



Ukraine



Last update:	25 November 2010
Author:	
Population:	45,415,596 (July 2010 est.)
Prime minister:	Mykola Azarov (since March 2010)
President:	Viktor Yanukovich (since February 2010)
Governemental type:	Republic
Ruling coalition:	Party of Regions, Lytvyn Bloc, Communist Party and number of independent MPs
Last election:	Local elections 31 October 2010
Next election:	Parliamentary 2012
Sister parties:	Social Democratic Party of Ukraine, SDPU (consultative)

On 17 January and 7 February 2010 Presidential elections were held in Ukraine. Party of Regions leader, Viktor Yanukovich won by a margin of 3.48%, after defeating Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. On 25 February, he was inaugurated as the new President. Tymoshenko at first accused her contestant of massive fraud and submitted an appeal against the results in Court. At the beginning of March she was ousted as Prime Minister in a vote of no-confidence. Surprisingly, Yanukovich managed to create a government around his PoR and he no longer faces the risk of having to hold early Parliamentary elections.

INTRODUCTION

Ukraine has a Parliamentary Presidential system, which means that the country elects on national level a head of state, the President, and a legislature. The President is elected for a five-year term by the people. The President needs a majority of the votes in the first round to be elected. If this condition is not met, a second round is held. In this second round, only the two candidates with the highest amount of votes (in the first round) can compete.

ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL SITUATION

The Verkhovna Rada –Parliament– has 450 members, elected for a four-year term. Until 2005, half of the members were elected by proportional representation and the other half by single-member constituencies. Starting with the 2006 Parliamentary election, all 450 members of the Rada are elected by proportional representation. Ukraine has a multi-party system, with numerous parties in which no party has a chance of gaining power alone, and parties must cooperate to form coalition governments.

The constitution prescribes that the governmental parties must have a majority in Parliament. Thus, minority coalitions are formally no option for government coalitions. Representative bodies and heads of local government throughout Ukraine are elected simultaneously with the Verkhovna Rada.



The Orange Revolution and Parliamentary elections 2006

The Orange Revolution at the end of 2004 had a great influence on the present-day political and societal situation in Ukraine. The reason for the Orange Revolution were the framed Presidential elections of October and November 2004, in which Viktor Yanukovich (at that time PM and candidate of the Kuchma government) and Viktor Yushchenko (Our Ukraine) competed in the second round of the elections. According to official results of the second round Yanukovich was proclaimed winner, with 49.4% to Yushchenko's 46.7%.

After election day tens of thousands of oppositionists started protesting in Kiev to show support for pro-western liberal Yushchenko, calling the election fraudulent. OSCE observers said the run-off vote fell far short of democratic standards. The organisation stated violations included a continuing "media bias" in favour of Yanukovich and intimidation of observers and voters.

After 17 days of protests the so-called 'Orange Revolution' enforced Parliament to approve reform bills, which paved the way for new Presidential elections. The third round was won by Yushchenko with 51.99% of the vote against 44.19 % for Yanukovich. Yanukovich refused to accept his defeat, appealed to the Supreme Court and resigned from Parliament. Yushchenko as President formed a new coalition with his 'Our Ukraine' party, the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc and the Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU). Tymoshenko became PM in the new cabinet. However, after serving only eight months as PM she was sacked by the President. The Orange-coalition fell apart and new elections were held in March 2006. These elections brought a victory for Yanukovich's 'Party of Regions'. Together with the Communists Party and the SPU, the Party of Regions eventually formed a majority coalition, which a year later already fell apart after the political crisis.

Parliamentary elections 2007

End of March 2007, eleven MPs switched allegiance by moving from the Yushchenko-camp to the PM Yanukovich-camp. This move was, according to Yushchenko, unconstitutional and the reason for his order to dissolve Parliament and hold new elections. The majority in Parliament, which supported Yanukovich, refused to follow the order by its President. As a result of this political deadlock several thousand supporters of Yanukovich organised anti-President protests. As Yushchenko did not have the intention to resign he ordered new elections for May 2007, which was later changed to June 2007. Consequently, supporters of Yanukovich considered simultaneous Parliamentary and Presidential elections on June 2007 as a fair solution for the deadlock.

However, the political unrest was worsened when Yushchenko sacked two members of the Constitutional Court, which was then to decide whether the early dissolution of Parliament was in accordance with the Constitution. The PM and leaders from the Socialist Party and the Communist Party accused Yushchenko of "pushing Ukraine onto a path of anarchy and chaos", which made a solution to the deadlock seem even further away. Eventually in May Yushchenko and Yanukovich agreed on holding early elections, which brought an end to the political crisis.

The poll

On 30 September 2007 the Parliamentary election was finally held. The joined observer-mission of the OSCE/ODIHR, European Parliament, the Council of Europe and the NATO Assembly stated that "voting was conducted in an orderly and transparent manner". The main result of the elections was the relatively close call between the Party of Regions –winning 34,37% of the votes– and the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc that gained 30,71%. Tymoshenko's strong overall position (popular in West-Ukraine, second-best in East-Ukraine) has strengthened her electoral position tremendously. Moreover, Yushchenko's bloc won 14,15%, the Communists 5,39%. The SPU was one of the losers. Dropping to 2,86% of votes, the party did not make the electoral threshold of 3%.

Being the winner of the poll, the Party of Regions did not succeed in forming a majority government together with the Communist party, having merely 202 seats in the 450-seat Assembly. Eventually, a majority-coalition was formed between Orange Revolution allies Yushchenko and Tymoshenko obtaining 228 seats with their two blocs (226 seats makes a majority). Tymoshenko became the new PM.

Political crisis September 2008



On September 16th the Speaker of Parliament, Arseny Yatsenyuk, officially dissolved the coalition between Tymoshenko and Yushchenko. The decision came after the constitutional 10 day-period during which the coalition partners were given the chance to reconnect. The parties were then given a 30-day period to either form a new majority in Parliament, or face early elections. The conflict between the allies was caused by the Russo-Georgian war in August 2008.

