Leonid Kuchma	60.6	11.5	7.8	3.3	16.8
Viktor Yushchenko	52.4	9.0	8.0	10.0	20.6
Petro Symonenko	28.9	11.3	18.7	16.4	24.7
Anatoliy Zlenko	27.1	4.0	8.4	37.5	23.0
Oleksandr Kuzmuk	24.0	5.3	14.6	31.4	24.7
Yevhen Marchuk	18.6	8.6	17.4	25.9	29.5
Ivan Plushch	16.5	8.9	23.7	21.7	29.2
Yulia Tymoshenko	15.4	34.3	12.8	10.6	26.9
Viktor Medvedchuk	11.9	9.0	19.3	30.9	28.9
Ivan Drach	10.3	10.4	13.8	42.3	23.2
Yuriy Yekhanurov	9.5	3.0	12.6	49.7	25.2
Mykola Zhulynsky	6.5	4.8	10.5	53.3	24.9

The stable second place of Premiere V.Yushchenko, who can hardly be reproached with pro-Russian sympathies, looks surprising. Maybe this is the result of the hypnosis of the second post in the state. On the other hand, Yushchenko's governance was marked with economic success, due attention was paid to the problems of wages and pensions. At that, the Premiere himself did not publicly demonstrate his foreign policy sympathies. Probably, a significant part of Yushchenko's 52% was given in advance. 29% of the communist leader P.Symonenko may probably be attributed to the nostalgic post-Soviet spirits of a significant part of Ukraine's society. He is followed by A.Zlenko (27%). His fourth position is demonstrative, especially if one takes into account that before the poll, for former Ambassador to France had headed Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine for only four months.

On the other hand, the "little known" influence of Yu.Yekhanurov, M.Zhulynsky and I.Drach on the Russian direction is noteworthy. It should be noted though that the two latter high-ranking officials repeatedly appeared in the centre of problems regularly arising in the sphere of humanitarian contacts with Russia. Another striking feature was the greatest share of negative assessments (34.3%) of the influence of ex-Vice Premier Yu.Tymoshenko. Those assessments were influenced by the accusations of Tymoshenko's abuse of power, including of "gas" contacts with Russian counterparts, lavishly published in the Ukrainian media.

The influence of Russian statesmen on the development of Ukraine-Russia co-operation, % of the polled					
	Positive	Negative	No influence	Unfamiliar with his activity	Hard to say
Vladimir Putin	68.1	4.8	2.9	8.3	15.9
Igor Ivanov	27.4	4.7	6.2	40.7	21.0
Mikhail Kasyanov	18.9	4.8	7.5	45.4	23.4
Gennadiy Ziuganov	17.4	16.4	14.9	29.3	22.0
Igor Sergeev	15.6	4.2	9.4	46.7	24.1
Gennadiy Seleznev	15.2	4.9	11.8	44.9	23.2
Yevgeniy Primakov	11.9	7.5	16.8	39.3	24.5
Grigoriy Yavlinskiy	10.5	5.9	17.5	40.9	25.2
Yuriy Luzhkov	9.4	28.6	14.3	27.9	19.8
Yegor StroeV	7.2	2.9	8.4	56.7	24.8
Rem Viakhirev	6.6	21.3	3.6	46.7	21.8
Vladimir Zhirinovskiy	5.8	45.9	10.9	20.8	16.6
Viktor Khristenko	3.7	2.4	7.0	63.5	23.4

As for our compatriots' assessment of the influence of Russian statesmen on the development of Ukraine-Russia relations, the picture was very much the same (Table "The influence of Russian statesmen on the development of Ukraine-Russia co-operation").

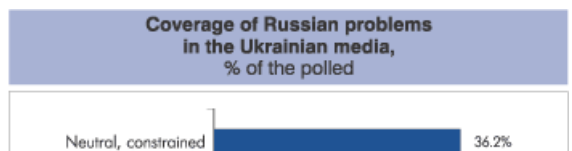
As we may see, the nomination of "positive influence" is led by President V.Putin who was far ahead of others. Such a gap in positive assessments may be explained, inter alia, by the fact that Ukraine's population is less aware of the activity of other listed representatives of Russia's state and political establishment on the Ukrainian direction. The structure of assessments shows some interesting points. First of all, among the figures that negatively influence bilateral relations, respondents mentioned Vice Speaker V. Zhirinovskiy in the first place (45.9%), evidently due to his tough statements about Ukraine. He is followed by Yu.Luzhkov (28.6%). This may be a result of his multi-year "struggle" for the Crimea and attempts to undermine the ratification of the "big" Ukraine-Russia treaty in Russia's Federation Council. R.Vyakhirev was third (21.3%). Here, one should recall regular tough statements of the Chairman of Gazprom's Board who accused Ukraine of siphoning gas and relevant return comments in the Ukrainian media. The Russian communist leader G.Ziuganov goes next. Roughly equal number of respondents gave him a negative and a positive assessment. Second, the majority of the polled is either unaware of the activity of the listed Russian politicians or experienced difficulty assessing it. We note here that the greatest number of respondents (63.5%) was not familiar with the activity of Russia's Vice Premier V.Khristenko, although exactly he was on the front line of Ukraine-Russia gas negotiations, showing his tough position. Furthermore, V.Khristenko chairs the governmental commission on the affairs of compatriots living abroad.

