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## Cultural Policy in Ukraine (1991-2005)<sup>1</sup>

### Historical Background

For seven decades after the loss of its short-lived independence of 1918-1920, Ukraine did not have the opportunity to set its own public cultural policy. The moderate Ukrainization policies of the 1920s, the cultural pogroms of the 1930s, the creeping Russification of the 1970s and the implementation of Gorbachev's *glasnost*' in Ukraine in the 1980s were merely local interpretations of policies designed by the Communist leadership in Moscow. The Soviet regime tried not only to bring Ukrainian culture wholly into its service (as it did Russian culture), but also to reduce it to the level of a provincial, inferior culture and, in the long run, to assimilate it into the so-called 'multinational Soviet culture'. However, the regime was not interested in 'killing culture'. On the contrary, it regarded the cultural revolution aimed at creating the New Soviet Man to be one of its greatest achievements. A dense cultural infrastructure, as well as broad and very cheap access to many basic cultural facilities and practices were always a part of the Soviet way of life.

As a result of Soviet cultural policy, a massive public cultural infrastructure was created in Ukraine, fully administered and funded by the Soviet party-state. This cultural infrastructure, which included performing arts organisations, museums, libraries, heritage institutions, book publishing and the press, reached its peak in the 1970s. There followed a long period of stagnation. There was practically no growth in Ukrainian book publishing until *perestroika*. The Soviet Ukrainian-language press actually declined in the 1970s and early 1980s. The number of films made in Ukraine may seem

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impressive in comparison with the output of other small national film industries, but in terms of cultural content these productions were, save for a handful of titles, a mediocre part of mainstream Soviet film production.

With the onset of *perestroika* it became possible to discuss the issue of a genuine national cultural policy for Ukraine. In 1988, the prominent ex-dissident writer and scholar Ivan Dziuba published a seminal essay, 'Do We Conceptualize National Culture as a Complete System?' which stimulated a vibrant discussion in Ukrainian intellectual circles. Dziuba observed that 'everywhere in contemporary Ukraine Ukrainian national culture exists alongside Russian culture and is surrounded by Russian culture, including Russian culture produced in Ukraine by both Russians and Ukrainians. Often, especially in big cities, it is Russian, not Ukrainian, culture that sets the tone of cultural life'.<sup>2</sup> Dziuba argued for a 'new cultural Ukrainianization':

There is a need for a philosophical and sociological concept of Ukrainian national culture and its multifaceted aesthetic manifestations, as well as a need for every [culturally active person] to learn to think, using not only categories derived from his or her profession, but also categories of national culture as a totality, as a system. ... For culture-makers – people of the arts – this also implies the necessity of a special kind of self-perception or spiritual condition that one could describe as a sense of mission or as patriotism inspired by reason, spirit and a broad, humanist world view.<sup>3</sup>

When Ukraine achieved independence in 1991, the task of 'cultural Ukrainization' took a more practical shape, and many believed that a renaissance of Ukrainian culture would soon follow. The reality, however, turned out to be otherwise. Dziuba's call for the Ukrainian artist to be motivated by a 'sense of mission' was now supplemented by a demand that the independent Ukrainian state develop a clear and effective cultural policy. Many critics believed, however, that the State's cultural policy during this period was inadequate and inert, or even that there was no sensible or articulated cultural policy at all.

Statements about the 'crisis of Ukrainian culture' or, at least, about its unexpected underperformance during the first decade of Ukraine's

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<sup>2</sup> Ivan Dziuba, 'Chy usvidomliuiemo natsional'nu kul'turu iak tsilisnist'?' *Nauka i kul'tura*, vypusk 22 (Kyiv: Znannia, 1988), 309-25, here 315.

