

Leaked documents show UK government supports anti-union labour reform Ukraine - undermining European Union policy



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(10 November 2021) These leaked documents show that the UK government via its development aid arm (UK Aid) and the UK embassy in Kiev is funding consultants to assist the Ukrainian Ministry of Economy in selling its neo-liberal market reforms to the Ukrainian people. EPSU received the presentation made to civil servants on how best to do this from several sources inside and outside the Ministry. The UK effectively tries to undermine efforts of the ILO and the European Commission to advice the social partners and the government on the labour reforms by financing propaganda to create a climate against the unions.

The Ukrainian government of the President Zelensky has introduced reforms of the Ukrainian labour market to weaken the influence of workers and their unions. It has further proposed changes to the trade union law aiming to take away properties and assets of the unions. Together these changes would significantly reduce the voice of workers. The aim is to strengthen employers, oligarchs and the rich and promote the neoliberal project of reform of the economy. The trade unions have been successful in blocking the proposals. Experts of the ILO have been critical of the changes and the European Commission equally had critical comments.

The Ukrainian government has now employed a consultancy [Abt-associates](#) to turn the tide of public opinion which according to its own analysis is predominately against the reforms. These consultants have developed a whole strategy to convince Ukrainian people of the reform. It was presented to government officials and is a comprehensive strategy to use official and social media as well as a selected list of public figures to speak in favour of the reform. It includes arguments to counter the trade unions and to create an anti-union climate in public opinion. It advises the government on the "emotion messages" and proposes "off-the-record" meetings with bloggers, influencers and Ministry of Economy officials and MPs: "...during off-records meetings with opinion leaders, bloggers, media editors, you can give an extended presentation...as well as support partners".

It is proposing to use official web pages of the Ministry of Economy to reinforce business-lobbyists arguments and suggests to use Ministry of Economy workers to promote accepting of the proposed law on talk-shows etc.

For the presentations in [Ukrainian](#) and in [English](#)

[Report on the Labour Leaks Ukraine by Solidarnost](#) (Russian news paper)

For [previous articles on the labour law reform](#)

For [another analysis](#) by openDemocracy EN (in [Ukrainian](#))

For [Press Release by the Interfax-Ukraine News Agency](#)

The web article above in [Russian](#)



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