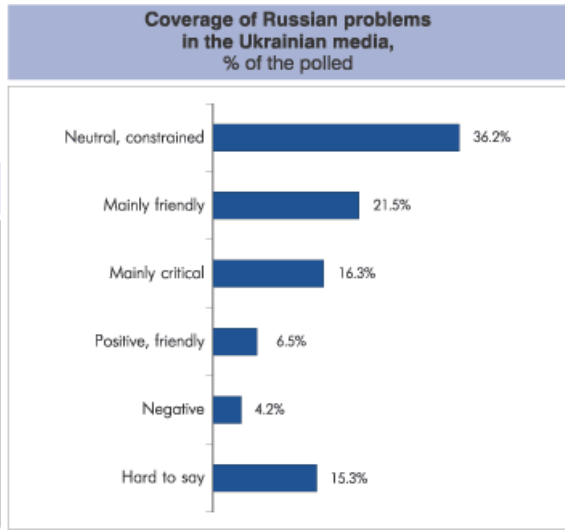
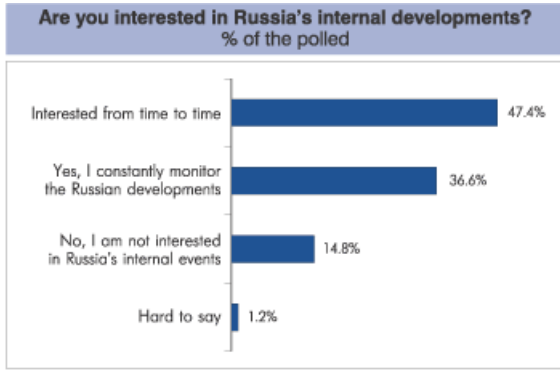
INTEREST TO RUSSIA SHOULD EXPAND THE CHANNELS OF BILATERAL CO-OPERATION

Intensification of the Ukraine-Russia dialogue was accompanied with attempts to renew the mechanisms of bilateral co-operation. In January, 2000, President L.Kuchma and then acting President V.Putin agreed on the resumption of the work of the Strategic group for Ukraine-Russia relations. At their Moscow meeting in December, 2000, the Presidents decided to step up activity of the mixed intergovernmental Ukraine-Russia co-operation commission. In turn, the President of Ukraine by his directive of January 12, 2001, established a Working group for the development of proposals for deepening economic ties with the Russian Federation, headed by the new First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration O.Diomin. The Ukrainian side performed some regrouping of high-ranking officials working with Russia. President V.Putin, on his part, in February, 2001, appointed two Vice Premiers — V.Khristenko and V.Matvienko — to lead the Ukrainian direction.

To be sure, it is important to put right a stable and reliable system of bilateral contacts on the level of officials. However, it seems no less important to further unofficial channels of co-operation, using contacts between politicians, businessmen, journalists, workers of culture and science. We should exploit ties between societies with account of the high level of mutual influence and interdependence between our two countries in different spheres.

In this respect, it should be stressed that the influence of the northern neighbour in Ukraine's socio-political and cultural life is significant. The reasons for this are many. We mention just a few. First of all, Russia's media occupy a weighty place in Ukraine's information space. (Out of 11 thousand periodicals registered in Ukraine, more than 7 thousand are Russian language or bilingual. Approximately one third of all books is printed in Ukraine in the Russian language. According to the results of last year's (October, 2000) UCEPS polls, 38% of respondents "entirely" and "to some extent" trust Russian TV channels, 33% — radio stations, 28% — printed media). The second reason is the existence of millions of ethnic Russians. The following results of the February poll held by Razumkov Centre are impressive. When asked "Do you have relatives in Russia?", 49.6% of respondents said "yes", 50.4% — "no". That is, half of Ukraine's population is tied with Russia by personal, kindred relations. The poll results prove rather a high interest of Ukraine's population to Russia. More than a third of the polled (36.6%) constantly monitors the Russian events (Diagram "Are you interested in Russia's internal developments?").



