



INFO PACK

2019 Ukrainian Presidential Election

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Introduction

Ukraïne will head to the polls on March 31 to elect their next president. In the potential of no candidate reaching an absolute majority (50%+1), a second round run-off will be held on April 21 between the top two candidates. These elections are crucial for the region since it is the first presidential election following the 2014 Ukraine crisis.

Ukraine occupies a strategic location between Russia and Europe. An ambitious pro-Western political course following the Euromaidan protests in 2014 has driven the country towards a path where membership in the EU and NATO is being considered. At the same time, there is an organic political connection to Russia that remains intact, particularly in the east of the country. Furthermore, Crimea - annexed by Russia - and the conflict ridden Donbass region will not participate in the elections and continue to be one of the major agenda issues of presidential candidates.

Another main issue of concern is economic instability and widespread corruption that damages the credibility of the Ukrainian politics. The majority

of the Ukrainian population remains vulnerable to radical economic changes and the reforms under Poroshenko did not deliver as promised. Therefore, the main focus of citizens is on ensuring the government increases its efforts in fighting corruption and increases in living standards.

There are total 39 candidates running for the presidency. The popularity of famous actor and producer Volodymyr Zelensky - seen as an outsider and anti-establishment figure - makes him the most favored candidate according to recent polls. Yulia Tymoshenko - an experienced pro-European politician - is running for President once again and is receiving significant support despite having been involved in several political scandals throughout her career. As of publication, experts remain uncertain as to what the results of the vote may be.

This info pack gives an overview of the Ukrainian political system alongside major issues in Ukrainian politics. In addition, the info pack supplies detailed information about the candidates, their vision and specifications. Lastly, the most current polls and expert comments are also included on the context of the 2019 Ukrainian Presidential Elections.

Overview of Ukraine's Political System

- A semi-presidential representative democratic republic
- Multi-party system
- Executive system – Cabinet of Ministers (until 1996, jointly with the President)
- Legislative power – Verkhovna Rada (Parliament)
- Due to widespread corruption, non-independent judiciaries, oppressed media and low efficiency of the state among other issues, Ukraine ranks 84th in the Democracy Index. In 2016, the Economist Intelligence Unit has rated Ukraine as a “hybrid regime”¹, which entails that there are irregularities in elections that prevent free and fair electoral decisions.
- System built on personalities and their personal hegemony over political blocs.
- A fractured and highly diverse political system
- The legacy of the Soviet regime and the fears of separatism led to the over-centralization of the system, which fails to give power to regions and to create strong local authorities.
- The president is elected by popular vote for a five-year term. If a candidate fails to reach 50%+1 vote in the first round, the two most popular candidates face a run-off for the presidency in the second round. The President nominates the Prime Minister, which then needs to be confirmed by the Parliament. The current president is Petro Poroshenko who is elected independently, while Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman is representing the leading party in Petro Poroshenko Bloc.
- The Ukrainian Parliament - Verkhovna Rada - has 450 members and is elected for a four-year term.



(Vladimir Shtanko- AA)

¹ Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) compiled the Democracy Index where Ukraine listed as the “hybrid regime”, scoring lower than full and flawed democracies while being better than authoritarian regimes in various democratic and social freedoms. Hybrid regimes has irregularities in their elections which prevents political life to be fully fair and free.

Historical Background of Modern Ukrainian Politics

The modern political history of Ukraine began just a few months before the dissolution of USSR. On July 5, 1991, the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) created the office of the president of the Ukrainian SSR. Leonid Kravchuk, the then Chairman of the Rada, executed presidential authority until elections. The office of the President of Ukraine was established after the dissolution of the USSR and the independence of Ukraine.

Verkhovna Rada called for early elections. Leonid Kuchma, the former PM, won over Kravchuk in the second round of voting and became the second president of Ukraine.

