



**Project Report**  
**Assessing Democracy**  
**Assistance**

## **Assessing Democracy Assistance:** **Ukraine<sup>1</sup>**

**Natalia Shapovalova<sup>2</sup>**  
**Researcher at FRIDE**

*This report is FRIDE's contribution to a project entitled 'Assessing Democracy Assistance' that is being carried out by the World Movement for Democracy. The project aims to gather views on how democracy support can be improved and its impact enhanced. Other case studies and a synthesis report can be found at [www.fride.org](http://www.fride.org).*

The Orange Revolution, the name given to the mass protests in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities that followed a fraudulent presidential election in November 2004, is widely seen as a crucial moment in Ukraine's transition to democracy. The Orange Revolution resulted in free elections and a peaceful regime change. It gave a boost to freedom of speech and civil society development, as well as introducing a constitutional reform that increased parliamentary powers. On Freedom House's world map of freedom, Ukraine went from being a 'partly free' to a 'free' country.<sup>3</sup>

Looking back twenty years after Ukraine's political transformation to an independent state began following the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is evident that the Orange Revolution put Ukraine back on the evolutionary path of democratisation which was interrupted by the regime of the late president Kuchma.<sup>4</sup> While the significance of the Orange Revolution for Ukraine's democratic development is not contested, analysts' opinions differ as to whether the Revolution occurred as a result of 'people power', or whether the struggle of the country's elite had a pivotal role in its success.<sup>5</sup> An answer to this question is crucial in order to accurately assess to what extent external aid to democracy prior to the

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<sup>3</sup> Freedom House, 'Country Report Ukraine', in *Freedom in the World* (Freedom House, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> On the Orange Revolution as a return to the evolutionary transformation see G. Gromadzki et al., *Beyond Colours: Assets and Liabilities of 'Post-Orange Ukraine'*, (Kyiv: International Renaissance Foundation, 2010, Warsaw: Stefan Batory Foundation, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> In support of 'people power' argument see T. Kuzio, 'Civil society, youth and societal mobilization in democratic revolutions', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39 (2006), pp. 365–86; A. Karatnycky and P. Ackerman., *How Freedom is Won: From Civic Resistance to Durable Democracy* (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 2005). On the role of elites in the 'coloured revolutions' see P. D'Anieri, 'Explaining the success and failure of post-communist revolutions', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39 (2006), pp. 331–50; H. Hale, 'Democracy or autocracy on the march? The colored revolutions as normal dynamics of patronal presidentialism', *Ibid* pp.305–29. Furthermore, the failure of 'people power' is given as an argument to explain the limited effects of the colour revolution in bringing democracy. See T. Tudoroiu, 'Rose, Orange, and Tulip: The failed post-Soviet revolutions', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 40 (2007) pp. 315–42.

Revolution affected Ukraine's transition. If the Revolution is seen as the result of the battle of elites, the role of international aid (except election monitoring and parallel vote count techniques) would be considered minimal. This paper is based on the assumption that the 'elitist' approach is too narrow to account for the success of the 2004 protest in Ukraine, and instead favours the argument that mass support and mobilisation played a crucial role in differentiating the Orange Revolution from opposition protests against the Kuchma regime in the early 2000s.

Western engagement (that went beyond aid) is recognised by many Ukrainian and foreign observers as having a significant, although far from determining, role in the democratic breakthrough of 2004.<sup>6</sup> Western, and most importantly US, democracy assistance contributed to the advent of freer elections, independent media and a vibrant civil society, which in turn helped to create a critical mass of people who raised their voices against the repressive regime in 2004. EU financial support for democracy was less significant, but the EU's condemnation of electoral fraud was crucial to the resolution of the political conflict between the democratic opposition and the incumbent regime in favour of democracy.<sup>7</sup>

Five years after the Orange Revolution, Ukraine has failed to consolidate democracy. In late 2005, the process of democratic consolidation stalled as pro-democratic forces appeared deeply divided and the country entered a period of political instability, characterised by early elections, unstable coalitions, frequent government changes and destructive 'cohabitation' between the President and the Prime Minister. As a result, reform was not undertaken under the 'Orange' elite rule, and the Ukrainian institutions that should ensure democratic freedoms remain unreformed or dysfunctional. In the presidential election of 2010, neither of the two second-round runners prioritised democratisation among its election promises. Ukraine entered its new political phase under 'the old guard' of the Kuchma regime led by Victor Yanukovich (Leonid Kuchma's successor in 2004), who came back to power through the democratic election. It remains to be seen whether the democratic development of Ukraine will prevail.

## Overview of donor activities

There are up to thirty donors and assistance providers to democracy in Ukraine. The US government and the European Commission take the lead in terms of the amount of assistance provided. They are followed by bilateral Western donors such as Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden and the Netherlands. Ukraine's democracy is also supported by international organisations present in the country: namely the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the United Nations. Constant, strong support to democracy and civil society is provided by private foundations, such as the George Soros Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Japan has also supported small democracy-related initiatives and election observation in Ukraine.

The **United States** is the top bilateral donor to Ukraine and has been the main donor to democracy since 1992. From Washington, Ukraine is seen as critical to US foreign policy due to its strategic geopolitical position and importance for regional stability. The US provides democracy assistance to civil society, media, political parties, government (including parliament), local government and the judiciary.

US democracy assistance is channelled via USAID, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy in Kyiv. USAID provides its democracy support through a number of implementing partners such as NDI, IRI, the American Bar Association and American corporations. NED supports Ukrainian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and its partners' projects in Ukraine.<sup>8</sup> The US embassy in Kyiv provides small grants to civil society organisations (CSOs) and media, as well as internet access in libraries.

In 2004–2005 US democracy assistance to Ukraine significantly increased, with the US Congress contributing

<sup>6</sup> O. Haran and P. Burkovsky, 'The Orange Revolution: Origins, Successes and Failures of Democratic Transformation', paper delivered at the international colloquium "Peace and Freedom – International Perspectives" organised by the Liberal Institute, Potsdam, 15–17 September 2006; O. Sushko and O. Prystayko, 'Western Influence', in A. Aslund and M. McFaul (eds.), *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006); M. McFaul and R. Youngs, 'International Actors and Democratic Transitions: Ukraine 2005', CDDRL Working Paper, March 2009.

<sup>7</sup> R. Youngs, 'Ukraine', in T. Piccone and R. Youngs (eds.), *Strategies for Democratic Change. Assessing Global Response* (Madrid: FRIDE, 2006), pp. 109–11.