After President Yushchenko's camp accused Timoshenko of 'high treason' for not condemning Kremlin's actions, he openly supported Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili and restricted the movement of Russia's Black Sea Fleet from the Ukrainian port of Sevastopol. After Timoshenko's bloc voted in tandem with the Party of Regions in restricting presidential powers, President Yushchenko accused Timoshenko of a "political and constitutional coup d'état". In response, Ms Timoshenko accused the President of "destroying" the coalition and seeking to damage her popularity with voters to weaken her chances in the presidential elections. The true nature of the political strife might be better explained by personal rivalry between Timoshenko and Yushchenko in the face of the upcoming Presidential elections in 2010.

After weeks of speculations on a new coalition or early elections, Parliament was officially dissolved by the President on 8 October. The early elections were initially announced for December but due to the impact of the financial crisis and lawsuits filed by Timoshenko's Bloc hindering decisionmaking, the early poll was postponed. In December the Orange coalition was restored and Lytvyn's Bloc faction leader Volodymyr Lytvyn –which bloc is also part of the coalition– was elected Speaker of Parliament. A struggle for the upcoming Presidency followed.

Presidential elections 2010

Run-up to the elections

On 17 January 2010, Ukrainian citizens voted in elections to choose their next President. The poll was the first Presidential election since the Orange Revolution in 2004 brought pro-Western forces to power. In the run-up to the elections tensions ran high, mainly between Party of Regions (PoR) leader Viktor Yanukovich and the sitting Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Months before the election opinion polls predicted that the struggle for the Presidency would revolve mainly around these two political actors. Tensions were at their peak when Timoshenko started accusing Yanukovich of preparing huge fraud. She claimed that an unusually high number of voters in Yanukovich's home region of Donetsk had opted to vote from home, showing the organising hand of his PoR. Yanukovich rejected his ability to falsify the elections and claimed that only the ruling party was in the position to do so. Also, months before the elections it became clear that the sitting President Viktor Yushchenko would not be re-elected, as his popularity ratings had dropped to 5% and went even down to 3% when the elections were approaching.

Although Yanukovich and Tymoshenko had been systematically leading in the polls, in the wake of the election campaign a remarkable appearance was made in the race by another candidate. Sergei Tigipko, a former Economy Minister, was at some point slightly ahead of Tymoshenko, according to several opinion polls. This was mainly due to the large sums he had invested in his election campaign. Nevertheless, all signs showed that the race would be between Yanukovich and Tymoshenko. But it was also predicted that neither would get a majority of the votes and a second round would need to be held. The list of candidates was nevertheless remarkably long, with 18 candidates competing. The situation on the streets of Kyiv was relatively calm in the run-up to the elections. One of the reasons for this, was the fact that a Ukrainian court banned all mass rallies on Kyiv's Independence Square – the heart of the "Orange Revolution" protests – several weeks before the elections. The demand for this was made by local authorities as many parties – including the PoR of Yanukovich – wanted to initiate protests during that period.

Results first round

After all votes were counted Yanukovich gained 35.32%, while sitting Prime Minister Tymoshenko won 25.05%. Other candidates were far behind the two front runners. Sergey Tigipko won 13.06% of the votes, while Arseniy Yatsenyuk, former Foreign Minister and Parliament Speaker got 6.96%. Outgoing President Yushchenko obtained only 5.45%. Oleksandr Moroz, leader of the Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU), received only 0.38% of the votes. Petro Symonenko of the Communist Party, who was the candidate of an Election bloc of left and central left political forces, received 3.55%.



Results second round

As both Yanukovich and Tymoshenko did not gain the majority of 50%, a second round run-off between the two was held on 7 February. The victory was for Yanukovich who won with a margin of merely 3.48%, getting 48.95% of the votes. Tymoshenko obtained 45.47%. Yanukovich was quick to declare his victory, already two days before the official results were announced. After his official victory was announced Yanukovich urged Tymoshenko to resign but she refused to concede accusing him of massive vote-rigging. The voter turnout was 69.07% reportedly. According to international election observers, led by the OSCE, the electoral process met most OSCE and Council of Europe standards. Western election observers even called the poll "a ringing success for democracy". They concluded, however, that the lack of mutual trust between the candidates and the deficient legal framework were at the root of the problems observed and constitute an immediate challenge for the new leadership.

Local elections October 2010

On 31 October local elections were held in Ukraine. The elections were seen as a test for the popularity of President Yanukovich's Party of Regions. Yanukovich's party secured 36.3 percent of the vote while opposition leader Tymoshenko's Batkivshchyna party received only 13.1 percent. The Front of Change party secured 7 percent, followed by Ukraine's Communist Party with 5.9 percent and Yushchenko's Our Ukraine party with 2.3 percent.

According to the opposition the vote was marred by massive violations. Tymoshenko denounced the vote as "invalid". Two observers from the European Parliament were monitoring the vote. In a report they concluded irregularities had taken place during the local elections. In their report they said there was not enough time to prepare for the elections since an elections law came into force only on 31 July. Also, due to the new election rules Tymoshenko's candidates were unable to register in the important Kyiv and Lviv districts, the report said. Opposition candidates had difficulty registering for the polls due to formalities, which resulted in the Party of Regions being at the top of the ballot in 85 percent of constituencies. The observers added that there were other irregularities reported in Ukrainian media but stated it was impossible to investigate all the claims. In November repeat elections were held in 759 districts across the country.

Both the EU and the US criticised the elections following the report of the European observers. A spokesperson for Catherine Ashton, the EU Foreign Policy Chief, said the elections undermined confidence in Ukraine's democracy.

On 25 November the European Parliament adopted a resolution which among other things highlights the need to improve the electoral legislation. The resolution points out that "because of deficiencies in the electoral legislation, which failed to protect the right of the existing political parties to participate in the election, such parties as the "Fatherland" were not able to register their candidates in several districts and to participate in the elections." On 30 August the Ukrainian Parliament approved amendments to the local elections law, allowing new political parties to nominate candidates – even those registered less than a year.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Aftermath of the 2010 elections

Following the official results of the Presidential elections Tymoshenko announced to contest them in Court. Eventually, she dropped her charges, arguing she had no chance to win in Ukraine's "tainted justice system". Also, the EU and the international community urged her to accept her defeat and to shake hands with Yanukovich. On 3 March, a vote of no-confidence was passed by the Parliament against Tymoshenko's ruling coalition. Hereafter, she resigned and Yanukovich could go and form a new cabinet. Tymoshenko is now leading the opposition. On 9 March, she was elected the leader of the "United Democratic Opposition."