<sup>3</sup> Dziuba, 325.

independence were commonplace in public discussions during the 1990s. There were obvious positive changes, such as the emergence of an undeniable freedom of artistic expression, the end of the state monopoly on financing and managing cultural organisations, and an unprecedented openness to the world. But it was also a fact that, during the 1990s, the financial conditions of the majority of Ukrainian cultural institutions deteriorated dramatically, while the social status and the income of Ukrainian artists and other professionals in the cultural sector fell considerably below what they had been, for instance, under *perestroika*. Several thousand public cultural institutions, including cinemas, local cultural centres and libraries, went out of business. Ukrainian book publishing plummeted until 2001, and domestic film production practically ceased. Participation in cultural activities shrank as well. Ukrainians began to buy fewer books and newspapers and to visit cinemas, theatres and museums less frequently than they had done twenty or even ten years earlier (although there was a slight increase after 2000). Some optimistic observers compared this state of affairs to similar transitional situations elsewhere in Eastern Europe, concluding that it resulted from changing cultural practices and the introduction of new communication technologies, especially video and the Internet. But in a poor post-communist country like Ukraine, many argued, it was not the Internet and globalization that were to be blamed for the decay of the public cultural sector, but deep economic crisis and bad governance.

On the other hand, vibrant non-public cultural industries evolved during the 1990s, bringing about a radical change in the balance between the public and private sectors in culture, especially in the popular and mass culture industries. This was especially evident in the electronic media. At the time of writing (May 2004) hundreds of private local television and radio stations throughout Ukraine manage to get along with virtually no support from the State. Only a few of them are commercially sustainable, however. The rest depend on (politically motivated) injections of money from their owners. Even state television channels lease prime programming time to such private companies as 'Studio 1+1' and 'Inter', the two most popular commercial TV channels in Ukraine. A similar situation can be seen in book publishing. There are several hundred independent publishing houses in Ukraine which since the early 1990s have been publishing more new book titles than state publishers. Since 1999 they have also been printing more copies of books than public publishing houses.

In addition to the allegedly apathetic State, a major factor that is blamed for the sorry plight of the Ukrainian cultural sector is the rapidly increasing flow of mass-cultural imports from the West and from Russia. Ukrainian cultural markets and electronic media are dominated by Russian books, American films, and Russian and Western pop-music. Russian cultural industries have made substantial progress since the time of *perestroika*, and their products are widely consumed in Ukraine by both Russophone and Ukrainophone audiences. Some commentators argue that this poses a critical threat to Ukrainian cultural development and, in the long run, to Ukrainian national identity. Others believe that this constitutes a crisis, not of Ukrainian culture, but of public cultural institutions inherited from the Soviet past, whereas the national culture as a whole is better viewed as undergoing a difficult transformation process in which positive and negative trends intertwine. According to this view, the difficulties faced by independent cultural organisations, both non-profit and commercial, are caused mostly by general economic hardship, by the low purchasing power of the Ukrainian public, and by the growing pains of the still very young Ukrainian cultural industries with their inexperienced managers and shortage of investments. The virtual absence of state financial support for independent cultural organizations in Ukraine, it is argued, is not unique in the context of post-communist Eastern Europe; given a fiscal environment friendly to non-government organizations, independent cultural bodies can support themselves through earnings and skilful fundraising.

### **The Cultural Situation in Independent Ukraine**

Ukrainian culture after 1991 could be seen as facing a number of important challenges. The first was the challenge of the change of the political and economic order. The collapse of the Soviet Union with its centrally planned economy, the only environment that Ukrainian culture had known for decades, demonstrated this culture's temporary inability to exist independently, without public support or control, whether financial or institutional. Ukrainian culture of the early 1990s was unprepared for changed circumstances in which it was necessary to struggle for audiences, their attention and money. An effective response to this challenge by the State would have required the successful completion of two tasks: the creation of a new, market-oriented

cultural infrastructure and a new cultural policy; and the preservation of the existing network of public cultural institutions (with some inevitable losses, of course). Not much of this has been accomplished, however. The majority of public cultural institutions inherited from the Soviet period still exist today, but the principles of public cultural policy and the manner of its implementation have changed very little.

The second major challenge has been that of openness and globalization. Until the 1990s Ukrainian national culture could be said to comprise two loosely connected parts: a high culture for the Ukrainian intelligentsia and a traditional, folklore-centred culture for peasants and ex-peasants. Ukrainian culture was caught unawares by the fall of the Iron Curtain and the resulting unprecedented confrontation and competition with Western mass culture, as well as a rapidly commercializing Russian post-communist popular culture. The negative consequences of this unpreparedness became visible as early as the 1990s: Hollywood movies and Latin American soap operas dominated Ukrainian cinemas and TV, the musical market was full of pirated CDs of Western music, and the Ukrainian book market was swamped by Russian pulp fiction. This made the protection of the immature national cultural industries one of the top priorities of Ukrainian cultural policy. However, this priority was seldom perceived as such by policymakers. Still, despite its low starting point and the apathy of the State, Ukrainian popular culture showed remarkable viability and managed to gain a foothold, at least in domestic markets.