<sup>8</sup> Since 2004, the average NED annual budget to Ukraine has been around USD 2.2 million. In 2007, the NED supported a record number of fifty Ukrainian organisations.

an extra USD 60 million to Ukraine in 2005.<sup>9</sup> As a result, in 2005 democracy funds increased to a record USD 58 million compared to USD 34 million in 2004. However, in 2006 the amount of USAID democracy assistance dropped significantly and since then it has never reached the same level as in 2004.

Overall, US support to non-state actors decreased by 70 per cent between 2004 and 2007, while assistance given to the government sector increased by 59 per cent in the same period.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, in 2006 the US government provided USD 45 million for anti-corruption activities from the Millennium Challenge Account. The majority of this money went to Ukraine's government. US democracy assistance to Ukraine is expected to grow with the increase of the regional budget for Europe and Eurasia.<sup>11</sup>

Until the early 2000s, the **European Union (EU)** – the largest multilateral donor to Ukraine – focused on stability and market reforms rather than on political transformation.<sup>12</sup> Hence, TACIS, the main instrument of financial assistance to post-Soviet states, was not tailored to democratisation but focused on trade and investment promotion and government capacity building. Only a small amount of TACIS funds went to civil society development, independent media and democracy (in 2004–2006, EUR 10 million out of 212 million of the TACIS funds).<sup>13</sup> In addition, human rights and democracy promotion in Ukraine were supported through the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), in which Ukrainian CSOs could participate through partnership with European counterparts or through a micro-grants scheme.<sup>14</sup> In contrast with US aid to civil society, EIDHR support is less political; its projects focus on social rights protection (such as vulnerable groups) rather than on voter education and mobilisation.

A change in EU democracy promotion policy towards Ukraine occurred in 2004–2005 as a result of EU enlargement and the introduction of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The EU introduced elements of positive conditionality through an ENP Action Plan with Ukraine; enhanced channels for political dialogue and people-to-people contacts and strengthened its assistance to Ukraine through new instruments and increased volumes of aid.<sup>15</sup>

From 2007 onwards, the EU introduced the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). Support for democratic development and good governance is one of the three ENPI priorities in Ukraine. It accounts for 30 per cent of the total budget: EUR 148 million for a four-year period.<sup>16</sup> Sector budget support was introduced in Ukraine, accounting for 72 per cent of total annual allocations.<sup>17</sup> Borrowed from the pre-accession assistance tool-kit, Twinning and TAIEX provide expertise and training to Ukrainian civil servants by their counterparts in EU member states. ENPI cross-border cooperation mechanisms involve local authorities and civil society.

Some EU democracy funds are implemented through an EU–**Council of Europe (CoE)** Joint Programme. The EU finances up to 90 per cent of these projects while the rest comes from the CoE budget. Currently the CoE office in Kyiv – established in 2007 to coordinate the CoE's cooperation programmes with Ukraine – runs joint projects on media standards, judiciary, women's and children's rights and anti-corruption. Additionally, two Council of Europe bodies – the Parliamentary Assembly and the Venice Commission – provide monitoring, expertise and advice to the government in different fields of democratic state-building, such as elections, rule of law and judiciary.

The EU has enhanced its direct support to Ukrainian CSOs under the reformed EIDHR. However, the aid volumes available to Ukrainian civil society are still small compared with those of the US: in 2007–2008 the European Commission made EUR 1.2 million available via the EIDHR. The 2009 national call for projects was seen by Ukrainian CSOs as driven by local demands. There has been a shift from a focus on rights

<sup>10</sup> USAID, 'Ukraine: Country Budget Justification', available at: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2007/ee/ua.html>.

<sup>11</sup> In the budget request for 2010 USAID seeks a 25 per cent increase in democracy aid (from USD 25 million to 31 million). The priorities for aid will remain largely the same (rule of law, justice, independent media, the civil society development, the capacity building for political parties). Stronger support will be given to local government development. See [http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2010/2010\\_CBJ\\_Book\\_1.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2010/2010_CBJ_Book_1.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> I. Solonenko, 'External democracy promotion in Ukraine: the role of the European Union', *Democratization* 14/ 4 (2009), p. 713.

<sup>13</sup> European Commission, *National Indicative Programme 2004–2006*, 4 August, 2003.

<sup>14</sup> In 2000–2006, EIDHR supported 43 country projects in Ukraine with a total support of EUR 11.5 million EUR (EUR 8.,539 million of which went to Ukrainian NGOs implementing 36 projects).

<sup>15</sup> I. Solonenko and B. Jarabik, 'Ukraine', in R. Youngs (ed.), *Is the European Union Supporting Democracy in its Neighbourhood?* (Madrid: FRIDE, 2008), pp. 96–7.

<sup>16</sup> European Commission, *National Indicative Programme 2007–2010*, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> European Commission, 'Ukraine: Country Strategy Paper Mid-Term Review: Concept Note. Potential priority areas for ENPI National Indicative Programme for Ukraine 2011–2013', p. 14.

protection to a more complex approach of supporting civil society through dialogue with state actors and public advocacy, among other methods.

From 1991–2008, a major share of the **United Kingdom's** democracy funds was channelled through the Department for International Development (DFID). In 2004–2007, DFID allocated around EUR 9 million to democracy assistance projects. Around three-quarters of these funds went to projects aimed at strengthening government capacities, while the remaining quarter was spent on CSOs' capacity-building.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, Ukraine is covered by the Foreign Commonwealth Office's Strategic Programme Fund (SPF). From 2003–2005 SPF funding went mostly to NGOs to support election monitoring, independent media and citizens' education, while since 2006 the lion's share of the funds has gone to the government.

Since 2008, when the DFID left Ukraine, the volume of democracy assistance has decreased. On average Ukraine receives between EUR 700,000 and 800,000 each year from SPF's Reuniting Europe programme budget.<sup>19</sup> The UK has supported improving election procedures, transparency of public institutions, government capacity building for EU integration, political party development (it is the only EU member state to work in this area apart from Germany) and parliamentary capacity building (the only donor focusing on this sector apart from the US).