Just several days later, on 11 March, Yanukovich managed to form a new government, and by this consolidated his power. While at first it seemed that he would not be able to create a Parliamentary majority in order to govern



effectively, Yanukovich managed to make concessions with representatives of several parties, among which with former President Yushchenko's Our Ukraine–People's Self-Defense Bloc. The coalition called the 'Stability and Reform coalition', is centred around Yanukovich PoR. The party has 22 MPs in the government and the Presidential administration. The coalition consists, furthermore, of 240 MPs and is formed by factions of the Regions Party, the Bloc of Lytvyn, the Communist Party of Ukraine, along with several MPs each from the Our Ukraine–People's Self-Defense Bloc and the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko, and some independent MPs.

After wide speculations on who would replace Tymoshenko as the country's new Prime Minister, Yanukovich picked his close ally and former Finance Minister, Mykola Azarov. Sergei Tigipko was appointed one of the Deputy Prime Ministers. Kostyantyn Hryshchenko, former Ambassador to Russia, was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. Also, the PoR obtained a new political leader, namely Oleksandr Yefremov. The formation of the new coalition enables Yanukovich to avoid having to call early Parliamentary elections. It is also good for the quick restoration of the political stability in the country, which it needs to obtain its 16.4 billion dollar bailout from the IMF in order to restore its devastating economic crisis. Yanukovich has also the task to determine the country's future place in Europe and improve ties with Russia, which have deteriorated under Yushchenko.

IMPORTANT POLITICAL ISSUES

Women and politics

Women are underrepresented in Parliament and the 2006 cabinet did not include a single female minister. There is no quota system to increase women's participation in political life. The issue was discussed in Parliament in 2004–2005, but never gained sufficient support. In 2005 the government did underline the importance of gender equality as part of the new European approach in Ukraine. Justice Minister Roman Zvarych noted in his report that the gender policy is an important problem, since "we inherited certain traditions, which should be rejected at the everyday and legislative levels."

Freedom of media

During President Kuchma's governing period, international watchdogs have expressed their concerns about press freedom in Ukraine. The Kuchma-government was accused of increasing the regular censorship of opposition newspapers, as well as attacks and threats against independent journalists. The regime change in the end of 2004 did strengthen hopes for the better. During the Orange Revolution many media transformed themselves. According to the Freedom House the political turns "could hardly have happened without a breakthrough in the media sphere, where some of the largest TV channels refused to accept censorship and resumed a balanced news policy." The new president encouraged the media to open up, in order to transform Ukrainian society into a European democratic one.

One of the most pressing legacies in this respect is the unsolved disappearance and murder on Georgy Gongadze, an oppositional journalist, in September 2000. After his body was found, tapes came out in which President Kuchma ordered the death of the journalist. The events in connection with the disappearance of Gongadze activated a big political crisis, which is often referred to as the Kuchma-gate. The case became a symbol for the corruption under President Kuchma.

Current President Viktor Yushchenko indeed kept the promise he made during the election campaign and arrested suspects. The revived investigation of the Gongadze-case has also led to the questioning of top government officials, among them former President Kuchma. Former Interior Minister Yuri Kravchenko committed suicide on 4 March 2005, just before he was to be questioned by prosecutors. Authorities are still trying to find out who ordered the murder. However, the first part of the investigation was finished in the beginning of August 2005 and the three policemen that allegedly executed Gongadze's murder were brought to court. By October 2007, the trial is going on.



Corruption

Corruption is the number one priority of the recent Yushchenko governments. During the last Kuchma administration an anti-corruption campaign was started, but no substantial results were made. Several Ministers were forced to resign after accusations of corruption, but only former Prime Minister Lazarenko (Prime Minister from May 1996 to June 1997) was proven guilty. The trial against him began in March 2004, five years after he was arrested on charges of stealing at least 4 million from the state and using U.S. banks to launder it. In August 2006 a U.S. court sentenced Lazarenko to nine years in jail and a 10 million dollar fine.

In 2003, the NGO Transparency International called Ukraine a "black hole". According to the Freedom House report Nations in Transit 2005, "pervasive corruption remained Ukraine's biggest problem". Prime Minister Tymoshenko said in July 2005 that she thinks the shadow economy accounts for 57 % of the GDP. Despite the fight against corruption, Ukraine still scores badly in the corruption perception index of Transparency International. In 2007, Ukraine scored 2,7 (between 1 and 10, of which 1 is highly corrupt and 10 not corrupt at all) on the Corruption Perception Index. With this score, Ukraine is placed between Moldova and Russia. In general, Balkan countries score better than Ukraine and Central-Asian countries worse.

The fight against corruption is said to have already led to the opening of more than 20.000 cases that are under investigation. Another measure against corruption is increasing the salaries of state servants and judges in order to make them less susceptible to taking bribes.

Legacies of the privatisations in the past

One of the problems that cause political tumult has been the process of privatisation. Under the Kuchma government many state firms were privatised under dubious circumstances. Under the lead of then Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, Ukraine started to re-nationalise some of these companies, among them steel producing companies Kryvorizhstal and Nikopol. This was a major set back to two of Ukraine's most influential businessmen Renat Akhmetov and Viktor Pinchuk, who had been able to buy the companies from the government in 2004 and 2003 for a friendly price.

Although the re-privatisation of former state companies guaranteed better takings for the government, it did create an uncertain situation for potential investors. This dilemma became one of the major issues of disagreement between Premier Tymoshenko – who was a strong proponent of re-privatisation – and President Yushchenko – who did not want to risk the loss of investments. In September 2005, after Tymoshenko was forced to resign from her post as Prime Minister, the President therefore abandoned his government's policy of reversing past privatisations; only the property that was illegally privatised will now be brought back to the state.

Crimea and the Tatar minority

Crimea is Ukraine's only autonomous republic. It used to be part of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic. During the Stalin years the complete population of Crimean Tatars was deported to Siberia on accusations of collaboration with the Nazis. Nikita Krushchev handed Crimea over to the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic in 1954.