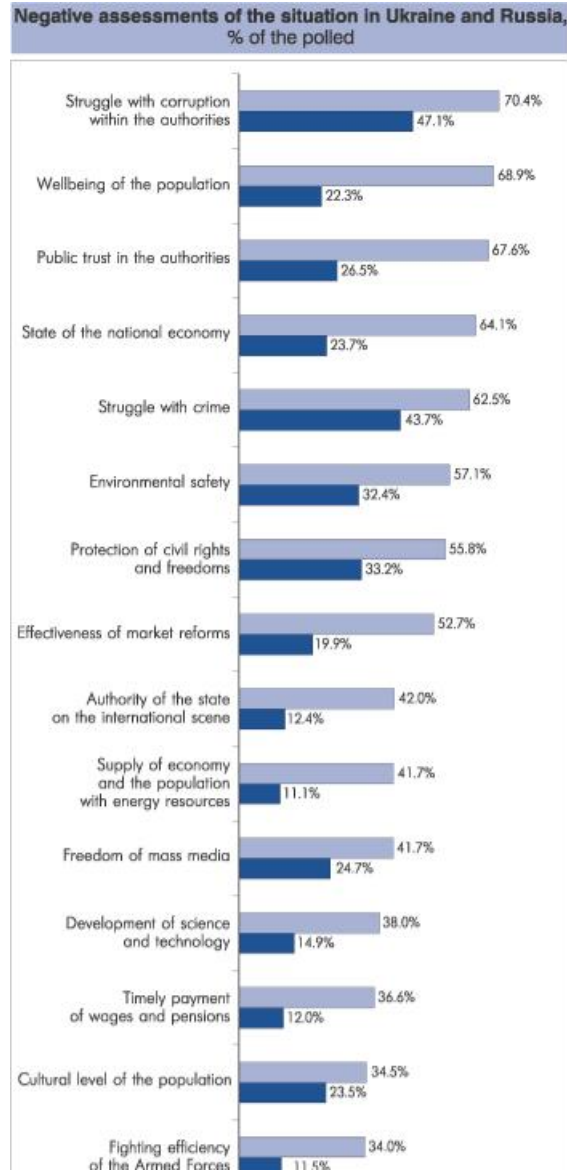


47.4% of the polled shows episodic interest to Russia's developments. This means that 84% of Ukraine's population either permanently or periodically monitors the situation in the neighbouring state. Given such high interest, the position of mass media, i.e., the form and character of presentation of materials about Russia to Ukraine's population, is of particular importance. (This primarily relates to television, radio and printed periodicals, for the number of Internet users in Ukraine does not exceed 500 thousand, or approximately 1% of the population). Here, the majority of the polled believes that the Ukrainian media covers Russian problems mainly in the "positive", "friendly" and "neutral, constrained" manner. This view is shared by 64.2% of respondents (Diagram "Coverage of Russian problems in the Ukrainian media").

To be sure, contacts in the information sphere present one of the most important unofficial channels of co-operation. In this context, it is expedient to remind that during the first Moscow visit of A.Zlenko in October, 2000, an important intergovernmental agreement of co-operation in the sphere of television and radio broadcasting was signed. The document was intended "to create favourable legal, organisational and economic conditions for ... satisfaction of cultural and information needs of citizens and further strengthening of traditional ties between the two countries".

THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE AND RUSSIA IN THE ASSESSMENTS OF UKRAINIAN CITIZENS

When comparing respondents' assessments of the situation in Ukraine and in Russia, one should make allowance for the lack of full information about the situation in Russia among Ukrainians who mainly form their opinion about the neighbouring country from media reports. (By the way, approximately a quarter of the polled could not assess the situation in the Russian Federation). To be sure, the eternal formula — "it's nice where we do not belong" — works, to some extent. Nevertheless, the comparison of marks put by the population to Ukraine and Russia by 19 positions shows a certain tendency and makes think seriously. In 18 nomination, the Ukrainian situation was assessed much more critical than Russian. Diagram below presents the aggregate negative assessments ("bad" and "very bad") of the situation in Ukraine and Russia.



The assessments of the internal political situation in the two countries are rather contradictory. The overwhelming majority of the population believes that corruption within Ukraine's authorities is fought in an unsatisfactory manner, much worse than in neighbouring Russia. The critical position of the population was probably evidenced by the general negative background formed by the resonant "Gongadze case" and further unrolling of the "Tapegate" accompanied with anti-presidential demonstrations in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities. Correspondingly, the majority of the polled (62.5%) negatively assesses struggle with corruption in Ukraine.

It cannot but arouse concern that Ukraine's population is very critical (55.8%) (木激xut)