**Germany** directs the majority of its democracy aid through its political party foundations. There are five representative offices of German political foundations in Kyiv, two of which opened after the Orange Revolution.<sup>20</sup> The German foundations are the most important contributors to political party development and intra-party democracy. They work closely with Ukrainian political parties, their youth organisations and individual politicians at national and local levels. They also help to foster public debate on Ukraine's democratisation and European and transatlantic integration policies by working in close partnership with Ukrainian CSOs. The foundations support education for youth, student exchanges, study visits and training for civil servants and journalists. Some of them give small grants, mainly for mobilisation of citizens' participation at local level.

From 2005–2008, **Sweden** spent around EUR 13 million on democracy and good governance support in Ukraine. This amounts to one third of its bilateral aid and Swedish democracy assistance to Ukraine is increasing. SIDA aims to achieve 'more efficient and transparent public administration that is closer to European standards and European norms' and focuses specifically on government capacities in public finance management and free trade with the EU, while support in other sectors, such as local government, depends on episodic windows of opportunity.<sup>21</sup> SIDA supports civil society involvement in reform work within established priorities. SIDA provides its support through partnerships of Swedish and Ukrainian organisations, through intergovernmental organisations and international NGOs; some funds go directly to Ukrainian NGOs.

**The Netherlands** support Ukraine's democracy through the MATRA programme established by the Dutch MFA in 1994 to support the democratic transformation of Central and Eastern Europe. The MATRA Project Programme funds large-scale projects (EUR 400,000–500,000) that aim to transfer knowledge and skills through cooperation between Dutch and Ukrainian NGOs. MATRA KAP, operated by the Dutch embassy in Kyiv, provides about EUR 300,000–350,000 in small grants (up to EUR 15,000) to Ukrainian NGOs. MATRA is demand driven and flexible because it supports civil society development without establishing prior priorities. MATRA also funds training and education in public administration and law in the Netherlands. In 2005–2008, MATRA spent approximately EUR 12 million on projects in Ukraine.<sup>22</sup>

**Denmark** is a relatively new donor to Ukraine.<sup>23</sup> Since 2006, Denmark has supported civil society, media and public sector reform. For 2008–2012, the Danish MFA has accorded Ukraine highest priority within the Neighbourhood aid programme and allocated EUR 16 million to projects mostly related to democracy.

<sup>18</sup> N. Shapovalova and O. Shymulo, 'Supporting Elusive Consolidation', in J. Kucharczyk and J. Lovitt (eds.), *Democracy's New Champions. European Democracy Assistance after EU Enlargement* (Prague: PASOS Secretariat, 2008), p. 274

<sup>19</sup> Within the SPF, Ukraine is mainly financed by the Reuniting Europe Programme, although some projects are also covered by human rights and democracy programme funds

<sup>20</sup> While the foundations of the largest German parties – the Christian Democratic Union's Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the CDU partner Christian Social Union's Hanns Seidel Foundation and the Social Democratic Friedrich Ebert Foundation – came to Ukraine in early 1990s, the Greens' Heinrich Böll Foundation and the Free Democrats' Friedrich Naumann Foundation opened their offices in Kyiv after 2005.

<sup>21</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 'Strategy for Swedish Development Cooperation with Ukraine, 2009–2013'.

<sup>22</sup> Author's own calculations based on data on the MPP and MATRA KAP reviews by the Dutch MFA.

<sup>23</sup> Prior to 2006, Denmark's MFA supported the Danish Institute for Human Rights project on human rights advocacy in Ukraine.

**New EU member states** also provide democracy assistance to Ukraine. Although the amount of funds they can offer is limited, their assistance is valuable as it offers the recent experience of transformation. The aid is channelled through bilateral cooperation, led by Poland, and through the International Visegrad Fund to which four members of the Visegrad group contribute.<sup>24</sup> The support is aimed at civil society development, strengthening public administration and local government, Ukraine's integration into the EU and NATO, journalistic standards and educational exchanges.

**Switzerland** provides assistance to justice and decentralisation by helping the national government as well as local governments.<sup>25</sup> Swiss aid goes to both government and non-governmental institutions or is provided through multilateral organisations (for example UNDP's Crimea Integration and Development Programme). Small, rapidly delivered funds are available for innovative projects of CSOs. Total Swiss aid to democratisation has been increasing gradually and stood at almost EUR 6.7 million in 2007–2010.

Democratic governance is one of two priorities of **Canada's** development assistance to Ukraine. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) assists reform of the judiciary and civil service: fighting corruption and improving the public policy process, regional and local governance, civic education and election procedures.<sup>26</sup> In addition, CIDA supports civil society through small grants from the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives as well as through a number of regional initiatives covering Ukraine (such as Canadian–Ukrainian partnerships and Canadian volunteer advisory). CIDA's programming under the 2002–2006 Country Development Strategy Frameworks has not changed significantly following the transition of 2004, with the exception of increased funding for the election process before and during the Orange Revolution.

**The Open Society Institute (OSI) and Soros Foundations Network (SFN)** are strong donors to civil society in Ukraine. The International Renaissance Foundation (IRF), a Soros foundation in Ukraine, has been operating since 1990. Even though it has external funding, the IRF is seen as part of Ukrainian civil society. Its staff and board members are all Ukrainian and work with other NGOs to define its programmes' priorities. The IRF combines the functions of a grant-making and operating foundation with those of a think tank. The average annual budget since 2004 has been around EUR 4 million, which mostly funds Ukrainian NGOs' projects that encourage European integration, strengthen civil society's impact on public policy, the rule of law, independent media and so on. The OSI contributes to democracy and civil society development in Ukraine through a number of regional programmes supporting educational exchanges and initiatives, civil society networking and institutional development of think tanks.

The **Charles Stewart Mott Foundation** also provides steady support to civil society. From 2004–2009 it contributed EUR 3.8 million to Ukrainian CSOs, mostly through institutional grants.

Besides the EU and the Council of Europe, multilateral donor aid to democracy is provided by the OSCE and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). Although their own funds are limited, many activities they implement are funded by other donors.<sup>27</sup> The OSCE, present in Ukraine through the Project Coordinator (OSCE PCU), is traditionally the strongest assistance provider to the election process. It also works on media reform and journalist education (in cooperation with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media) and has recently begun to take an interest in civil society development. From 2006–2010, the main focus areas of UNDP democratic governance programmes have been institutional reforms, civil society development and rights promotion. Before and after the Orange Revolution, the UNDP provided support to the Ukrainian government in the development of reform strategies. As the reform process in Ukraine has stalled, the UNDP has started to pay more attention to civil society, focusing on specific niches, for example consumer rights and a regulatory framework. The UNDP also promotes good governance through local development by encouraging social mobilisation and cooperation between local communities and authorities in the resolution of community problems.