The final challenge to be addressed here is the challenge of nation-building. The 'incompleteness' of the Ukrainian political nation referred to by some analysts means that Ukrainian culture has yet to achieve the goals that other European cultures achieved decades ago. The Ukrainian 'national culture' of the Soviet era was supposed to meet the cultural demands of one socio-cultural group, namely, 'nationally conscious' Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians. Such a culture has not been able to satisfy the demands and tastes of other social and cultural groups and strata in contemporary Ukrainian society. In order to accommodate each other, Ukrainian culture and the rapidly changing Ukrainian society still have to undergo a long and painful transformation process: the heterogeneous society has to become a modern political nation, while the Ukrainophone culture of ethnic Ukrainians has to transform itself into the shared culture of this ethnically diverse nation.

The cultural transformation taking place in contemporary Ukraine consists of four elements. An ideological (value) transformation involves a shift from collectivist to individualist values, from the *Weltanschauung* shaped by Soviet egalitarianism and the Soviet shortage economy to that of Western consumer society. Ideally, such a transformation would bring with it ideals of liberal democracy and free enterprise to replace the values of the *ancien régime*. In reality, however, the process of value transformation is socially and demographically fragmented and regionally diverse: while younger generations of Ukrainians, especially in big cities, embrace individualism and consumerism, elderly people, especially in the countryside and in economically depressed, de-industrialized Eastern Ukraine, are often frozen in a post-Soviet consciousness characterized by cultural nostalgia for 'good old' Soviet songs, films and books.

Symbolic changes are visible in the public use of icons of national heritage and history. The use of such symbols is intended to reflect and promote national consolidation and national identity-shaping. At the level of public consciousness, the transformation of the population of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic into a Ukrainian political nation may be said to have come a certain distance, although it is still far from completion. It has also less of a culturally and linguistically 'Ukrainizing' character than the national democrats of the early 1990s had anticipated and hoped.

As far as institutional changes are concerned, one can point to the economic transformation of the cultural sector, including the development within it of market structures, and to reforms, however insufficient, of sectoral legislation and public administration. In contrast to the situation that prevailed in the Soviet era, the State has greatly limited the extent of its interventions in cultural matters and has provided a legal framework for private as well as non-commercial, non-government initiatives in the cultural sphere. On the other hand, no stable structure for public-private partnerships in culture has been created so far. Nor can domestic cultural industries boast much attention and support from the State.

The transformation of cultural practices has been determined by socio-political changes, especially the collapse of the Soviet ideology-dominated system of 'cultural supply' and the arrival of Western mass culture in independent Ukraine, as well as by the spread of new technologies. Processes of change in cultural practices are widespread and rapid in contemporary

Ukraine, but the State does not seem to be willing or able to articulate its goals in relation to these processes, let alone take action to achieve such goals. For instance, the rapid development of the network of technically advanced commercial cinemas, fuelled by high box office income from Hollywood movies, has had no positive impact so far on the national film industry, which remains in deep crisis.

### **Goals, Principles and Priority Tasks of Public Cultural Policy in Ukraine**

In the context of such challenges to national culture, public cultural policy could play a crucial role. Such a policy, if well designed, could provide legal, institutional and financial foundations for the development of modern Ukrainian culture as an important factor in the shaping of a mature democratic society and a stable modern national identity – factors that are preconditions of Ukraine’s success as a member of the international democratic community and a respected actor on the international cultural scene.

There have been several attempts to formulate in legislation a set of principles, goals and priorities for Ukraine’s public cultural policy. Chronologically, the first document of this kind was the Basic Law of Ukraine on Culture, adopted by parliament in February 1992 during the period of so-called ‘state building’. This act was the main official cultural policy document of the initial period of independence. The following were listed as ‘Main principles of cultural policy in Ukraine’ (Article 2):