Kuchma marked an important period of modern political history who is widely known as the main figure behind today's political instability in Ukraine. His period was infamous for its corruption scandals, oppression of the media and decline in the economy. His presidency is also

marked by positive developments in the relationship between Russia and Ukraine. He was reelected in 1999, and in the following he was at the center of the Cassette Scandal where his opponents accused him of being involved in the assassination of journalist Georgiy Gongadze and of approval of the radar systems sale to Saddam Hussein. The press also reported that Kuchma gained unofficial immunity in return of leaving the office peacefully in 2004 elections.



(Vladimir Shtanko- AA)

The first elections were held in 1991 where the voters voted for both the President and the Declaration of Independence. 92.26% of Ukrainians voted in favour of independence from the USSR and Leonid Kravchuk was elected as President with a record number of over 19.5 million votes (61.6%). Yet Kravchuk's rule was mostly considered as a transitional period for Ukraine from its Soviet roots where the President tried to keep a balance between conservatives and reformists. However, the President could not serve his full 5-year term since the

The 2004 elections witnessed massive protests, leading to what became known as the Orange Revolution. The two main candidates, Viktor Yanukovich and Viktor Yushchenko, received a similar amount of votes in the second round of voting in November 2004 and the electoral committee subsequently declared Yanukovich the winner. However, Yushchenko supporters did not accept the result and Yuliya Timoshenko, a close ally of Yushchenko, called the people to the Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) in Kiev.



(Nihat Dağdelen- AA)

Massive numbers of protesters came to the Maidan and demanded fresh elections. The event changed the course of Ukrainian politics, known as the "Orange Revolution" because of the use of orange banners and arm bands (Yushchenko's colour), became an inspiration for what became known as the "Colour Revolutions". The election results of 2004 clearly showed the divisions in the country where the west of Ukraine in the electoral map, including Kiev, was orange, Yushchenko voters, while most of the Russian-speaking East voted for Yanukovich, the blues. Nevertheless, the opposition claimed that Yanukovich, who cannot even speak and write in the official language of the country, was under influence of the Kremlin as well as the main face of the corrupted establishment. In contrast, Yushchenko was representing progressive pro-Western ideals and integration to the EU. People gathered in Maidan were not just Yushchenko supporters and even some of them were stating that they wanted anyone but Yanukovich. Eventually, the electoral commission ordered a re-run of the elections in December 2004. The deal conducted among the parties involved limiting the power of the President, mainly on the appointment and dismissal of the PM, before the election. In the re-run Yushchenko was elected president, representing a victory for one of the biggest peaceful protests in Ukrainian history.

After completing his term, Yushchenko decided not to run for second term. Interestingly, the Orange Revolution did not stop Yanukovich's bid to power, and after serving as Prime Minister under Yushchenko's presidency, he ran for president again and, in 2010, was elected as the fourth president of modern Ukraine.



(Sefa Karacan- AA)

Ukraine's Challenges: Conflict, Corruption and a Struggling Economy

Euro-Maidan Protests

Ukraine borders with Russia on the East and the European Union on the West. The current political crisis in Ukraine can be seen as a power struggle between internal factions with one side aiming to align with the European Union and the other with Russia. The crisis began with protests in the capital city of Kiev in November 2013 against Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich's decision to reject a deal for greater economic integration with the European Union (EU) and possible EU membership. For almost two decades, Ukrainians have sought economic reform that would enhance the country's economy. This has raised serious concern among pro-European protestors, who openly began condemning the government's corruption.

Massive street protests followed, accusing Yanukovich of what was seen as an attempt to dismiss Ukrainians who aim for more integration with the European Union. Waves of demonstrations and civil unrest, also known

as Euromaidan protests, soon expanded with calls for the resignation of Yanukovich and his pro-Russian government. The Ukrainian government carried out a violent crackdown on the protestors. The demonstrations started peacefully, but the violence intensified the leading to the 2014 Ukrainian Revolution.

After the brutal crackdown by state security forces, the situation in the country was exacerbated, forcing President Yanukovich to flee the country in February 2014. The Maidan Uprising was not only a momentous transition but also a chance for Ukraine to define itself in the contest against the Russian force. To uphold democratic values, protestors embraced the concept of citizenship that involves in individual citizen responsibility. The Euromaidan protests in Kiev were followed by the Crimean crisis and unrest in Eastern Ukraine.



