

## WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH (WAPOR)

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### PRESS RELEASE

#### Statement Regarding Pre-Election Polls in Ukraine

Lincoln (Nebraska, USA), October 24, 2012. In the run-up to the Ukrainian Parliamentary elections on 28 October 2012, the political party "Ukraine – Forward!" has claimed that the results of a pre-election poll were deliberately distorted to reduce the share of the vote intention for that party. The poll was carried out by two reputable polling organizations, Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) and the Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF). KIIS is a member of ESOMAR. The poll results were in line with the trend in polls over the past couple of months, which have shown a gradual decline in support for "Ukraine – Forward!".

"Ukraine – Forward!" has now initiated a court case against the pollsters, asking the court to demand that the pollsters retract the poll findings, and declare that they were false. The case is to be heard on 25 October, just three days before the elections.

WAPOR is deeply concerned by these developments. Pre-election polls play an important role in democratic societies. The regular publication of reputable polls, and vigorous debate about the findings, are an integral part of a functional democracy. Bona fide pollsters should be free to publish their findings and the media should be free to report and discuss them. For this reason, WAPOR also encourages that the publication of polls meets minimal requirements of disclosure to the public. See the Rules of Practice Regarding Reports and Study Results in WAPOR's Code of Ethics at <http://wapor.unl.edu/wapor-code-of-ethics/>.

We wish to express our solidarity with KIIS and DIF. We hope the Court recognizes the value of conducting and publishing poll results and takes no action to suppress polling in Ukraine. It is important that the Ukrainian public should continue to trust the results of genuine polls, and surveys more generally. Well-conducted surveys hold a mirror to society. Survey findings can provide information that permits debate to be informed, rather than uninformed. We would uphold the right of all Ukrainians to freely express their views and we believe that the discussion of those views is more fruitful in the context of objective information about the state of society, including poll results.

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