- Recognition of culture as a key factor of the selfhood [*samobutnist*] of the Ukrainian nation and national minorities living in Ukraine;
- Consolidation of humanistic ideas and high moral principles in the life of society, orientation toward national and universal human values which are recognized as prior to political and class interests;
- Protection and accumulation of cultural heritage;
- Promotion of cultural contacts with Ukrainians abroad so as to preserve the integrity of Ukrainian national culture.
- Assurance of artistic freedom and the non-interference of the State, political parties and other public associations in the creative processes;
- Equal rights and opportunities for all citizens, regardless of social condition and national origin, to create, use and disseminate cultural goods;
- Access to cultural goods and all kinds of cultural services and activities for all citizens;

Provision of necessary conditions for the development of creativity for every individual and for the aesthetic education of each citizen;  
 Promotion of charitable activities by enterprises, organisations, civic and religious associations, and individuals in the cultural sphere;  
 Multifaceted international cultural co-operation;  
 Recognition of the priority of international legislation in the sphere of culture.<sup>4</sup>

The final principle had a distinctively post-Soviet flavour: ‘Combination of State and civil [*hromads’kykh*] principles in promoting cultural development’. Perhaps this was supposed to encourage both public and private patronage of culture, but the very term ‘private’ was burdened with negative connotations in the minds of Ukrainian legislators at the time, so the word ‘civil’ was used instead.

The influence of Ivan Dziuba’s ideas on this document is obvious. Its general mood is an enlightening and moralistic one, reminiscent of Raymond Williams’s ‘paternalistic’ model of cultural communication.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Article 3, which reformulated some of the principles enunciated in Article 2 as ‘Priorities in cultural development’, declared that such priorities were ‘defined by special purpose Government programs’, apparently overlooking the possibility that Ukrainian society, or the artistic community, might have a role in determining such priorities.

The next attempt to set the goals and principles of cultural policy for the Ukrainian State took place in June 1997 when the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted a set of ‘Conceptual Guidelines for the Activity of the Executive Government Concerning the Development of Culture’. This document declared that development of Ukrainian culture should be based on the following ‘generally accepted’ principles:

Recognition of the value and independence of culture and the arts;  
 Formation of an integral national cultural space as a key factor of national consolidation and nation-building;  
 Provision of conditions necessary for the active presence of the Ukrainian language in all key fields of cultural life; assurance of freedom of creativity,

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Osnovy zakonodavstva Ukrainy pro kul’turu’, <<http://www.ndiiv.org.ua/ua/pravo/zakonua/ap/04.htm>>.

<sup>5</sup> See Raymond Williams, ‘Communications and Community’ [1961], in Robin Gable (ed.), *Resources of Hope* (London: Verso, 1989), 19-31.

free access to cultural goods and to artistic creativity for all citizens, especially the young;

Support for professional artistic creativity to ensure that high levels of quality are maintained in the national culture, regardless of political or commercial conditions;

Protection of the national cultural heritage (movable and immovable monuments and treasures, museums, heritage reserves etc) as the foundation of national culture; provision for the further development of the traditional cultures of the peoples and ethnic groups living in Ukraine;

Funding by the organs of central and local government of essential [cultural] infrastructure and of cultural institutions of national and regional significance;

Government support for cultural and artistic organisations and associations, regardless of their legal status and form of ownership, as well as for individual artists;

Creation of legal and economic incentives for non-public funding of culture and the arts.<sup>6</sup>

As for the main tasks and priorities of public cultural policy, the Conceptual Guidelines proclaimed the need for a comprehensive reform in the cultural sphere, which was to include the following processes:

Creation of a legislative base for the cultural and artistic sphere which would satisfy modern international standards and contribute to the flourishing of the Ukrainian nation;

Reform of property and financial management in the cultural sector;

Promotion of the establishment and consolidation of a network of non-government cultural and artistic organisations (artistic associations, foundations, professional guilds, artistic groups etc.) ... by means of economic, institutional and legal instruments, as well as backing from the State and the general public;

Establishment of conditions for a sound protectionism with respect to national culture and domestic cultural products, so as to make them competitive in both national and international markets.

Unfortunately, few of these objectives were implemented. It would also be an exaggeration to say that the Conceptual Guidelines had a strong impact on public cultural policy. One of the reasons for their failure was that the legal

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<sup>6</sup> 'Kontseptual'ni napriamy diial'nosti orhaniv vykonavchoi vlady shchodo rozvytku kul'tury' [Resolution No. 675, 23 June 1997], <[http://www.nplu.kiev.ua/uk/profy/official/r\\_direction.htm](http://www.nplu.kiev.ua/uk/profy/official/r_direction.htm)>.

status ‘conceptual guidelines’ is unclear: such a document is neither a law, nor a government decree. After the parliamentary elections of 1998, the presidential elections of 1999 and the subsequent change in the Cabinet of Ministers, few people remembered the Guidelines or the principles and goals that they articulated.