(Aykut Ünlüpinar- AA)

Annexation of Crimea and the Separatist Movements in the Eastern Ukraine

After the Euromaidan demonstrations and the overthrow of Ukrainian President Yanukovich, Russian-backed fighters took control of strategic bases within the Crimean territory, which is predominantly inhabited by Russia population. The crisis exploded in March 2014, when Russian forces began occupying Ukraine's Crimean peninsula shortly after the pro-Western government took power in Kiev. The majority of Ukrainian troops did not show resistance and instead retreated from the Peninsula. Throughout the invasion, Crimean Tatars² tried to support its continued association with the Ukrainian government. Later on, a controversial referendum on the territorial status of Crimea was held, asking local populations whether they want to join Russia as a federal subject or to stay as part of Ukraine. This referendum was held during a Russian military occupation of the Crimean region, therefore, the referendum was regarded as illegitimate by most members of the European Union and the United States, calling it a Russian invasion. However after the referendum, Moscow signed a declaration with self-proclaimed Crimean officials, justifying and securing the annexation.

Crimea is geographically located on the Southern periphery of the former Soviet Union. Officially part of Ukraine, it lies on a peninsula between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov and separated by the narrow Kerch Strait. Russia has now expanded its full authority over the Crimean region and is now advancing its control over Ukraine's military bases in the province. The Kremlin's annexation of Crimea was seen by some as an attempt to return Russia to the glory of its

pre-Soviet days. However many world leaders condemned the annexation and considered it to be a violation of international law and of Russian-signed agreements that safeguard the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The conflict within Ukraine, particularly in Crimea created a political and ideological schism, where some of the eastern parts of Ukraine became pro-Russian while others pro-European.

This dispute resulted in a war between government forces and separatists backed by the Kremlin in Eastern Ukraine, namely in Donetsk and Luhansk cities, commonly known as the Donbass region. After the Euromaidan protests, Russian troops crossed the border into Ukrainian territory without the permission of the Ukrainian government. These events were followed by the strict control of the region by the Russian separatists. Two referendums were announced to determine whether these regions should seek any form of autonomy and to settle the territorial question in the region. Later on, the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) were announced, further expanding military control across these cities. More than 10,000 people have been killed there since 2014. As the war in eastern Ukraine drags into its sixth year, Ukrainians still see the war as the country's most pressing issue, outweighing any economic obstacles and corruption. Until now, Moscow uses eastern Ukraine to incite unrest in the country. The Ukrainian government is still trying to resolve the unrest and war with Russia as well as conflict resolution will remain the top priority for any candidates.



² Crimean Tatars are Turkic indigenous inhabitants of Crimean Peninsula.

Corruption in Ukraine

Corruption in the post-Soviet states is one of the major sources of the emergence of political and social disputes. Corruption in Ukraine is deeply rooted in its institutions, which is one of the main reasons for its poor performance in economy and diplomacy. Circumstances have meant that legal and political actors had no choice but to seek security guarantees from oligarchs and others involved in both legal and illegal activities. Bribery, facilitation payments, and abuse of office are widespread among Ukrainian public officials. Furthermore inadequate legal frameworks and poor enforcement weaken investor confidence. Three out of five Ukrainians consider judges corrupt, while more than half of Ukrainians consider the police corrupt. Moreover, companies do not trust the police to uphold order in the country. This, along with corruption, has become a major factor inhibiting foreign investment in the country.

After the 2014 Revolution, Ukraine has taken a few steps to reduce overcome corruption in civil life by introducing an anti-corruption package of laws and established new functional institutions. The Law on Prevention of Corruption introduces measures for monitoring the effective implementation of anti-corruption provisions. Cooperation between the EU and Ukraine helped to promote and improve this process. Ukraine's anti-corruption laws encompass corrupt misconduct in both the private and the public sectors. Despite its achievements, the level of corruption remains extremely high. Thus, the political will of the government representatives to fight corruption is seriously questioned. This has left the Ukrainian citizens increasingly pessimistic and skeptical given that much of the old voracious political class and the old system remain unchanged.