In sum, since 2005, the democracy aid arena in Ukraine has become more varied as new donors and democracy assistance providers, such as new EU members, Denmark and non-governmental foundations have entered the scene. Despite this, the overall quantity of democracy aid decreased after 2005 with the

<sup>24</sup> N. Shapovalova and O. Shumylo, *op.cit.* pp. 275–90.

<sup>25</sup> Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 'Cooperation Strategy Ukraine 2007–2010'.

<sup>26</sup> CIDA, 'CIDA Cooperation with Ukraine. Project List 2009'.

<sup>27</sup> The OSCE annual budget for democracy and human rights activities in Ukraine counts for about EUR 1 million, but budgets of some OSCE projects in Ukraine, especially those on elections, exceed the annual budget. The same can be said for the UNDP, which often serves as an implementing agency for donors which lack capacity on the ground (for example the European Commission, Denmark or Ireland).

departure of or decrease in funding from the large donors (mainly UK and US). Instead, donors have made more funds available to the government, with the aim of supporting reforms of democratic institutions and combating corruption.

## Impact of democracy aid

In the aftermath of the Orange Revolution, external aid to democracy continues to be of key importance to democratisation in Ukraine. Many consider that progress towards democracy would not be possible without foreign donor assistance.

Some NGO representatives insist that civil society organisations and donors are the main reform drivers in Ukraine, citing examples of successful changes to government policies promoted by this partnership. The most far-reaching of these have been the efforts to combat corruption in higher education institutions.

Although external democracy assistance is regarded as a key resource for democratisation in Ukraine, it is acknowledged that it has been limited in its results. Despite many important reform strategies developed through donor assistance, few reforms have been implemented.

There is not yet a full value local substitute for foreign democracy assistance in Ukraine. On the one hand, local philanthropy – both corporate and individual – is growing, particularly from Ukrainian oligarchs who have opened private foundations (for example, the Victor Pinchuk Foundation and Rinat Akhmetov's Foundation for Development of Ukraine and the Foundation for Effective Governance). The government has established a mechanism that supports CSOs through contracting for social services provision. But local aid does not focus on democracy support. Local support is still politically biased. As an expert on civil society mentioned, the main value of foreign democracy aid to Ukraine is not the financial contribution, but the values, standards and practices spread with the aid.

According to local stakeholders, democracy promoters in Ukraine (including foreign donors) have overlooked 'a very basic level of the democratisation process, namely explaining what democracy is about'.

People equate democracy to live political talk shows on TV: this is a common metaphor used by interviewees regarding the current popular understanding of democracy.<sup>28</sup> As one civil society activist said, 'society understands democracy as when one can say whatever one wants to say, and when one can go abroad. Nobody understands that democracy is rule of law, respect for human rights, clear rules of the game'.

**The electoral process** has been significantly improved since 2004. Due to donor support led by the OSCE, a voters' register has been introduced in advance of the 2010 presidential elections to make the electoral process more transparent. The impact of donor aid has been much stronger on technical issues of election organisation than political ones, especially concerning a change of the electoral system. There have been positive developments in the adoption of the electoral legislation with the involvement of donor-funded NGOs; however, politicians are reluctant to listen to this advice.<sup>29</sup> Some NGOs dealing with election monitoring report that donors do not work on important issues in the periods *between* election campaigns.

**Civil society** is one of the sectors which largely depend on donor support. Many CSO representatives interviewed confirm that donor funds constitute up to 98 per cent of their budget. As one NGO representative said, donor policy is more favourable to CSOs than government aid. The former is more hands-on and responds to citizens' interests; the latter invariably entails corruption.

Foreign assistance was crucial for the institutional development of most CSOs. Some grew out of donor projects, while others acquired necessary equipment or skills through donor aid. Many organisations have managed to become more self-sufficient, especially those providing social services or those who managed to diversify their budgets with membership fees. But others, particularly, human rights defenders or other watchdog-like NGOs, are unable to substitute donor funds with local resources.

<sup>28</sup> As a result of the media pluralism that emerged after the Orange Revolution, there has been a proliferation of live talk shows named 'Freedom' (the first TV show was called Freedom of Speech), where Ukrainian politicians of all colours are key speakers. These shows have occupied prime time on all national channels. The main political debate in the country is often held on these shows, as many Ukrainian politicians are seen on TV more often than in parliament.

<sup>29</sup> The last parliamentary revision of the presidential election law in 2009 shows that even though – thanks to Ukraine's vibrant civil society and media – it is possible to prevent undemocratic changes in the election law, the whole process of electoral reform remains driven by short term political interests.

Since 2004, donor support to civil society has decreased, particularly aid to institutional development. Many NGOs have been told that donors are not willing to cover administrative costs as well as the project activities they support, and expect NGOs to make their own contributions to the projects.

Moreover, after the Orange Revolution many prominent NGO activists went to work for the government. Along with the decrease of donor support, this brain drain has substantially weakened CSOs. Many strong organisations ceased to exist or shrank dramatically, and no new organisations have been created. New cadres to the CSO sector often lack basic skills or knowledge, such as how to write a project proposal.

According to the majority of NGOs interviewed, useful aid for the development of CSOs would combine elements of training, such as on public advocacy, and project activities in which acquired knowledge can be practised. This assistance formula is more appreciated than the simple provision of grants, and is usually used by US-funded civil society projects.

Donor aid is seen as helpful when it supports important trends in civil society, such as the consolidation of civil society movements, dialogue and cooperation with public authorities. The largest scale civil society initiative supported by donors is the Civic Assembly of Ukraine, a platform of 400 organisations that aim to influence the most important policy decisions, such as constitutional reform. It is a good example of how CSOs can organise themselves in pursuit of a common goal. However, despite the scale and high level of professionalism of this initiative, policy makers are reluctant to listen to it.

Thanks to donor aid, CSOs have managed to lobby for a better policy and legal environment for their work. This includes a government concept for civic society development, the introduction of civil society examination of public authorities' activities and a law on access to public information, although these changes remain vulnerable. Many successful projects have been implemented at a very local level, where small communities have been encouraged to self-organise and cooperate with local authorities to solve important problems in their day-to-day operation. One example of this is the UNDP Crimea Integration and Development Programme.

