

# Reforms for successful EU association

Strengthened institutions and new ideas are paving the way for the successful implementation of vital reforms



## The challenge: sluggish reform processes

Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe and one of the continent's poorest. In a bid to improve living conditions, politicians and the Ukrainian public are seeking a rapprochement with the European Union. They are keen to strengthen economic cooperation in particular, the aim being to bring prosperity to Ukraine.

As well as outlining reforms for the public administration, the Association Agreement signed by Ukraine and the EU in 2014 contains a free trade agreement. It covers matters such as duty-free access to the Ukrainian and EU internal market, enhancing the competitiveness of Ukrainian products and adopting EU legal and economic standards.

Nevertheless, implementing the reforms still poses a major challenge. There is a shortage of capacity at institutional and personnel level, and the reform processes are being hampered by a lack of efficient structures and processes and by unnecessary bureaucracy. Key actors are unable to fulfil their role as coordinators on EU matters, and the line ministries do not have any clear focus or opportunities to learn

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from one another. Highly qualified professionals are often snapped up by private-sector employers offering better-paid jobs. The country is therefore still suffering from economic stagnation, and the European Commission too has seen very few signs of progress.

## Our approach: efficient institutions

GIZ has been commissioned by the German Government to help its Ukrainian counterpart implement the EU Association Agreement. A crucial element of this work involves cooperating with the Government Office for the Coordination of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, which coordinates activities designed to promote closer ties with the European Union. With help from GIZ, the Government Office is devising new strategies and methods to achieve its ambitious objectives. Training is also being provided for the Office's staff to improve project and knowledge management, while clear responsibilities and regular opportunities to exchange ideas with relevant actors in newly established networks are helping to make their work more efficient.



What can we achieve together? Alumni of EU trainings from different ministries and state authorities at a workshop

The Government Office is reliant on support from relevant ministries if it is to act as a capable negotiator with the EU. With this in mind, the key ministries need to be able to perform their roles efficiently. GIZ is advising the institutions on refining their content and adapting their services to meet the requirements of the Agreement. The ministries are working with the Government Office to develop new processes and make communications more efficient. The Government Office is thus being transformed into a model EU coordination unit for the region, providing the line ministries with the guidance they need to implement the reforms.



Ukraine needs highly-experienced EU experts. This GIZ employee contributes to this



Fresh ideas for the implementation of the EU Association Agreement in Ukraine



## Roman Andarak: 'Our reports make more sense'

Roman Andarak works as an advisor for the Mission of Ukraine to the European Union. On behalf of the Ukrainian Government, he applies for financial and technical support from the EU Commission to help implement political strategies, such as enabling visa-free travel for Ukrainian citizens to EU countries. Before starting this job, Andarak took part in GIZ's EU Soft Skills training course. The interactive learning format helped him to enhance his skills in all areas that are now relevant to his daily work: EU project management, approximation of EU legislation and, in particular, EU communication. He recalls:

## Our results: hundreds of staff are learning new skills

The Ukrainian ministries are rarely told how they are meant to achieve the reform goals set out in the Association Agreement. GIZ and the Government Office are therefore running a competition to encourage the line ministries to implement projects relating to the rapprochement reforms. Together with partners from public administration, the private sector and civil society, the authorities are invited to put forward proposals for schemes such as creating a platform for exchanging information or drawing up guides for enforcing EU directives. After the Government Office has made its selection, GIZ supports up to five teams per year from the initial idea right through to the first pilot – as part of a six-month EU Association Lab. They work together to find experts, come up with a suitable method for implementation and thus set each project on the path towards its final objective.

In addition, more than 450 experts and managers from the Ukrainian government and administration will be learning how to organise their departments in line with EU standards by 2020. New working processes and services will enable them to structure their activities more effectively and achieve better results, which will help push forward the implementation of reforms for EU rapprochement.

*"Our partners in the EU often criticise us for having lots of ideas but not being able to present them properly. The training course has improved our reporting culture significantly – apart from anything else, our reports and applications are now easier to understand. For example, I have learned what to avoid when writing and what can be shown using visual means such as charts. This is something I have been able to pass on to my colleagues easily, too. We now know how to present our ideas in a way that wins the support of our partners. The first application I wrote myself was approved by the European Commission. I wouldn't have managed that without the training."*

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