



Foreign Affairs Committee

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From the Chair

Rt Hon Alan Duncan KCMG MP
Minister of State for Europe and the Americas
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London
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5 February 2019

Dear Alan,

I write regarding the forthcoming Ukrainian presidential election, due to take place on 31 March 2019. These elections mark a crucial point in Ukraine's continued development, strengthening and reinforcing democratic governance. The Ukrainian Central Election Commission will announce candidates by 9 February, with 83 applications received to date.

The election will take place against a background of continued interference and aggression from Russia, with ongoing violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and violations of the Minsk agreements. Russia's actions in the Sea of Azov in December demonstrated a clear will to disrupt Ukrainian activities and disregard international rules.

Since the events of 2013 Euromaidan, Ukraine has taken strong steps towards political and economic reform, fighting corruption and embedding democracy. It has received strong international support in achieving this, including sustained diplomatic support and significant UK Government funding. This progress risks being undermined by Russian interference in this election.

I would be grateful if you could write to me to outline:

- What work the FCO plans to undertake to equip the Ukrainian authorities to counter potential interference by Russia in the election?
- Whether the FCO plans to assist the Ukrainian authorities and civil society in countering misinformation in the media relating to the election (especially Russian language media) to ensure voters receive reliable information?
- Whether a portion of the Good Governance Fund has been allocated specifically for this purpose?

The Committee intends to publish your response.

TOM TUGENDHAT MP
Chair



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King Charles Street
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Minister of State for
Europe and the Americas

21 February 2019

Tom Tugendhat MP
Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee,
Committee Office,
House of Commons
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Dear Tom,

Thank you for your letter of 5 February about the forthcoming Presidential elections in Ukraine.

The UK is committed to supporting and upholding Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of sustained Russian interference and aggression. The presidential and parliamentary elections taking place this year in March and October respectively are both an opportunity to cement the considerable reform progress Ukraine has made, and for those who wish to undermine Ukraine to sow instability. Over the course of the election period, Ukraine will face on-going threats in conventional terms, from disinformation and in cyber space.

The UK is providing significant assistance to Ukraine. Our diplomatic engagement across the field of candidates and political spectrum in Ukraine is focused on urging respect for a transparent and credible election process, and locking in the gains that Ukraine has made. The UK is also funding 75 short term and 10 long term election monitors as part of ODIHR's election monitoring mission. Working with partners, we are in parallel calling out Russian malign activity, for example, the EU's recent political consensus for new sanctions against those involved in the Kerch Strait attack on Ukrainian vessels.

On a bilateral basis, the UK's principle vehicle for delivering cyber-security assistance is a programme with Ukraine's Central Election Commission (CEC) and related election administrative bodies. This is delivered through the Good Governance Fund. The programme includes expert training for IT staff and other specialists, a cyber-hygiene course focusing on user-end vulnerabilities, and strengthened coordination between the CEC, security services of Ukraine, and the international community. Following Ukraine's recent renewal of the CEC's leadership, discussions are underway on the provision of further capacity building and technical assistance. We are also working with Ukrainian Government partners to help implement a cyber-hygiene campaign to inform Ukrainian businesses, civil servants and citizens of the risks they face in cyberspace and how to manage these risks and build resilience online.

We continue to provide other support, such as capacity building and training to independent media in Ukraine, including the Public Broadcaster, to ensure voters have access to reliable, unbiased information during the presidential and parliamentary election cycles and beyond. We support civil society organisations such as StopFake, which works to expose and debunk malign narratives about Ukraine, emanating primarily from Russia. We are also in discussions to provide communications support to civil society that will be monitoring the elections to enable them to proactively disseminate fast, factual information and advice to voters.

This work is a subset of UK programmes delivered in Ukraine in support of civil society and media organisations designed to build an independent and pluralistic media environment. This work has been ongoing for a number of years, examples include:

Programme	2018/19	2019/20
BBC Media Action - Support for the transition of the national public broadcaster in Ukraine in order to enable a more informed and active population able to hold government to account.	£246,570	£264,708
IRES - Promoting media choices amongst Ukrainian youth through developing materials for critical information consumption courses to be delivered in schools	£261,879	£1,389,437
International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)– Electoral Reform Projects including cyber security support and capacity building with the Central Electoral Commission, and Democracy Practice and Theory Module at Universities.	£1,562,272	£1,300,000

Alan Duncan

RT HON SIR ALAN DUNCAN MP