2019 General Elections

The revolution of 2014 gave Ukrainians the chance to choose the way in which their country should develop. Political developments inside the country were marked by a grave deficit of transparency and accountability. However, 2019 seems to have many promises for the country, as it is an election year in Ukraine.

On 25 November 2018, three vessels of the Naval Forces of the Ukrainian Armed Forces were involved in an incident with vessels of the Russian Federation near the Kerch Strait. As a result of these developments, the Ukrainian parliament convened the next day in order to introduce martial law for 30 days in 10 oblasts (regions). On the same day, the parliament voted to schedule the presidential election for March 31, 2019, with parliamentary elections to follow in the fall.

In Ukraine, the president is elected for five years through a nationwide majoritarian system. If no candidate wins an absolute majority of votes in the first round, a second round between the top two candidates will be held three weeks later.

By the end of the registration period, the Central Election Commission (CEC) approved 39 candidates who have been officially registered for the elections. March's presidential election holds decisive importance to the political parties, as the associated winner will have the best chance of getting good result in the general elections scheduled for October 2019.

Voter registration is passive and continuous and is based on the centralized State Voter Register. The number of registered voters is around 35.9 million. Voters are able to check their records online and can request amendments to their records with the Register Maintenance Body at their current residence.

Candidates should be older than 35 years, be a citizen of only Ukraine, have the right to vote, have resided in Ukraine for at least 10 years prior to Election Day, and have command of the Ukrainian language. Candidate registration begins from the official start of the election process (31 December for this election) and lasts until 55 days prior to Election Day.

Russia's position during these elections will be important to watch, as according to President Poroshenko, the Kremlin may try to intervene in the Ukrainian elections in a similar manner to how they are alleged to have done in the U.S. France, Germany, and referendums in the UK and the Netherlands.

Ukrainians are optimistic regarding the March elections, believing by nearly 2:1 that the next government will be more representative than the last. However, it seems too difficult, to determine not only which candidate is most likely to win, but also which candidate will make it to the second round. This presidential election will take place in a difficult political, economic and security environment against the backdrop of continuous challenges to Ukraine's

territorial integrity that started in 2014. The opacity of the political challenges reflects the competition between various oligarchic groups.

Moreover, the entire presidential campaign is based on Ukraine's political stance in the region and the promise of ending the war with Russia as soon as possible. However, we have to take into account that the conflict is still ongoing. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) recorded 34,766 conflict-related casualties in Ukraine from April 14, 2014, to August 15, 2017. This includes 10,225 people killed and 24,541 injured.

The campaign is expected to be intense and divisive and focus on issues related to economic development and social protection, territorial integrity and peace efforts,

corruption, and future relations with the European Union, NATO and the Russian Federation.

The main contenders, apart from the pro-Russian candidates, do not differ in their declared views concerning the country's strategic development. Each of them has declared their support for Ukraine's integration with the EU and NATO, for continuing the reforms and modernizing Ukraine's political-economic model along Western lines, and for the reintegration of occupied Crimea and parts of the Donbas. It is worth emphasizing that since 2014, and as a result of the conflict with Russia and the de-facto loss of these territories, the pro-Russian factor, while still strong in southern and eastern regions, has been substantially weakened on the national level, and can only rely on about 15–20% of the vote.

Elections in Donetsk, Luhansk and Crimea

Since the onset of armed conflict in the eastern Ukraine region, Russia expressed that no significant progress should be expected prior the Ukrainian presidential elections. The Kremlin is actively trying to put pressure on a pro-Western Ukrainian government and prevent it from any participation in the electoral process.

The Central Election Commission (CEC) has announced that the presidential elections will be held in 12 out of

21 districts in the Donetsk region, as well as in 6 out of 11 districts in the Luhansk region, while the elections in Crimea will not be held at all, as the region is under strict Russian control. Therefore, since some territorial districts are not registered and the election campaign is not held, individual polling will not take place. Around 12% of eligible voters will not be able to vote due to the Crimean annexation and the occupation of parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts by separatist forces.