The main challenge for donors is the sustainability of the impact on civil society. Often, when a donor stops supporting an important issue, such as anti-corruption monitoring, CSOs are unable to continue the activity on their own. Thus it is vital that donors do not jump from one fashionable issue to another, but adopt a strategic approach in their civil society development programmes.

Donor contribution has also been crucial to the development of the **independent media**. With donor support, mainly from the US, many strong media organisations have appeared in Kyiv and the regions. Many of these contributed to the journalists' revolution in 2004 and to the media pluralism that emerged after the Orange Revolution. Donor interest in the media sector has continued, although media organisations experienced a decrease in funding after 2004–2005. For example, a Crimean journalist stated that donors had stopped funding media monitoring and legal support to journalists, while many problems with the freedom and ethnic tolerance of the media have persisted in the region.

Some critics also believe that the aid provided has not always been effective. For example, many donors finance short-term training for journalists, when it would be more effective to invest in long-term journalist education aimed not only at professional skills development, but also mission education. Interviewed journalists and media representatives believe that foreign donors supporting this sector in Ukraine do not understand its problems and that few donors contribute to the independence of the media in a systemic way.

Foreign aid to Ukraine's media remains very important. With a few exceptions (for example a non-degree digital journalism programme financed by Rinat Akhmetov's Foundation), there is no local funding for independent media. Education and media production, especially in the area of new media, are the sectors where donor support is seen by stakeholders as the most valuable. As a Kyiv journalist said, 'One has to educate journalists and show them good practices, success stories'.

Small production grants are considered more effective than numerous round-tables attended by the same media activists. Thanks to small institutional grants from IRF and USAID to a project on journalist investigation, an internet-based resource called Svidomo has been created in Kyiv. It supplies the regional press with its materials, and is gradually becoming self-sustaining. The project founder and director explained that they produce three articles a week, focusing on 'non-political topics' which are not very popular among the Ukrainian media. However, these topics are important for the population, who depend on policy-makers in Kyiv for an effective healthcare system and quality medicines, the environmental situation, and access to justice and education.

A similar project has been supported in Simferopol, Crimea. The investigation materials produced by the journalists are popular among local TV channels. Support to independent production has been extremely important during the economic crisis, as many independent media have been affected by the recession of the advertising market.

**Parliament and political parties** have not enjoyed significant donor support. Only two donors specifically deal with parliamentary development. Since 1994 USAID has supported a project on parliamentary institutional development (with an annual budget of EUR 1.1 million), and since 2009, the UK has funded programmes for parliamentary training, human resources development and management (EUR 330,000 for two years). The US, UK and Germany also fund party development activities.

The head of the parliamentary committee secretariat regards the exposure of parliament to international practice through advice and exchange visits as particularly valuable. Democratic practices such as public hearings have been introduced into the parliamentary committees' work. The committee benefits from involving different stakeholders in the law making process, as this brings expert knowledge and increases the legitimacy of their work.

The parliamentary committee official gave an example of the usefulness of foreign assistance and advice. 'If before we did not have the practice of public hearings, now we hold two to three hearings per session', he said. An important road safety law was adopted after a public hearing, to which government experts, civil society representatives and advisors of foreign embassies in Ukraine contributed. Statistics show that the number of fatalities in road accidents has since decreased. Now the law has been in force for one year, the committee is planning to hold a public hearing regarding its implementation. The interviewee opined that the role of the donor (USAID) was extremely important; as they managed to convince the members of parliament how important it is to listen to the public before introducing a draft law to parliament. However, there is such a high volume of draft laws that it is extremely difficult to have public hearing on each one. Other difficulties include how to provide all the interested parties with access to a hearing, and how to provide more information on which laws are being discussed.

Internship programmes are helpful to understaffed parliamentary units and they serve as a way of recruiting future parliamentary employees. The representatives of foreign embassies in Ukraine also provide valuable expertise and advice on many issues discussed in parliamentary committees. The parliamentary staff makes use of legislative analysis provided by donor NGOs. Local stakeholders argue that this is an area that requires much more foreign assistance. They believe that donors should pay more attention to practical aspects of law drafting (such as training provided by practitioners from different parliaments, introduction of modern information technologies) and internal audit issues, ensuring democratic decision-making procedures. Particularly important is more active engagement with the committee regarding the rules of parliamentary procedure; and with leaders of parliament and of the parliamentary factions. Increased assistance to the research and academic institutions that provide legal expertise on parliamentary acts has also been suggested.

Donor support to **political party development** has not borne fruit in terms of increasing intra-party democracy. As a representative of a donor organisation assisting party development mentioned, at the national level political parties do not see the value of democracy assistance to party structures, as they have enough money to contract any assistance they need. However, at the local level, political party activists show a



real interest in such support. The latter area may have great potential, especially for European bilateral donors. Training and study visits should include not only politicians and organisations of the so called 'pro-democratic' and pro-European parties in parliament, but also the parties which are more ambiguous in their support of European integration.

Donors recognise that successful projects in **good governance** are concentrated at local level (oblast, municipality, rayon). Here, success stories show that democratic governance is effectively promoted through development projects in which donors stimulate local government, business and community to work together. The donors' role is to encourage this cooperation through advice, technical assistance and matching funds. It is an obligatory condition that the community and local government invest their own money; this makes them more motivated in obtaining results. As one donor representative said of his experience, 'after we finished a project in one municipality, other donors came to us and asked us to come and work with them'.

At national government level there is a lack of political will to implement reform. The key reforms which the donor community is striving to move forward, such as civil service reform, reform of the judiciary and law enforcement agencies and decentralisation reform, remain incomplete. As a donor representative said, 'there has been a lot of effort on the donor side, but no gains for citizens'.

The positive impact of donor aid to the different levels of government primarily consists of exposing Ukraine's institutions to international influence, the effects of socialisation and increased engagement of the bureaucracy in European integration policies. The major improvement in European Commission aid has been from the 'weak' TACIS to the 'better, more result-oriented and aimed at institutional change' ENPI, which also brought accession policy tools such as Twinning and TAIEX to Ukraine.

Much work on policy development has been conducted through donor support. Thanks to donor support for the expert work of the National Commission on Strengthening Democracy and Establishing the Rule of Law, established in 2005 by presidential decree and composed of government and non-government presidential representatives, a reform of criminal justice and the legislation package for judicial reform have been developed. Under pressure from international organisations and with the help of donor support, anti-corruption policy initiatives have also been launched. However, the reform process stalls when it comes to decision-making in parliament, or at the level of implementation.

