

**Speech by Mr. Vasyl KUIBIDA**  
**Minister of Regional Development and Construction of**  
**Ukraine**  
**during the Conference**  
**“Innovation for Good Local and Regional Governance: A**  
**European Challenge”**

**University of Twente,**  
**Enschede, the Netherlands**  
**2 April, 2009**

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to be here and address all the participants of this Conference on behalf of the Government of Ukraine.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Dutch authorities and to the Council of Europe for the invitation to take part in this representative international event devoted to the issue of innovations and good governance.

Now we should be able to answer to the question about the importance of good governance at local level.

Scientists say that there are three reasons of the bad political, economic situation in a country (or in a region and a municipality):

- Firstly, bad (non-effective) governance;
- Secondly, bad (non-effective) governance;
- And thirdly, as you have already understood, again bad governance.

Different European countries established different models of local self-government which show different ways (options) for the creation of the effective system of public administration. But at the same any system is not perfect.

In our democratic world nowadays governments at all levels increase the number, variety and quality of public services to respond better to the needs of the citizens. In this regard, it is important to note an increasing number of providers of public services (not only public authorities, but also institutions of public sector, NGOs etc.). This fact changes the approaches and criteria for the identification of good governance standards.

The local self-government system in the new world must be an opened system which should be able to improve itself, to respond to the new challenges and to accept innovations. To ensure efficient public service delivery governments need to establish and develop real partnership with the civil society, non-governmental organizations, private sector – to involve all the actors into those activities.

In this context, good governance has become a paradigm for giving real effect to the values and standards of democracy, human rights and rule of law.

In Ukraine, we have done and keep doing quite in this field. Government of Ukraine is strongly committed to implement a large-scale decentralization reform, involving transfer of essential competences from central to local government level.

New competences transferred to local level would not have any effect, if local authorities do not have the capacity to effectively realize these competences and to respond better to the needs of the citizens. Therefore, it is highly important not only to build and reinforce the institutional capacity of local authorities following the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, European best practices and standards, but also to make use of new forms and methods of the work.

We consider that among most important initiatives in this regard is the European Strategy on Innovations and Good Governance at Local Level, adopted and approved by the Council of Europe in Valencia in 2007.

The Ministry of Regional Development and Construction of Ukraine has responded to the invitation stated in Valencia Declaration to endorse this European Strategy in Ukraine. In June

2008 Ukraine joined the Council of Europe member states, which decided to implement the European Strategy at national and local level. Activities on implementation of the Strategy were also included into Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2008-2011.

Our Ministry, as a central government body responsible for the State Regional Policy and for development of regional and local democracy, plays the key role in the Strategy implementation, collection and dissemination of best practices. This year we initiated establishment of the National Steering Committee, preparation and adoption of the National Action Plan for Implementation of the European Strategy on Innovations and Good Governance at Local Level.

We have received full support in these activities from national associations of local and regional authorities, local self-government bodies and international donor community. About 40 municipalities were selected as pilot communities for the implementation of the European Strategy on Innovation and Good Governance at Local Level in 2009.

The activities for Strategy implementation will be realized at the national, regional and local levels.

Special attention has been paid to the issue of promoting the Strategy and its principles – organization of trainings for local officials and local elected representatives, workshops and conferences was a good input into broad public awareness campaign.

Ukrainian authorities have already good experience in implementation of 2 principles of the European Strategy:

- Fair Conduct of Elections, Representation and Participation of the citizens at local level;
- Ethical Conduct, to ensure that the public interest is put before private ones.

In 2007 Ukraine was selected by the Council of Europe as a pilot country for the implementation of the Project on improvement of public ethics standards at local level. The project was implemented in 5 pilot Ukrainian cities: Artemivsk, Kamyanets-Podilskiy, Slavutych, Trostianets, Vinnytsa.

The project involved a number of activities, which were successfully carried out with the help of Ukrainian and European experts. Preparation of the Ukrainian Handbook on Public Ethics at Local Level, based on the European package of model initiatives on improving public ethics standards; preparation and implementation of the corruption prevention plans in 5 pilot municipalities, organization of a number of training seminars for

local officials. Taking into account the successful implementation of the project, we plan to disseminate this experience among other Ukrainian communities.

Another Council of Europe initiative – European Local Democracy Week, the new campaign aimed at promoting citizens participation in public life at local level — can also inspire lots of innovations at grass-root level. Ukraine took an active part in the implementation of the European Local Democracy Week. The implementation of this campaign were supported by the Government of Ukraine and the President of Ukraine who issued the special Decree.

It's important to underline that Ukrainian city Odessa, along with Brussels, Madrid and Varna was selected a pilot city for the implementation of the European Local Democracy Week in 2008, and we hope that this year another Ukrainian city (Boryspil) as a pilot city will ensure the successful practice of Odessa.

We consider that the European Local Democracy Week in Ukraine in 2008 was rather successful – more than 60 000 activities were organized with more than 2 million participants involved. Conducted activities contributed to the development of participatory democracy in Ukraine, because they activated the participation of citizens in social-public life of its territorial communities. Much attention was paid to the problems of the

openness and transparency of government. In order to inform public about actions that were held in the framework of the European Local Democracy Week, regional and local mass media issued nearly 2000 articles on this topic.

The special attention of Ukrainian Authorities was addressed to the Principle of Fair Conduct of Elections. In October Ukraine will host the next Council of Europe Forum “For the Future of Democracy”. I am proud to say that the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction was appointed responsible body for the organization of a section on “Local Elections and Local Democracy”. I’d like to invite you to close cooperation in preparation of this event.

In addition, I have the honor to inform you that Ukraine expressed the readiness to host the next session of the European Conference of Ministers responsible for local and regional governance after the Utrecht event. In this regard we have to reinforce our bilateral cooperation between Ukraine and Netherlands in order to ensure sustainability and observation of the European agenda on promoting Good Governance Principles at Local Level.

I wish all of us fruitful and constructive discussions during this Conference. Thank you very much for your attention!