Main Candidates

The president exercises considerable power over foreign and defense policies and holds certain executive powers, including the right to suspend the decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers and the right to appoint the heads of regional state administrations. According to Ukrainian law, a presidential candidate must be a citizen of Ukraine who is at least 35 years old, can speak Ukrainian language and has lived in Ukraine for the last ten years prior to Election Day. Candidate registration began from the official start of the

election process, which is 31 December and lasts until 55 days prior to Election Day.

The president is elected for five years through a nationwide majoritarian system and can serve up to two consecutive terms. A candidate needs to receive more than 50% of the valid votes cast to win in the first round. If no candidate receives the majority of votes, a second round takes place three weeks after the first round between the two candidates who won the most votes.

Petro Poroshenko (53)



(Dursun Aydemir - AA)

- Incumbent President of Ukraine, businessman.
- His supporters formed Poroshenko Bloc "Solidarity" – a coalition of parties – which holds majority in the Parliament.
- Won the 2014 Presidential elections with percentage of 54.70%.

• Talks about fighting corruption, increasing the country's prosperity and wealth, and ensuring conditions for innovations in economics and social justice.

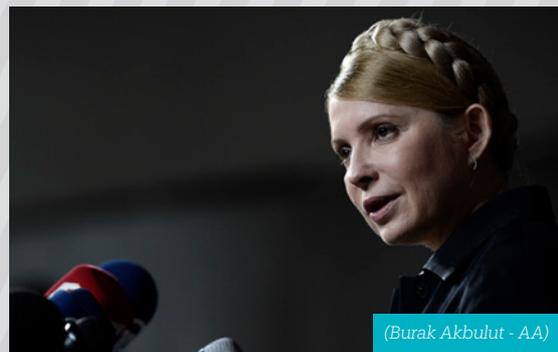
- The main motto of his election campaign is 'Army, Language, Faith' and 'To Live in a New Way'.
- His supporters often justify his situation by saying "it's not his fault, he came in the wrong time, and everything is fine and should continue".
- Promises his campaign is built around the state security and stability, protection from Russian influence, alliance with the West and the post-Maidan accomplishments, mostly in creating a strong national identity.
- Accused of bringing defective parts for military equipment from Russia at high prices. The scandal is likely to negatively affect Poroshenko's campaign.

Yulia Tymoshenko (58)

- People's Deputy of Ukraine and former Prime Minister.
- Batkivshchyna Fatherland Party.
- Towards the end of 1999, she became part of the government of Viktor Yushchenko as Deputy Prime Minister responsible for the fuel-energy sector.
- Tymoshenko was accused of the excess of authority because she made a deal, due to which Ukraine agreed to pay a higher price for Russian gas.
- She was arrested on February 13, 2001, and charged with bribery.
- In 2004, she was one of the leaders of the 'Orange Revolution'.
- In November 2007, she again became head of the government.
- In February 2010, Tymoshenko lost the presidential election to Yanukovich when she won 45.5% of the vote in the second round.
- Promises a new constitution, territorial integrity of Ukraine, to keep Ukraine's cooperation with the IMF,

reduce taxes, and liberalize the energy market and cheaper energy tariffs.

- Tymoshenko has had several criminal charges against her for bribery, and accusations of corruption and tax evasion have been made in the last year arising from dubious sources of financing for her massive US lobby campaign.



(Burak Akbulut - AA)

Anatoliy Hrytsenko (61)



(Valentyn Ogirenko - REUTERS)

- A reserve colonel, a former deputy, a former defense minister (2005-7).
- Head of Civil Position Party.
- In 2004, he was responsible for the media and analytical support of Viktor Yushchenko's election campaign.
- In 2014, he was accused of military property theft worth over 1.3 billion UAH (approx. 48 million USD).

- In May 2014, he stood in the presidential elections, receiving 5% support (fourth place). In the same year, his Civic Position Party failed to pass the 5% electoral threshold in the parliamentary elections. Since 2015, he has been a lecturer at the Kiev-Mohyla Academy.
- Promises to defend Ukraine against any invasion from Russia and deal with corruption and the oligarchic system of power in the country.
- He is a firm supporter of Ukraine's current pro-Western course; he supports membership in the EU and NATO.