Still, many respondents believe democracy aid to the government has very limited impact. Some have said that donors should not continue to provide support if a recipient institution does not deliver on its obligations and does not improve its performance. Unconditional aid damages the effectiveness of foreign aid as a whole. It inspires abuse of funds by government agencies and can even breed corruption.

Donors should involve civil society in government policies or activities implemented with donor support to increase input legitimacy. NGOs argue that when donors provide assistance to the government, particularly budget support, they should ensure that a supported reform has been developed in a democratic way and that society's interests have been represented.<sup>30</sup> Civil society should also be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of government activities supported by donors, as this will increase the legitimacy and effectiveness of foreign aid.

The majority of stakeholders believe that **budget support** is an effective instrument for promoting change but that a number of important conditions must be established. Through budget support that does not involve intermediaries, more funds will potentially reach the beneficiaries. Nonetheless, it is important to establish control over the effectiveness and efficiency of funds used. In Ukraine, the government does not currently report on how it spends budget money.

ENPI budget support is provided to implement the sectoral reform strategies. But as these strategies are very weak (for example, the energy strategy of Ukraine until 2030) and have been widely criticised as incomplete and irrelevant, EU support to them is unlikely to bring a new quality to the sector.

<sup>30</sup> International Centre for Policy Studies conference on ENPI and NGOs, Kyiv, September 10, 2009.

The list of the supported programmes is not public. Information on aid amounts, beneficiaries and performance indicators is not available on the websites of the Cabinet or the respective ministries, nor is it provided on the request of NGOs. The NGOs working in the sector suspect that ENPI budget support is being used to cover general expenses of the Ministry. As one civil society representative observed, 'If you try to talk about this with ministries, they will tell you go away'.

The government did not establish a national system of monitoring and evaluation of budget support programmes. There are no guidelines on how budget support should be used. Thus every single project needs a separate governmental decree to use the aid.

EU budget support introduced in 2008 for energy sector reform in Ukraine has not yet been fully implemented. A Commission diplomat said that there had been a lot of difficulties in launching this cooperation modality and that the Commission was concerned that it would not be able to disburse future funds.

## Factors weakening the impact of aid

The factors weakening the impact of aid can be divided into two groups. Internal factors refer to specific conditions of the recipient country, while external factors refer to the shortcomings of donor modalities.

Among internal factors, **political instability** is a frequently cited reason why democracy aid has been unable to deliver, especially concerning projects aimed at institutional reforms or adoption of legislation. Donors often describe themselves as hostages of a political situation. The legislative deadlock and confrontation between different branches of power impede the reform process.

Other reasons for the limited impact of donor assistance include the **lack of political will** for reform within the Ukrainian government and the **absence of an agreed reform strategy**. Former 'Orange' allies have been unable to produce a common vision on reform priorities and directions. Important institutional reforms are seen by the key political actors through the prism of their short term political and economic interests. The clearest example of this is the debate surrounding constitutional reform.

As one donor representative explained, 'there has never been a cohesive reform strategy [...] and the donors face the fact that there is no coherent agreement on the path of reforms. Government is exposed to a very donor driven path of reforms, while the donors are doing whatever they want. That does not always help. Unless there is a tripartisan consensus nothing can help much. Thus aid has limited impact'.

The absence of genuine will to reform at the political level is reflected at the level of the public administration, which is a main recipient of good governance aid. As a result, cooperation of public administration with democracy assistance projects often remains declarative and formal. Ignorance is a frequent reaction of beneficiary government agencies to the aid projects. The director of an EU project to assist the government explained that meetings held between the project team and the beneficiary ministry were useful, but that follow-up work was never done. In the end, only intervention from the top, through the deputy prime minister's office, inclined the ministry to cooperate.

Another democracy assistance provider representative says that government agencies are unwilling to be involved in a project requiring policy change. 'They would prefer us to finance an event, not policy work. They are in a comfort zone, and our activity gets them out of it.'

Many stakeholders believe that donors should not finance certain governmental agencies, as their money is wasted because some recipient institutions obstruct any reform (as in the case of aid given to the Civil Service Department). When it comes to institutional reforms that require high level political decisions, donors must work with politicians not civil servants.

The lesson learnt by many donors on how to make aid to the government more effective is to work with institutional reforms only when a specific window of opportunity or a demand from the government appears.

As one donor representative expressed it, 'you cannot help unless the patient wants to be helped'. If there is opportunity to work on reform, donors should work on creating a favourable environment and nurturing demand for it (for example by providing information and raising awareness).

The volume of aid does not always correspond to results due to **ineffective donor policies**. Interviewed recipients mention serious shortcomings at all levels of the policy cycle, including planning, implementation, cost management and monitoring.

Many interviewees believe that local needs are not taken into account and that donors impose their own priorities. Aid which is not driven by local demand creates a grant-eating community that knows how to apply for and obtain funds, but does not bring change to Ukrainian society or consolidate democracy. A representative of a donor cooperating with the government said, 'there is no sense in imposing priorities, they will nod their approval, but will continue doing things their way'. A good donor practice is to consult beneficiaries and assess needs.

Many respondents mention the long, rigid decision-making procedures that characterise a large number of big donor organisations as a reason why aid is not always helpful. Big donors are usually two to three years behind schedule with their funding priorities. When such donors work in a project cycle, from the moment a project proposal application is submitted, through approval and financing procedures, to the moment when the project is launched, the situation on the ground can change dramatically. A head of one EU technical assistance project reveals that one of the major constraints is 'a lack of the flexibility on the part of the donor. The project was designed earlier, and was started too late; by that time the project environment and country needs had changed. For example, a lot of work had been envisaged for legal experts, but the project was designed where there was no UEPLAC (Ukrainian-European Policy and Legal Advice Centre)'. Good practice for big donors would be to have both small and readily available funds for activity support, and strategic long-term initiatives with a flexible review process.

A common opinion exists among many interviewed recipients that donors choose safety and convenience at the expense of effectiveness. Donors are more process than result oriented; they seem more interested in the smooth implementation and budget spending aspects of their projects than in the substantive results. With regard to civil society support, some donors are afraid to take risks and support new initiatives or work with new NGOs; they prefer to support organisations they already know. When it comes to aid to the government, donors seem to prioritise good relations with the government over their projects' results. One critic questions the donors' approach: 'If the EU-funded SIGMA report reveals that a particular government agency is not able to proceed with reforms, why do donors give it money [for reforms]? How could donors fund an anti-corruption project of the government agency which has a conflict of interest inside that stimulates corruption? Why do donors find appropriate in Ukraine what they do not permit in their own countries?'