Still today, the majority of the Crimean population is ethnically Russian. In a conciliatory move, the Ukrainian government granted the region the special status of autonomous republic in 1992, as a result it has its own parliament that operates under the law of the Ukrainian constitution. Crimea is still a point of discussion in the relations between Russia and Ukraine. In 2003 tensions rose when the Russians started to build a dam between Russia's Taman Peninsula and the Crimean islet of Tuzla in the strategically important Kerch Strait, which was seen as a threat to Ukraine's territorial integrity. Others, among them the communists, were more positive about the dam describing it as a "bridge of friendship".

Support for Yushchenko in this area during the Orange Revolution came from the Tatars, a group that now accounts for 20 % of the population. According to reports of UNPO the celebrating mood of the Orange Revolution turned to



fear when international observers left Crimea. After years of discrimination, the Tatars have brought their case to international attention by becoming members of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO). The Crimean Tatar population has issues with reclaiming the ownership of the land their families were forced to leave behind, and presses for the use of their own language. In September 2006, the first Tatar-language television station "Atlant" started to broadcast in the Crimean town of Simferopol.

Chernobyl

On 15 December 2000 the last nuclear reactor was decommissioned at Chernobyl. It was the last operational set from the nuclear station Chernobyl, which was the cause of the worst nuclear disaster ever in 1986. Ukraine was forced to shut down the reactor under international pressure. More recently, officials at the Chernobyl plant declared that the condition of the concrete-and-steel structure covering the destroyed reactor is a cause of growing concern, but does not pose a severe threat.

The construction of a new shelter started in 2004, and is financed by Western governments, the European Union and the Ukrainian government. In the contaminated areas diseases such as leukaemia and thyroid cancer, as well as social hardship, pose a major problem for the health of the inhabitants. In September 2007, the Ukrainian government agreed to build a .4 billion shelter around the Chernobyl-reactor. The shelter will be ready in 2012.

Relations with the European Union

Ever since the Orange colours disappeared from the squares in Kiev, President Viktor Yuschenko has been pledging in favour of a Ukrainian membership of the European Union (EU). Formally the EU never made an announcement about the possibility of a future Ukrainian membership.

EU relations with Ukraine have to a large extent been based on the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA), which entered into force in 1998. The PCA remained mainly a trade regulating agreement with a possibility for information exchange and a very limited possibility for implementing actions. However, following the summit in Yalta in October 2003, where the EU presented its Wider Neighbourhood Initiative, possibilities to extend co-operation in the future were articulated.

Today, the relations between the EU and Ukraine are framed within the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and its Action Plan. The Action Plan, which was adopted by the European Council in December 2004, describes in which areas Ukraine must reform. On 21 February 2005 President Yuschenko visited Brussels to sign the agreement. Before that, he was complaining about the fact that nothing is mentioned about a future EU membership. Ever since, he uses every occasion to pledge in favour of a EU membership.

However, the European Union is not awaiting such a request, especially not after the no votes against the European Constitution in France and the Netherlands. EU commissioner Ferrero Waldner said that an official request for EU membership would be most inappropriate. The Ukrainian government reacted by stating that it is the sovereign right of every European state to submit EU membership (Article 49 of the European Treaty). According to then Prime Minister Tymoshenko, the results of the referenda would not stop the process of EU enlargement. She said that a majority of the EU-citizens supports accession of Ukraine to the European Union. However, analysts say that the no-vote did have something to do with dissatisfaction about EU enlargement. The strongest support for the Ukrainian case can be found in Poland. The social democrats in Ukraine and the EU are reluctant. Their main message is: the door is not closed but a lot of homework, on both sides, needs to be done (European Forum conference Kiev, 2005).

The declaration of National Unity that was signed after the 2006 parliamentary elections states that Ukraine intends to continue the course of European integration with the goal of Ukraine's entrance into the EU. Now the former Orange Revolution allies formed have a pro-western majority in parliament, it can be expected that Ukraine will be focussing again on becoming a member of the EU.



Relations with Russia

The pro-European/pro-independency attitude of the post-orange revolution government worsened relations between Russia and Ukraine. The wishes regarding NATO and the EU were a curse in the eyes of many Russians who still see Ukraine as their brotherly nation under their sphere of influence.

A major issue in the relations with Russia is gas trade. Russia sends some 80 % of its gas exports to Europe via Ukraine, while Ukraine depends on Russia for more than one-third of its gas needs.

Initially Ukraine received its gas for a heavily subsidised per 1,000 cubic metres, but in March 2005 the Russian gas company Gazprom announced its intentions to increase the gas prizes to market rates of 0 per 1,000 cubic metres. Ukraine objected and in return demanded higher transit fees for Russia's gas exports to Europe. The countries were unable to come to an agreement and on 1 January 2006 Gazprom cut all gas exports to Ukraine to pressure the negotiations. After great media interest and political discussion, the EU and the U.S. stepped in and helped to reach a compromise. On 4 January, Gazprom continued the gas supply to Ukraine. An accord was signed on 11 January, agreeing to raise gas prizes to per 1,000 cubic metres, and also raising the fees for transportation of gas through Ukrainian territory for the next six months. Former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko highly objected to the agreement and threatened to sue the Ukrainian Naftogas for violating state interests by agreeing to the compromise.

Analysts speculated about the Russian state-owned Gazprom the intentions. Many suggested that the price raise could be seen as a way of undermining Ukraine's post Orange revolution government.

One of Viktor Yanukovich's first acts as Prime Minister was to come a new agreement on gas prices with his Russian counterpart Mikhail Fradkov mid August 2006. They settled on the prices for the rest of 2006 and for 2007, stating that the prices will be based on a market framework, their calculation will be transparent and that the January agreement was at the centre of the new arrangement. By October 2007, Gazprom threatened to cut-off the supply of gas to Ukraine.

On the 1st of January 2009, due to a dispute concerning gas prices, Russia cut-off gas supply to Ukraine, amid an economic recession and an extremely cold winter. The already tensed relations within the government between former President Yushchenko and PM Tymoshenko intensified. Moreover, the opposition at that time, among which the Party of Regions, immediately demanded the government's resignation. The EU urged both countries to resolve the conflict. The gas supply was resumed by Russia on 20 January 2009.