Yuriy Boyko (60)

- Former Vice Prime Minister and former Minister of Fuel and Energy.
- Independent, but in the alliance of Opposition Platform – For Life.
- Received 0.19% of the vote in the 2014 presidential election.
- Promises to end the war in the East, tax reforms, increase accessibility and quality of the social services, ensure energy security, fight against corruption and augment the authority of local governments;
- Accused of corruption and being an agent of the Kremlin.



(Olga Ivascenko - AA)

Oleg Lyashko (46)

- Politician and journalist.
- Member of Verkhovna Rada (MP).
- Leader of the Radical Party.
- Received 8.32% of the vote in the 2014 presidential election, coming in the third place.
- Promises to end political and economic chaos, shrink the government, decrease the number of MPs, empower youth, increase in wages and pensions, create jobs and stop brain drain, increase the strength of the army and end the war in Donbass.
- Accused of fascism, populism, provocation, and starting fist fights in the Parliament.

Volodymyr Zelensky (41)

- Screenwriter, actor and director.
- Acquired nationwide popularity with the TV series 'Servant of the People' where he portrays an honest and anti-establishment high school history teacher who becomes the president of Ukraine after getting popular in social media. He is popular among youth, protest voters and an alternative seeking electorate.
- Has a law degree but with no previous experience in politics.
- A strong frontrunner in the presidential race. A Russian-speaker from Eastern Ukraine he has been learning Ukrainian in the run up to the election.
- Promises to be an alternative to current sociopolitical climate or economic migration, to create honest politics and change the establishment in the country as his character does in the show. He admits that the people want to see his portrayal of the president in the show as

the elected politician;

- Accused of being the long hand of Ihor Kolomoyskyi, the owner of the channel 1+1 where Zelensky's show plays, former governor of Dnipro and a nemesis of Poroshenko, with significant business ties to Russia.

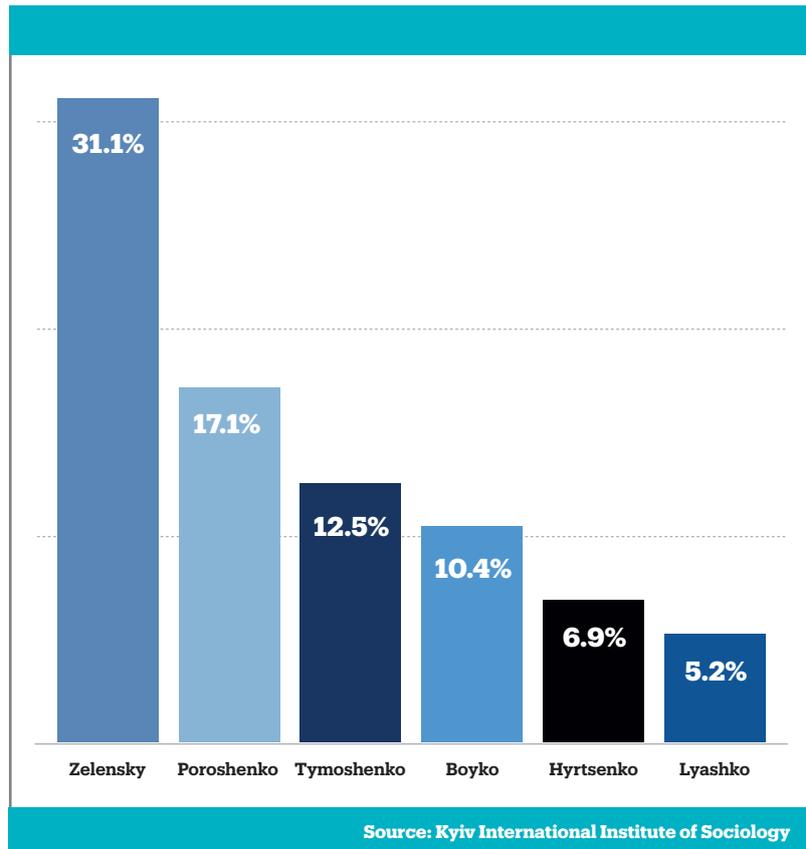


(Valentyn Ogirenko - REUTERS)