Despite the adoption of several culture-related laws after 1997, Ukraine’s cultural legislation remained ineffective and incomplete. No structure of partnership with the private sector was created, and protectionist tax incentives were introduced for Ukrainian book publishing only. Many politicians, artists and cultural workers felt the need for a new, more comprehensive and effective public cultural policy document. The ‘Concept of a National Cultural Policy 2005-2007’, adopted by parliament in March 2005, produced yet another version of goals, principles and priorities for Ukraine’s public cultural policy:

- 1) Making the cultural development of Ukraine as a whole and of its regions a priority sector of action for both central and local government;
- 2) Drafting and adopting a long-term program of cultural development for Ukraine, as well as promoting the drafting of middle-term regional programs of cultural development;
- 3) Administrative reform in the cultural sector and, specifically, the reorientation of central and local government from performing particular functions [in culture] to setting and achieving concrete goals; involvement of the public in cultural governance and management;
- 4) Creation of an effective model to provide financial, material and technical resources for cultural development;
- 5) Design, adoption and implementation of national, State-guaranteed standards for the provision of cultural services to the population ...
- 6) Introduction of correctives for public budget subsidies for culture and the arts relative to the number of heritage objects and the size of public museum stocks in particular regions;
- 7) Implementation of a set of educational, cultural and artistic programs and projects for children and young people;
- 8) Support for cultural development in rural areas;
- 9) Formation of an integrated information and cultural space for Ukraine by means, in particular, of mapping Ukraine’s cultural resources, creating appropriate analytic databases, publishing information leaflets and establishing a ‘Culture’ television channel;

10) Participation by Ukraine in international cultural projects and the implementation of promotional and cultural initiatives to raise international awareness of Ukraine's cultural wealth.<sup>7</sup>

Many of these tasks echo the priorities affirmed in 1992 in the Basic Law of Ukraine on Culture, but the list brings together items that are rather heterogeneous and of different levels of importance (for instance, the *ad hoc* task of the introduction of correction coefficients for budget subsidies can hardly be compared to the task of the cultural development of rural areas). Chapter 4 of the Concept of a National Cultural Policy 2005-2007 outlines the 'principles of the State's policy in the cultural sector'. These, the Policy claims, 'correspond to international and European foundations of modern cultural policy':

1) *The principle of transparency and publicity.* The cultural policy of the State shall be carried out in a public way; decisions and drafts of decisions of all government bodies, national and local, shall be published in the media; citizens, foreigners and persons without citizenship have the right to full, timely and objective information about decisions and drafts of decisions by central and local governments on matters of culture and the arts.

2) *The democratic principle.* All actors in the sphere of culture shall take part in the process of designing and implementing the State's cultural policy; independent experts commissioned by citizens' associations or organs of central or local government may, at their own cost or on a voluntary basis, audit and evaluate decisions and draft decisions on matters of culture and the arts. The results of such evaluation may be taken into consideration by central and local cultural administration bodies in implementing State cultural policy.

3) *The principle of tolerance and ideological neutrality.* The cultural policy of the State shall be based on the principle of ideological pluralism and reflect the universal social values enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine; there shall be no discrimination on grounds of race, colour, political convictions, religious beliefs, gender, ethnic or social origin, wealth, place of residence, language or other attributes; the State shall ensure free development of the cultures, traditions and values of all national minorities on the territory of Ukraine.

4) *The principle of systemic integration and efficiency.* The cultural policy of the State shall be an integral part of the State's general policy to ensure the

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<sup>7</sup> 'Zakon Ukrainy pro Kontseptsiiu derzhavnoi polityky v haluzi kul'tury na 2005-2007 roky', *Normatyvni akty Ukrainy*, <<http://www.nau.kiev.ua/cgi-bin/nauonlu.exe?>>.

sustainable development of Ukraine; the State's cultural policy shall be based on a deep factor analysis of the problems facing the cultural sector and on resource-based planning of the array of instruments, mechanisms, programs and actions capable of effectively solving any particular problem arising in the sphere of culture and the arts; the State's cultural policy is directed toward generating a model of cultural development able to ensure the independent survival and continuous growth of culture in Ukraine.