NATO/ Ukrainian troops in Iraq

The joint activity of Ukraine and NATO has become an important factor for strengthening stability and security in Central and Eastern Europe. Ukraine has participated in the multinational peacekeeping contingents IFOR, SFOR and KFOR. The country joined the Partnership for Peace Program of the NATO and a special agreement 'Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine' was signed. Becoming a member of NATO is a strategic goal since 2002. Like in the EU-negotiations on a future memberships, NATO stresses the need for strengthening civil society and democracy in Ukraine.

Ukrainian peacekeepers have been stationed in Iraq, under the supervision of the Polish battalion. Ukraine's contingent was the fourth largest in the U.S.-led military coalition. According to analysts, Leonid Kuchma sent the troops to ease the relations with the US as tensions rose in 2002 when the Ukrainian President was suspected of arms sales to Saddam Hussein. In addition, the Ukrainian government hoped to gain economically from being involved in the reconstruction process.

President Yushchenko however decided to withdraw the troops, in total 1650. Withdrawal was one of the promises he made during the election campaign. Yushchenko said that despite the military withdrawal, Ukraine will help train Iraqi security forces. In May 2005 the troops started to go home in phases.

Despite the withdrawal of the Ukrainian troops from Iraq, the pro-western coalition still has the objective to become



member of NATO in the future. However, although there is a pro-western coalition in parliament, the opinions on NATO membership of Ukraine is still a highly debated subject in Ukraine. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer declared the following about his issue:

"I think that those people who are critical [of NATO] -- and we have to work on them, and we want to assist and help in that regard, that's why we have a Kyiv office -- that they perhaps should know more and should be informed better about what NATO is, what NATO is doing".

The coming period should determine whether Ukraine is ready to become a member of NATO and to what extent this is recognised by the NATO-member states.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES

Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU)

The Socialist Party of Ukraine was founded in 1991. It called itself the successor to the Communist Party of Ukraine, but they chose to form their own programme and develop a new emphasis in its political activities. After the return of the Communist Party and the creation of the Progressive Socialist Party in 1993, the SPU lost its leftist monopoly. The new strategy that was chosen by the party did not have any political impact. For the 1998 parliamentary elections the SPU formed a coalition with the Peasant Party of Ukraine (PPU).

The SPU lost its ideological vestiges of the past and opted for reform. The new programme underscored the need to carry out privatisation, implement changes to the tax and criminals codes, fight corruption and introduced a pro-European foreign policy.

Competition between two candidates within the faction during the presidential elections in 1999 led to a split. Deputies moved to several other parties or formed new parties. The SPU calls itself democratic socialistic, but shows signs of social democracy. In March 2005 the party claimed to have 90,638 members. Regions with most members are Zhitomir (8700), Poltava (8500), Chercassy (6600) and Dnepropetrovsk (4500).

In the latest presidential elections, the SPU participated in the first round with their own candidate and party-leader Mr. Moroz. He gained 5.8% of the votes, which was not enough to join the second and eventually third round. The SPU signed a political agreement with the Yushchenko bloc on the 6th of November supporting him in the rounds to come. The Socialists joined the governing coalition and their main aim is to strengthen the social component of the government policy. They have submitted draft bills on increasing salaries in education and healthcare as well as raising pensions.

The SPU ran independently in the 2006 parliamentary elections. The party received 33 seats in the Verkhovna Rada, and was part of the governing coalition. In the 2007 parliamentary elections, the party did not pass the threshold by winning only 2,86% of the votes (3% is the threshold). The party lost all its seats in parliament. Analysts state that maybe the loss of votes could be explained by disagreement among the potential SPU-electorate concerning the coalition-participation of the SPU after the 2006 elections. The fact that the SPU changed side to join the coalition of Prime Minister Yanukovich, was used by Tymoshenko to portray the SPU and its leader Moroz as unreliable traitors. This could explain the loss of the SPU.

Party leader: Oleksandr O. Moroz

<http://www.socpart.info/>

The SPU is a consultative member of the Socialist International.

Ukrainian Social Democratic Party (USDP)

The USDP was formed in 1998 out of a split in the first social democratic party of Ukraine (the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine) when a part of the latter joined with the Party of Human Rights and became the USDP. The first



leader of the party was Vasyl Onopenko who in the Presidential elections in 1999 got 0,47% of the votes. Since November 2006 Yevhen Korniychuk is the chairman of the party. He currently serves as the First Deputy Justice Minister.

During the Parliamentary elections in 2006 and 2007 the party was part of the Yulia Tymoshenko Electoral Bloc. During the 2007 elections the bloc won 156 out of 450 seats. The eight MP's of the USDP are the only Social-Democratic MP's in Parliament, since the SPU did not make the threshold.

Party leader: Yevhen Korniychuk

<http://www.usdp.kiev.ua>

Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (SDPU)

The SDPU was originally founded in 1890 and re-established in 1990, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the 2006 elections the party was part of the "Lazarenko Bloc". Yet this bloc was supported by only 76.950 voters, or 0.30%, and therefore did not make it into Parliament.

On the European Forum conference in Kiev, June 2005, party leader Buzdugan expressed his concerns about the current situation in Ukraine. He said that oligarchs still rule the economy and media. Also he expressed his hope that one day there will be a centre-left coalition, including his party and the SPU. The SDPU is in favour of supporting democracy in the former Soviet Union and hopes Ukraine will be a member of the EU in the future.

Party leader: Yuriy O. Buzdugan

The SDPU is an observer member of the Socialist International.

OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES

Party of Regions

The Party of Regions was created in March 2001 from the unification of five parties. Three quarters of the party's members are from the Donbas region. During the 2002 parliamentary elections the party joined the pro-Kuchma 'For a United Ukraine' bloc. The leader of the party, Viktor Yanukovych, ran for President in 2004, with a strongly pro-Russian and regionalist agenda. After he eventually lost those elections, the party moved into the opposition where it was one of the most visible parties. It frequently criticised the post-Orange Revolution government for its alleged preference for the Western parts of Ukraine and the party gladly exacerbated the internal struggles in the government. This paid off in the 2006 parliamentary elections; the party won the elections. Once the elections were over, the Party of Regions was excluded from coalition negotiations with the other parties and therefore blocked the Verkhovna Rada for several weeks. After the blockade was lifted the party managed to turn the tables and became the senior party in a broad governing coalition.