Opinion Polling for the 2019 Ukrainian Presidential Election

Nine different polls were taken in early 2019. Zelensky was leading in all of the polls while the second and the third place shifted between Tymoshenko and Poroshenko. Radical voters who want to submit a protest vote usually mentioned the names of either Zelensky or Lyashko. There were also polls for the possible second round of the voting where the polling companies mainly focused on four or five names including Zelensky, Poroshenko, Tymoshenko, Boyko or Hyrtsenko. As previously, Zelensky seems to be victorious in all possible duels, while Tymoshenko has an advantage against Poroshenko in the possible race of two candidates in the second round.

According to the latest polls conducted by Kyiv International Institute of Sociology and revealed on March 25, 2019, Volodymyr Zelensky is leading by a significant margin. However, if the polling is accurate, the second round is inevitable as none of the candidates reach 50%+1 of the vote.



What Expert Say?



Anna Korbut

Chatham House
Academy Robert Bosch Fellow, Russia and Eurasia
Programme

What is your general opinion on the Ukrainian Presidential Elections and the situation in the country?

The 2019 presidential election is competitive and risky.

Competitive for a number of reasons:

1. 39 candidates are running. There are 3-4 top contenders but there is a lot of uncertainty over who will win the race.
2. The main component of the campaign has been criticism and negativity, followed by promises. Action plans or strategies to deliver have been secondary although they should be first in Ukraine's context given its economic and security challenges.
3. A lot of dirty and populist tricks used by both the incumbents and their competitors.

Risky because they are a fragment society and inflate expectations with a dangerous rhetoric such as:

- Ending the war even though the key to that is in the Kremlin.
- Focusing on more "people power" when a lot of voters don't know the difference between the president's portfolio and that of the government or parliament.
- Unrealistic economic promises without explanation on how to implement them.
- Promises to apply for EU and NATO membership by 2023 when the prospect seems unrealistic at this point (at the same time, ambivalence on the foreign policy choices or rhetoric along the lines of "we will

only apply when they want to see us there" are neither reasonable nor wise). This hardly contributes to Ukraine's resilience, which is key given the existential threat from Russia and the emerging uncertainties in the broader geopolitical context.

What kind of change Ukrainian citizens are expecting from candidates and elections?

That depends on whose electorate you are looking at. The voters of Petro Poroshenko expect pragmatism; focus on defense and stability, especially in the context of the existential threat from Russia. They also demand to fight against corruption but are willing to wait longer for it to be cleaned up (realize that it will not disappear overnight) and put it after the security priority, not before. The voters of Yulia Tymoshenko are looking for better socio-economic conditions (wages, pensions, lower utility rates etc) and someone who expresses their grievances with status quo. But the problem is that they do not give much thought to how Ms Tymoshenko could implement her promises or what that would mean for the country's overall economic stability and further development. The voters of Volodymyr Zelenskiy are looking for an anti-establishment candidate, a "new face". They like him for being an "honest guy". He has made some good moves, mainly on social media by creating an image of "hearing people" and their concerns. He has yet to explain how exactly he would meet these concerns and do what the incumbents have failed to do such as abolishing corruption, cleaning up the judicial system, demonopolizing the economy and improving it to the point where it will generate enough wealth for Ukrainians to be happy with their living standards etc. Anatolii Hrytsenko and the coalition shaping up around him (especially for the parliamentary election) also presents himself as anti-establishment and representative of the post-Maidan democratic movements and parties, which also appeals to people who want a determined position on Ukraine's geopolitical choice, resistance against Russia and fight against corruption.

I am not describing other candidates because I do not think any of them stands a chance of getting into the second round. However, what I mean is that there is no one expected. The concerns that come up in public opinion polls are mostly about the war, socio-economic conditions (growing utility tariffs, lower purchasing power etc. - these points concern 50% and more people), unemployment, top-level corruption (up to 25% of the polled).

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