Financial aid to promote democracy achieves limited results as donors do not take responsibility for the results of their activities and have nothing at stake if democratisation fails. One respondent said that most donors are not interested in Ukraine's future, with the exception of Poland, the UK and the US. Another stated that unless the European Union takes a strategic decision on a final goal regarding Ukraine's European integration, aid impact will be weak, introduced in an unsystematic and incomprehensive manner.

Another complaint from local actors is that aid projects need to be backed up by more focused **diplomatic pressure**. Although the biggest donors include positive conditionality in their aid programmes, it is not uniformly applied. The most telling example is the International Monetary Fund, which has been criticised for having provided ongoing tranches of millions of dollars to help Ukraine's government to handle the economic crisis, despite the fact that the latter has not completed any reform commitments.

The US and the EU employ *ex post* positive conditionality.<sup>31</sup> The EU awards additional funds from the government facility if an ENP country makes progress in reforms. In 2008, Ukraine received EUR 22 million from this fund. This money was designated to support the state budget in the energy and trade sectors and to provide funds for Twinning projects. The US Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) provides funding for

<sup>31</sup> D. L. Girod, S. D. Krasner and K. Stoner-Weiss, 'Governance and Foreign Assistance: The Imperfect Translation of Ideas into Outcomes', in A. Magen, T. Risse and M. A. McFaul (eds.), *Promoting Democracy and the Rule of Law. American and European Strategies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 67–76.

infrastructure development according to a country's needs if the country is a democracy and successfully combating corruption. Since 2006, Ukraine has participated in the Threshold programme in order to be eligible for large five-year grants (Compact) for development needs, and received USD 45 million from the US government for anti-corruption initiatives. If this was implemented successfully, Ukraine would be able to fully participate in the MCA. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian government has not performed well. A USAID official observed that this failure was due to the Ukrainian government's lack of genuine interest: 'there was not a lot of appreciation [of the anti-corruption aid] from the government. Ukraine has never expressed interest in participating in Compact'.

Negative conditionality, which envisages punitive political, diplomatic or economic sanctions imposed on a government unwilling to reform, is not applied to post-transition Ukraine, except for some rather small-scale cases. For example, Switzerland revised its technical assistance to the State Department for Execution of Punishment (SDEP) due to the latter's non-compliance with human rights standards. The SDEP did not allow human rights defenders access to penitentiary premises. In response, the human rights NGOs appealed to the international donors providing technical assistance to the SDEP to set up strict conditions for technical assistance to the SDEP. As a result, the Swiss Development Cooperation agreed to decrease the aid volumes and review the aid priorities in respect of this government body.

Generally, local stakeholders believe that international donors should use political pressure within their democracy promotion policies. Before 2004, the US government deployed diplomacy to persuade the former political regime to abandon repressive policies, but nowadays political pressure is not put into practice.

Many interviewees believed that donor diplomatic engagement is too soft and insufficient. That said, there are some cases where persistent appliance of diplomatic tools helped the aid project to achieve better results (for example HIV/AIDS Global Fund engagement with the government and the World Health Organisation's involvement in Ukraine).

Recipients also make a familiar plea for greater **donor coordination**, to avoid duplication and make better use of existing projects and results. Currently, it seems that some donors do not pay attention to what their colleagues are doing. There are a lot of useful projects, especially on a low level and a smaller scale, of which nobody is aware.

Interviews show that **quality of staff** in the donor community in Ukraine differs enormously. Presence of the donor organisation on the ground is greatly appreciated, as is a balance between international and local staff. As one media representative said, there is a problem when decision-makers in Washington or Brussels are consulted by four people who worked in different geographical areas. Donors are not expected to be up to speed with local problems as the situation is changing so rapidly. An example of a poorly informed donor policy is the funding of a study on Ukraine within the Council of Europe's regional project on torture prevention, when this topic has already been well researched in Ukraine.

As the head of one EU-funded project stated, 'Local people are needed in the project to provide an effective interface with the beneficiaries, and to enable working without translators'. A frequently cited example of a competent donor, relying completely on local staff, is the Soros Foundation. It is independent in defining programme priorities, and gets involved in consultation with civil society and the government. While other donor organisations that provide support to civil society might be skilled at managing projects and administrating financial resources, they are not seen to have a good understanding of local problems.

Donors who largely rely on foreign experts are seen to be more successful if their staff does not change frequently. If personnel stay the same, they have a greater understanding of beneficiaries' priorities and of stakeholders and their capacities. The best example is a current German director of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Kiev who speaks Ukrainian and Russian, publishes articles in Ukrainian newspapers, and regularly meets with Ukrainian politicians. This gives the foundation an opportunity 'to be an insider and outsider at the same time, gaining a much better and deeper picture of Ukrainian politics than other organisations operating from Washington DC or Brussels'.

Still, reliance on local staff and awareness of local context among the foreign personnel are not sufficient for aid to be successful. Some critics have observed that there is a group of locals who migrate from one project to another, contributing nothing to the quality of the projects on which they work.

## Conclusion

Foreign democracy assistance to Ukraine since 2005 has been affected by the 'democracy triumph' effect. The peaceful regime change and shift of power to pro-democratic political forces created the belief, both within and outside Ukraine, that the new government would proceed with necessary democratic reforms. Thus many donors reoriented their strategies from support to non-state civic and political actors, who were the driving forces behind Ukraine's transition, to support for the government. Paradoxically, although new donors and democracy assistance providers came to Ukraine after the Orange Revolution, the volume of democracy assistance has actually decreased.

As before 2004, foreign democracy assistance remains an important factor in Ukraine's democratisation. In the opinion of Ukrainian stakeholders, few reforms are initiated without foreign democracy support. Donor support remains not only crucial in terms of monetary value, but also in terms of the transfer of democratic values and practices to Ukraine.

Despite its significant role in Ukraine's democratisation, the impact of foreign aid has been increasingly disappointing. Democratisation in Ukraine is stagnating. To a large extent, domestic factors explain why the impact of aid has been limited. Since late 2005, Ukraine's politics has been unstable, with the policy making process in continuous deadlock. More importantly, Ukraine's political elite has not agreed on the path reform should take, as it is fully absorbed by an ongoing struggle for power.