However, the political crisis of early 2007 caused the breakdown of the broad governing coalition and new elections were scheduled for 30 September 2007. In these elections, the Party of Regions managed to stay to biggest party in parliament. The party, however, did not had an obvious majority-coalition partner. For this reason, the Our Ukraine - People's Self-Defence Bloc and the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc formed a majority coalition, earlier than the Party of Regions. Until 2007, the party was in the opposition. After Yanukovych won the Presidential elections in 2010 and the Parliament ousted Pime Minister Timoshenko's ruling coalition, Yanukovych formed a new majority coalition centred around his party. Now, it is the biggest party in Parliament with 172 seats.

The Party of Regions campaigned especially on issues like the status of the Russian language (calling for Russian as



additional official state language), Ukrainian accession to NATO (against) and socio-economic development (promising more jobs, a focus on industry and economic growth). The powerbase of the party lies fully in the eastern part of Ukraine.

Party leader: Viktor Yanukovich

<http://www.partyofregions.org.ua/eng/>

Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc (BYuT)

The Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc is named after its leader and founder of the Fatherland Party (1999) Yulia Tymoshenko. Tymoshenko was a very successful businesswoman, having earned fortunes directing several energy-related companies. In 1996 she went into politics and in 1999 was appointed deputy prime minister for the fuel and energy sector. In this post she rather successfully took on the struggle against corrupted oligarchs. However, in 2001 she was sacked and briefly imprisoned on charges of fraud during her business career. Tymoshenko always maintained that the charges were politically motivated, as she a political threat to then President Kuchma.

After she was forced to step down in 2001, the Fatherland Party began to oppose presidential policies and Tymoshenko lead the united opposition in the in 2001 created National Salvation Forum. The main goal of the forum was to form an electoral bloc with the aim to oust President Kuchma. In November 2001 the bloc was renamed Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc. The bloc consisted of the following parties: Fatherland Party, Sobor Party, Social Democratic Party, Republican Party, Conservative Republican Party, Christian Democratic Party, and Patriotic Party.

According to the personal website of Yulia Tymoshenko the priority of the bloc lies with the “development of spirituality”, since existing ideologies have failed to solve the people’s dissatisfaction, economic and political crises and terrorism. The second priority is said to be “the desire for justice, not as a slogan but as a scientific method of improvement of society, which is based on determining, publicising and settling all conflicts in society.”

The bloc gathered 7.2 % of the votes in the 2002 elections. The relatively radical Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc cooperated with Our Ukraine in the 2004 presidential elections, supporting Viktor Yushchenko’s candidacy. Once Yushchenko was appointed President, Tymoshenko became Prime Minister. However, the cooperation faltered and finally resulted in Yushchenko sacking Tymoshenko on accusations of corruption. The Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc then ran independently in the 2006 parliamentary elections and became the second largest party, beating Yushchenko’s Our Ukraine. However, the BYuT cam in opposition.

In the 2007 parliamentary elections, Yulia Tymoshenko managed to stay the second biggest party in parliament, almost closing the gap with the Party of Regions. Shortly after the elections, it was announced that BYuT and the Our Ukraine – People’s Self Defense Bloc formed a coalition. Yulia Tymoshenko became the new Prime Minister.

After Yanukovich won the Presidential elections in 2010 and the Parliament ousted Timoshenko's coalition in a no-confidence vote, Tymoshenko went into the opposition. She is now the leader of the opposition forces in the country. In order to obtain a majority in Parliament, Yanukovich needed the support of several extra lawmakers. Eventually, some deputies of the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc joined his coalition.

Party leader: Yulia Tymoshenko

<http://www.tymoshenko.com.ua>

Our Ukraine – People’s Self Defense Bloc

The Our Ukraine Bloc was officially formed in February 2002 and united ten nationalist and centre-right parties that emerged during the time Ukraine gained independence. The gathered parties historically all had an anti-communist rhetoric and their goals broadly were to keep distance from Russia and strengthen Ukraine’s statehood.

According to the program of Our Ukraine the bloc’s priorities are a significant increase in the wellbeing of the majority of Ukraine’s citizens; a strong economy and effective social protection; a just society and the establishment



of a moral and honest government. The bloc supports the integration of Ukraine into the European Union and NATO

In 2004 the Our Ukraine bloc and the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc united forces in the presidential elections, both backing Yushchenko as their candidate. Once Yushchenko made it to the second round of the 2004 presidential election he gathered the support of all anti-Kuchma forces. On 26 December 2004 the leader of the Our Ukraine bloc, Viktor Yushchenko, was elected for the post of Ukrainian President and the bloc was the biggest party of the post-Orange Revolution government.

On 5 March 2005, parts of the Our Ukraine Bloc consolidated into a new party, the Our Ukraine People's Union. The constituent congress was organised by the public movement "For Ukraine! For Yushchenko!" coordinated by the president's older brother, Petro Yushchenko, as well as by some government officials from Kyiv and regional governors. President Yushchenko however failed to mobilise his major allies from the Orange Revolution – notably Yuriy Kostenko's Ukrainian People's Party and Borys Tarasyuk's People's Rukh of Ukraine – for the idea of a single party.

In the 2006 parliamentary elections the Our Ukraine Bloc – with a new composition of parties – lost quite a lot of its votes to the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc in the 2006 parliamentary elections. However, the Our Ukraine Bloc managed to form a broad governing coalition with the Party of Regions and the Socialist Party of Ukraine. The political crisis of 2007 brought an end to this coalition. For the 2007 parliamentary elections, the Our-Ukraine Bloc changed its name into Our Ukraine – People's Self Defence Bloc, merging with the People's Self Defence Party. Until 2010, the bloc held 72 seats in the Verkhovna Rada. Together with the BYuT, the Our Ukraine – People's Self Defence Bloc formed the new coalition.

After Yanukovych won the Presidential elections in 2010 and the Parliament ousted Tymoshenko's ruling coalition, several deputies of the bloc decided to join the new governing coalition of Yanukovych.