5) *The principle of innovation.* The agents of public cultural policy shall promote the design and implementation of new forms and methods of activity in the sphere of culture and the arts; cultural development is made possible through the formation of an integral consumer market for cultural and artistic services; this presupposes the emergence of intermediaries between the producers and the consumers of cultural and artistic goods.

With all due respect to transparency, tolerance, pluralism, openness and broad public participation, and to the systemic approach to problem solving, it needs to be remarked that these are principles of good governance rather than of cultural policy. A possible explanation for the half-baked character of the Concept of a National Cultural Policy is that there was no broad public discussion preceding its adoption. The initial draft, prepared by a task group commissioned by the parliamentary standing committee for culture, did not undergo many changes before being submitted to parliament.

At the time of writing the most recent culture-related legal act that deals with the goals and priorities of public cultural policy is the President's Decree of 24 November 2005 'On Primary Tasks for the Enrichment and Development of Culture and the Spiritual Values of Ukrainian Society'. The decree instructs the Cabinet of Ministers to draft a national action plan which should include a wide range of initiatives: 'improvement of culture-related legislation, the development of national cinema, book publishing and archives; assurance of the efficient functioning of historical and cultural centres dedicated to the lives and activities of persons prominent in Ukrainian culture, science and the arts, in the national liberation struggle and in other important events of Ukrainian history, as well as encouragement of academic research in these fields and the publication of relevant encyclopaedias, reference books and works of popular scholarship; construction of new museum buildings and exhibition halls in Kyiv and other major cultural centres; erection of new monuments to national

liberation fighters; intensification of international cultural co-operation, in particular with UNESCO'.<sup>8</sup>

The *ad hoc* approach, typical of earlier cultural policy decisions, is also evident here. Among the priority tasks listed in the Decree, many are dictated by the acuteness of the existing problems, rather than by a vision for the future of Ukrainian culture. The Decree also reflects President Yushchenko's own cultural policy agenda, in which the actualization of the national heritage and the strengthening of Ukrainian national identity are prominent. The work of drafting the national action plan envisaged in the decree started in January 2006 and was to be completed by June.

### **Cultural Administration and Public Cultural Infrastructure**

In contemporary Ukraine, several government agencies, including the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the State Committee for Information Policy, Publishing, Television and Radio, and the National Council for Television and Radio Broadcasting have partial responsibilities for administering the cultural sector on the national level. They are co-ordinated by the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine for Humanitarian Affairs. This institutional diversity has also been reflected in the public funding of culture. Several government departments receive budget allocations for the maintenance of cultural organizations. Some of these (for instance, concert halls) also bring income to the departments themselves.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism is formally the main government agency for cultural policy, but in reality its main task is managing the public cultural sector, including institutions for music and performing arts, the plastic arts, film, libraries, cultural heritage and arts education. The Ministry directly administers nearly 130 state-owned cultural organizations and has certain (or, as some say, uncertain) powers to make recommendations affecting all other public cultural organisations. These organizations – over 45,000 theatres, museums, libraries, cinemas, arts schools, and community cultural centres – are supported by local government bodies (*oblast* and *raion* administrations, as

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<sup>8</sup> 'Ukaz Prezidenta Ukrainy No. 1647/2005 Pro pershocherhovi zakhody shchodo zbahachennia ta rozvytku kul'tury i dukhovnosti ukrains'koho suspil'stva', *Prezydent Ukrainy: ofitsiine internet-predstavnytstvo*, <<http://www.president.gov.ua/documents/3551.html>>.

well as city, town and village councils). Regional government agencies and local councils have culture directorates or departments for culture (and, since 2005, tourism) to take care of local public cultural organizations and cultural activities. Because *oblast* and *raion* administrations are subordinate, not to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, but to the Secretariat of the President of Ukraine, the influence of the Ministry of Culture on local cultural administration has been rather weak.