But foreign donors are also responsible for the limited results of their work. Generally, donor policies have become more focused on intergovernmental top-down democratisation. This approach has limited results when strong external incentives for democracy consolidation – such as the EU accession prospect offered to Central and Eastern European countries – are unavailable. Moreover, donors have not been strict in applying aid conditionality to Ukraine, giving the government no incentive to fulfil commitments. Donors' policies make local stakeholders question whether foreign donors are more interested in the effectiveness of their aid or in smooth relations with the government or implementation of budget resources.

In the case of democratic consolidation in Ukraine, donors strive for a balance between top-down intergovernmental and bottom-up transnational democratisation. Success stories in the democracy assistance field in Ukraine show the importance of integrated support to government and non-government actors. Non-government actors – civil society, media and local communities – create local demand for reforms. This should be reflected in democratic assistance. Donors should promote the involvement of civil society at all stages of the support process to government actors. Support to non-state actors, such as civil society organisations and media, should aim to establish a favourable environment for their sustainable development, involving government actors in this process.

As foreign democracy assistance to Ukraine decreases, donors should promote the mobilisation of local resources and local philanthropy. Democracy donors who also provide development aid should aim to better integrate local resource mobilisation in their projects. Community–government–business cooperation should be encouraged. As the director of a Ukrainian community foundation said, 'philanthropy is a form of direct democracy'. It increases ownership and involves different stakeholders. Initiatives such as the joint project of George Soros and Victor Pinchuk's foundations on legal aid for low-income Ukrainians should be increased. As one civil society practitioner said, 'The change will come when Rinat Akhmetov finances what George Soros is now funding in Ukraine'.

There is a risk of degrading the very concept of democracy in Ukraine. Donors should devote more funds to initiatives showing what democracy is really about. Projects supporting citizen mobilisation, participation

at local level and socialisation through study visits and education exchanges need to be stepped up. This means that donors and their implementing partners should aim at grass roots level, working not only in Kyiv and major cities, but also in small towns and villages.

By providing support to institutional reforms (such as public administration), donors ensure that there is an explicit demand from the government and involvement at a high political level. However, parliament must be more involved in the reform process. While the majority of donors work throughout the spectrum of government agencies at different levels, only two donors work on parliamentary development.

Finally, donors to Ukraine should support greater aid transparency and empower civic and political actors to undertake a monitoring process. Local pressure on the government should be increased in order to discover how both domestic and external funds are used for reforms. Without the government accountability for spent funds, donor aid runs the risk of reinforcing domestic corruption.

## Appendix: Country Report Methodology

### Scope and aims of this report

This report assesses external democracy assistance in one country according to the views of local democracy stakeholders.

The report does not aspire to provide an exhaustive record of external democracy assistance to the country in question. Neither does it aspire to be a representative survey among local civil society at large. The scope of this project allows reports to provide only a rough sketch of external democracy assistance to the country assessed, and of the tendencies of local civil society activists' views on the latter.

### Sample of interviews

The report's findings are based on a set of personal interviews that were carried out by the author between spring and autumn 2009.

For each country report, between 40 and 60 in-country interviews were carried out. The mix of interviewees aimed to include, on the one hand, the most important international donors (governmental and non-governmental, from a wide range of geographic origins), and on the other hand, a broad sample of local democracy stakeholders that included human rights defenders, democracy activists, journalists, lawyers, political party representatives, women's rights activists, union leaders and other stakeholders substantially engaged in the promotion of democratic values and practices in their country. Wherever possible, the sample of interviewees included representatives from both urban and rural communities and a selection of stakeholders from a broad range of sectors. While governmental stakeholders were included in many of the samples, the focus was on non-governmental actors. Both actual and potential recipients of external democracy support were interviewed.

### Donors

The term 'donor' is here understood as including governmental and non-governmental external actors providing financial and/or technical assistance in the fields of democracy, human rights, governance and related fields. Among all the donors active in the country, authors approached those governmental and non-governmental donors with the strongest presence in this sector, or which were referred to by recipients as particularly relevant actors in this regard. An exhaustive audit of all the donors active in this field/country is not aspired to as this exceeds the scope of this study. While many donors were very open and collaborative in granting interviews and providing and confirming information, others did not reply to our request or were not available for an interview within the timeframe of this study. While we sought to reconfirm all major factual affirmations on donor activities with the donors in question, not all donors responded to our request.

We do not work to a narrow or rigid definition of 'democracy support', but rather reflect donors', foundations' and recipients' own views of what counts and does not count as democracy assistance. The fact that this is contentious is part of the issues discussed in each report.

### Anonymity

External democracy assistance to local activists is a delicate matter in all the countries assessed under this project. It is part of the nature of external democracy assistance that local non-governmental recipients, especially when openly opposed to the ruling establishment, fear for their reputation and safety when providing information on external assistance received to any outlet that will make these remarks public. In a similar vein, many donor representatives critical of their own or other donors' programmes will fear personal consequences when these critical attitudes are made public on a personal basis. In the interest of gathering a maximum of useful information from our interviewees and safeguarding their privacy and, indeed, security, we have ensured that all interviewees who requested to remain anonymous on a personal and/or institutional

### **Interview methodology**

In order to carry out field work, authors were provided with a detailed research template that specified 7 areas of focus:

1. A brief historical background and the state of democracy in the country;
2. A short overview of donor activities;
3. A general overview of local views on impact of democracy aid projects on the micro, meso and macro levels (including best practices and variations of the local and international understandings of the concept of 'democracy');
4. Local views on specific factors that have weakened the impact of democracy aid;
5. Local views on diplomatic back-up to aid programmes (including conditionality; diplomatic engagement; donor coordination; relevance, quality, quantity and implementation of programmes, etc);
6. An illustration of the above dynamics in one or two key sectors of support;
7. A conclusion outlining the main tendencies of local views on external democracy assistance.

Along these lines, semi-structured one-on-one interviews were carried out by the authors in the country between spring and autumn of 2009.

### **Key sectors of support**

Transitions to democracy are highly complex political, economic and social processes. No study of this scope could aspire to fully justice to them, or to external assistance to these processes. Aware of the limitations of our approach, we have encouraged authors to let their general assessment of local views on external democracy support be followed by a closer, slightly more detailed assessment of the dynamics in one or two key sectors of support. These were chosen by the respective authors according to their estimated relevance (positively or negatively) in the current democracy assistance panorama. In none of the cases does the choice of the illustrative key sectors suggest that there may not be other sectors that are equally important.