The following parties are part of the Bloc: People's Union "Our Ukraine" (Narodnyi Soyuz Nasha Ukrayina); Forward, Ukraine!; People's Movement of Ukraine (Narodnyi Rukh Ukrayiny); Ukrainian People's Party; Ukrainian Republican Party Assembly (Ukrayins'ka Respublikanska Partiya Sobor); Christian Democratic Union (Khristiyans'ko-Demokratichnyj Soyuz); European Party of Ukraine; PORA; Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists (Kongress Ukrayinskykh Natsionalistiv); Motherland Defenders Party

Viktor Yushchenko remains the leader of the party. The party tries to transform its image from right wing nationalist to liberal. His next objective will be the presidential elections of 2009. In these elections, Yushchenko will have fierce competition from Yanukovych and Tymoshenko.

Our Ukraine has an observer status at the European People's Party.

Party leader: Viktor Yushchenko

<http://www.razom.org.ua/>

Communist Party of Ukraine

The Communist Party is the successor of the old Communist Party in Soviet time. Its main supporters are older and retired people. Between 1991 and 1993 the party was temporarily forbidden. With the country's economy in decline, the party grew in popularity and the party re-emerged during the 1994 parliamentary elections. The CPU received a lot of protest votes, however analysts predicted a soon decline because of aging of their electorate and the growing out datedness of their Soviet nostalgia. In the 2002 elections they were cut by half winning just 65 of the 450 seats in parliament. After the 2006 elections, the Communist Party had only 21 seats, but in the 2007 elections, the party regained seats. Until 2010 it held 27 seats in the Supreme Rada. In 2010, the Communists joined the governing coalition of President Yanukovych, after signing an agreement with the Party of Regions and the Lytvyn Bloc.

The communists are loosening their Soviet style arguments and plead for respect for private business, freedom of religion, a multi-party system and foreign investments. According to their leader, Petro M. Symonenko, state policy should be based on balancing real incomes and expenditures, with the surplus spent on services such as education



and healthcare for the individual Ukrainian citizen. The communists are against Ukrainian NATO membership.

The leader of the party, Petro Symonenko ran in the first round of the presidential election in 2004. He gained the fourth place, gathering almost 5 % of the votes, which was not enough to make it to the second round.

While being in opposition to the Kuchma government, the post-Orange revolution government lead by Yushchenko was not after the Communists taste either. Symonenko accused the first government lead by Yushchenko of “obediently fulfil[ing] commands of their foreign masters, selling property that has been constructed for years by our long-suffering people”. In the campaign prior to the 2006 parliamentary elections Symonenko identified the Communist Party’s main struggles on three fronts: “American nationalists”, “right-wing oppositionists” and “opportunists” from the Socialist Party of Ukraine.

Party leader: Petro M. Symonenko
<http://www.kpu.kiev.ua/Main/index.htm>

Lytvyn’s Bloc

The Bloc consists of the People’s Party and the small Labour Party, party-leader is Volodymyr Lytvyn. The People’s Party is a continuation of the former Agrarian Party. The party officially supported Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich during the 2004 presidential elections. Party leader Lytvyn, however, did keep the parliament open during the protests when the legislature refused to accept the official results. Lytvyn’s parliamentary faction tripled after the Orange Revolution, as moderate supporters of former president Leonid Kuchma gathered under the People’s Party’s umbrella raising the party’s support base to about 60 parliament members. However, the Lytvyn’s People’s Bloc did not clear the voter threshold in the 2006 parliamentary elections. In 2007, the Lytvyn’s Bloc managed to win 3,96% of the votes, and won 20 seats in parliament. In 2010, the party signed a governing coalition agreement with the Party of Regions and the Communist Party. It still holds 20 seats in the parliament.

Party leader: Volodymyr Lytvyn

Progressive Socialist Party

The Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine (PSPU) opposes Ukrainian involvement with Western institutions like the IMF and NATO and is very critical of economic reforms. The party supports integration with Russia and Belarus as an alternative to integration with the European Union. The party did not pass the threshold, winning 1,32% of the votes.

Party leader: Natalia Vitrenko
PSPU site: <http://www.vitrenko.org/>

BIOGRAPHIES

Viktor Yanukovich

President of Ukraine, Honorary Leader of the Party of Regions

Victor Yanukovich was born on 9 July 1950 in the Zhukovka village, near Enakievo, Donetsk region, to a working class family. He graduated from the Donetsk Polytechnic Institute in Engineering and Mechanics in 1973, and in 2001 received an MA degree in International Law from the Ukrainian Academy of External Trade.

In 1967, at the age of 17, he was convicted for robbery and moderate assault and served 18 months of his three year prison term. In 1970 he was convicted again, for assault, and sentenced for 2 years imprisonment.

He started his professional life in 1969, as a mechanic at the Enakievo Metal factory. After taking evening courses and graduating from the Polytechnic Institute, he was appointed chief manager of a transportation company in



Enakievo and admitted to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He then went on to occupy various managerial positions in Donetsk and in 1996 was appointed first deputy head of the Donetsk oblast administration. Between 1997 and 2002 he was governor of the Donetsk region, and chaired the regional council of Donetsk.

On 21 November 2002 President Leonid Kuchma appointed Yanukovych as Prime Minister of Ukraine, and in April 2003 he became chair of the Party of Regions (PoR). In July 2004, while being PM, he was put forward by his party as presidential candidate. He was officially pronounced the winner of the elections. However, according to observers, his campaign enjoyed powerful sponsoring and financial aid, as well as the use of administrative resources. Mass demonstrations followed, now referred to as the Orange Revolution. In the resulting repeat elections he lost to his rival, Viktor Yushchenko. He then disappeared from the political arena for some time.

In the spring of 2006 the PoR (still lead by Yanukovich) gained the majority of votes in the parliamentary elections and Yanukovich again became PM. After the early elections of 2007 Yanukovych's bloc lost its majority. After the formation of a new coalition Yanukovych was relieved of his duties and replaced by a new Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko.

In 2009 he announced his intention to run for president in the 2010 presidential elections, which he ended up winning from his main rival, Timoshenko. He was inaugurated as President of Ukraine on 25 February, 2010.

Viktor Yanukovych is married with two children (sons). The younger son, Victor, is a member of parliament.

Mikola Azarov
Prime Minister of Ukraine

Mikola Azarov was born in 1947 in the city of Kaluga, in Soviet Russia. He graduated in 1971 from the Moscow state university in geology and geophysics. He received a PhD in 1986, and became Professor in 1991.