From the late 1980s onwards several thousand independent cultural organizations emerged in Ukraine. Public agencies in charge of the cultural sector did not acknowledge an obligation to support them, least of all financially. Traditionally, the so-called 'creative unions', founded in the 1930s, were the major legitimate representatives of the artistic community in Ukraine. Before 1991 virtually all professional artists had to be members of creative unions. Nowadays many artists do not choose to join the traditional artistic unions, and some have created artistic associations of their own. However, the Ukrainian government still treats the eleven 'traditional' unions, which have adopted the title of 'National Creative Unions', as legitimate representatives of the whole artistic community and provides them with some financial support, while the recently founded independent artistic associations usually receive none.

On 20 April 2005 President Yushchenko issued a decree 'On the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Ukraine' whereby the Ministry of Culture and Arts would merge with the State Tourist Administration, previously a separate government body. The inclusion of the tourism sector in the sphere of responsibility of the former Ministry of Culture signalled recognition of the fact that, on the one hand, the tourism and recreation sector, especially heritage-based cultural tourism, had become a major incentive and source of support for cultural development; and, on the other hand, that the nation's cultural heritage and cultural industries have a role to play in the development of tourism. According to the President's decree, there were to be three major administrative bodies within the structure of the new ministry, alongside the traditional directorates and departments: a state national cultural heritage service, a state service for tourism and resorts, and a state service for

cinematography.<sup>9</sup> The completion of the administrative reform, however, took much more time than originally expected, and at the time of writing not all of the state services had been created.

### **Present and Future**

This article was written after the parliamentary and local elections of 26 March 2006. Culture, language and civilizational choice were principal issues during the campaign. The pro-presidential *Nasha Ukraina* (Our Ukraine) grouping, and the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc headed by the charismatic former prime minister whom Yushchenko had fired in September 2005, supported the model of a pro-Western democratic nation-state with Ukrainian as its sole state language. The main oppositional group, the Party of Regions led by Viktor Yanukovych, as well as the Communist Party, advocated closer ties with Russia and Belarus, signalled opposition to Western influence, and argued in favour of two official languages, Ukrainian and Russian.

No government majority has been formed since August 2006, although there was the possibility of a government based on the political forces that had won in the Orange Revolution of 2004 (*Nasha Ukraina*, the Tymoshenko Bloc, and the Socialist Party of Ukraine). However, this did not eventuate, because of the inflexibility of the prospective members of such a coalition and their unrealistic ambitions.

The pro-Russian Party of Regions holds majorities in the newly-elected regional assemblies of the ten *oblasts* of southern and eastern Ukraine. One of the first steps of these bodies was to proclaim Russian to be the 'regional' language in their respective *oblasts*. It is likely that this means not only the end of the few steps that have been taken to encourage the use of the Ukrainian language in eastern and southern Ukraine, but also the entrenchment of the division of Ukrainian society into a pro-European West and Centre on the one hand, and a pro-Russian East and South, on the other. Until now the efforts of President Yushchenko, whose prerogatives were reduced by the constitutional reform that took effect from the beginning of 2006, to stop this 'linguistic separatism' have been unsuccessful.

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<sup>9</sup> Ukaz Prezydenta Ukrainy 'Pro Ministerstvo kul'tury i turizmu Ukrainy', *Uriadovyi portal*, <<http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control>>.

A new governmental coalition including the Party of the Regions, the Communists and the Socialists, was finally formed and Viktor Yanukovych was appointed Prime Minister with wide powers. This happened after the main parliamentary groups had signed, together with President Yushchenko, the Manifesto of National Unity. This document, proposed by the President, proclaimed democratic, pro-European goals as state policy.

The measures actually adopted by the new government, however, have proved to be more ambiguous. In the field of cultural policy, it seems to favour principally the pro-Russian voters of South and East Ukraine. One early conflict that received wide media coverage concerns a decree by the previous government requiring the mandatory subtitling in Ukrainian of at least 50% of foreign films previously subtitled only in Russian. This decree has been abolished by a decision of the courts, but obviously with the approval of the government. Yushchenko, on the other hand, has affirmed his devotion to the national capital Renaissance and to European values.

One possible outcome is a nation with two different models of cultural policy, and even with two models of national identity, based on two different systems of values, one modern and European, the other post-Soviet. The present situation of political struggle, together with attempts by the Russian Federation to restore the dominance over Ukraine that it lost during the Orange Revolution, leaves little space for intellectual discussions on a model of compromise that would enable Ukraine to remain a consolidated nation, differences between its regions notwithstanding. Such discussion is a matter for the future.