Azarov started his professional life as a head of department and chief engineer at the Tulaugl coal factory. He occupied various leading positions in the industrial and research sectors, including Deputy Director and later Director of the Ukrainian State Scientific Research and Project-Designing Institute of Mining Technology, Geomechanics and Mine Surveying of the Ministry of Coal Industry of Ukraine (1984-1995). In 1995 he successfully ran for Ukrainian parliament, and remained MP for one term, until 1998. Between 1996 and 2002 he was head of the State Tax Administration. During that time, and along with other high-ranking politicians, he was implicated in the 'Melnichenko tape scandal' in which Melnichenko, a presidential bodyguard, taped several conversations between President Kuchma and his allies, revealing controversial activities and corruption.

In 2001 he was elected chairman of the Party of Regions but resigned a year later. In 2003 he was elected chairman of the political council of the party. From 2002 to 2005 he was the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. In late 2004-early 2005 he was acting Prime Minister between Yanukovych's resignation and Tymoshenko's instalment to that post. In 2006 he was again elected into parliament and headed the budget committee (since 2006) and the committee on finance and banking (2007-2010). In 2009 he became Yanukovych's campaign manager in the presidential election campaign. In March 2010, after Yanukovych's victory, he was appointment Prime Minister of Ukraine.

Azarov is married and has one son.

Vladimir Litvin
Speaker of Parliament

Vladimir Litvin was born in 1956 in the village of Sloboda-Romanovskaya, in the Zhitomir Oblast, to a family of farmers. He graduated from the Kyiv University (Historic Faculty) in 1978.



After his graduation he worked as the Dean's assistant and history lecturer at the same university until 1986. He then left to work at the Ukrainian Soviet Republic's Education Ministry, before returning again to the university.

His political career started in 1994 as aid to President Leonid Kuchma and in 1999 he was appointed head of the presidential administration. During this period he is sometimes referred to as Kuchma's 'Grey Cardinal'. Along with other high-ranking politicians he was implicated in the 'Melnichenko tape scandal', in which Melnichenko, a Presidential bodyguard taped several conversations between President Kuchma and his allies, revealing controversial activities and corruption.

In 2002 Litvin was elected into parliament and following the parliament's instalment, elected Parliament Speaker. But in 2006 Litvin's Bloc failed to clear the 3% electoral threshold. However, in the early elections in 2007 Litvin did manage to clear the threshold. He was again elected Parliament Speaker in 2008, after the collapse of the government coalition and the resignation of then Parliament Speaker, Arseniy Yatsenyuk.

In 2009 he ran in the presidential elections, but came in on the seventh place. He remains Speaker of Parliament and an active member of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

Vladimir Litvin is married and has a daughter and a son.

Oleksandr Moroz
Leader of the Socialist Party of Ukraine

Oleksandr Moroz was born in 1944 in the village of Buda in the Kyiv region to a farmers' family. In 1965 he graduated as Engineer-Mechanic from the Ukrainian Agrarian Academy, and in 1983 in political science from the Supreme Party School of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party. Until 1990 he occupied various positions within the Ukrainian agrarian sector.

In 1990 he was elected in the Verkhovna Rada, and remained MP until 2007. In 1991, after the ban on the Communist Party, he initiated the Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU), and was elected its leader. In 1994 he ran in the presidential elections, but came in third. He also participated in two other Presidential elections, with similar success. In 2000 he initiated the 'tape scandal', publicly accusing President Kuchma, his head of administration Vladimir Litvin and Minister of Interior Yuri Kravchenko in involvement in the disappearance of opposition journalist Georgi Gongadze, and other crimes.

In June 2006 SPU, Our Ukraine and Bloc Yulia Tymoshenko signed an agreement on the creation of a democratic coalition. But after the elections the party unexpectedly left the coalition because the position of parliament speaker did not go to Moroz but instead to Petro Poroshenko. In 2006 Moroz signed an agreement with the Party of Regions and the Communist Party on creating an "Anti-Crisis coalition". He then received the position of Parliament Speaker. The turning away from the 'Orange coalition allies' was seen by many as "betrayal" and in 2007 the SPU failed to get re-elected into parliament, when it did not clear the threshold. Moroz remains leader of the SPU.

Oleksandr Moroz is married and has two daughters.

Yulia Tymoshenko
Leader of the Bloc Yulia Tymoshenko (Bytkyvschina)

Yulia Tymoshenko was born in 1960 in Dnepropetrovsk. In 1984 she graduated from the Dnepropetrovsk State University, faculty of Economics. After graduation she worked as an engineer-economist in a machine-building plant in Dnepropetrovsk.

After that she went into private business and together with her husband or separately built and/or headed several commercial enterprises, including oil and gas trade. The latter grew into a multi-million enterprise and was in



trouble with the tax authorities by 1996. Tymoshenko claimed the latter were harassing her because of political reasons.

In 1997 Tymoshenko became first deputy to the leader of the All-National Movement Hramada, Pavel Lazarenko. She entered parliament for the first time in 1998 on the list of Lazarenko's Hramada. Both harshly criticised the Kuchma Presidency. In November 1998, however, she unexpectedly called for a dialogue with Kuchma, and left Lazarenko motivating this by his authoritarian rule of Hramada. After leaving Hramada she created her own political force, Bytkyvshina. Almost immediately she left the parliament to become Vice Prime Minister in Victor Yushchenko's government.

In 2001 Tymoshenko, while president of United Energy Systems of Ukraine, was relieved of her position and arrested under charges of forging customs documents and smuggling gas between 1995 and 1997. After her release she called on Yushchenko to head the opposition movement to struggle against the authorities.

In 2004 Bloc Yulia Tymoshenko (BYuT) and Yushchenko's Our Ukraine announced the creation of the Force coalition to support Yushchenko's candidacy at the 2004 presidential elections. As a result of repeat elections after mass demonstrations (dubbed 'Orange Revolution') Yushchenko became President and Tymoshenko Prime Minister. She left after seven months because of a bad relationship with the President's administration, and automatically became the main opposition leader. The relationship between Yushchenko and Tymoshenko was not well, and deteriorated even further over years among squabbles and power struggles.

She ran for President in the 2010 election as the main rival to Victor Yanukovych, losing the Presidency by 3% of the votes.

Yulia Tymoshenko is married and has a daughter