



Ilko Kucheriv  
**Democratic Initiatives**  
Foundation

The Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF) is an analytical and educational organization founded in 1992. DIF is among the leading think tanks in Ukraine, which successfully combines the research of public opinion with the analysis of policies and key socio-political processes in Ukraine, develops well-grounded proposals for decision makers and civil society in the realm of the democratic transformation of Ukraine and its integration in the community of European democracies.



## DIF WORKS AS:

- **A think tank** – analyzing public policies which corresponds to popular demand for European standards, and advocacy of reform.
- **A research organization** – research of the main trends in public opinion, functioning of bodies of state government and local self-governance and international organizations.
- **Educational institution** – education, seminars, informing and enlightenment of civil society, stakeholders, different target groups in Ukraine and abroad on the most relevant and pressing socio-political issues.



## DIF WORKS IN THE FOLLOWING SPHERES:

- Research and analysis of trends in public opinion and its influence on public policies
- Domestic reforms of the political system
- European and Euro-Atlantic integration
- Policy towards occupied and liberated territories in the Donbas region with the aim of their re-integration
- Frozen conflicts on post-Soviet territory
- Strengthening of the capabilities of Ukrainian think tanks
- Educational reform
- Monitoring of electoral processes and conducting exit polls



In 2010 the Democratic Initiatives Foundation was named after its founder and first director Ilko Kucheriv (1955-2010), who made a major contribution to the development of Ukrainian state-building.



Today, the organization is headed by Iryna Bekeshkina, Director of the Democratic Initiatives Foundation, sociologist and PhD candidate in Sociology, who every year is ranked among the Top 100 Most Influential Women in Ukraine.



Professor of Political Science at the National University Kyiv Mohyla Academy Olexiy Haran is a Head of Research at DIF.





DIF was the first NGO that from the start of its activities played the role of an intermediary between researchers of public opinion and civil society by analyzing and presenting public opinion of the Ukrainian population regarding the most poignant social issues to society. Subsequently, DIF introduced public opinion polls to political discourse and was the first to begin actively using public opinion as an argument in political discourse.

Today, DIF as a think tank that conducts original research, resolutely promotes its products to the state level, conducts advocacy of its recommendations systematically influences the forming of policies and public opinion. DIF participates in the work of consulting and advisory bodies of governmental bodies and regularly engages public officials in expert surveys.

One of the key components of the DIF activity has become the conducting of independent exit polls in Ukraine. DIF was the first to organize exit poll during the 1998 parliamentary elections. Since then the team of sociologists and analysts that DIF conglomerated into the National Exit Poll Consortium became the leader in this sphere in Ukraine. By developing standards targeted at the proliferation of democratic values DIF was an example of how an independent organization can change society.



According to the results of the Global Go To Think Tank Index, which is compiled within the framework of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) at the University of Pennsylvania (U.S.), DIF is rated among the most influential think tanks in the Eastern Europe.

DIF constantly holds public events (debates, roundtables and press conferences) dedicated to the discussion of issues of the development of the Ukrainian state, national interests, democratic processes and the integration of the country into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. DIF continues its activity in the direction of Euro-Atlantic integration. Having started its activity as a civil center for the support of Ukraine's accession to NATO, today DIF has gained the reputation of an authoritative analytical source of the Euro-Atlantic attitudes of Ukrainians.

DIF publishes the English-language analytical bulletins «Focus on Ukraine», which offers regular assessment of political events in Ukraine, «Policy Papers» in which the main reforms in Ukraine is analyzed and «Public Opinion», in which the views of Ukrainians on specific problems and issues in the political, economic and social life of Ukraine are studied.

DIF has published a number of academic monographs and handbooks. It has two web pages on the Internet: [www.dif.org.ua](http://www.dif.org.ua) and <http://dif-exitpoll.org.ua/>.



DIF directly influenced the political course of the country in 2004 when it conducted an independent exit poll in Ukraine during the presidential elections, which pointed to the falsification of the election results through vote rigging, changed the political landscape of Ukraine and became the main argument for and catalyst of the Orange Revolution. Since that time the exit polls became a crucial and indispensable element of political culture to ensure free and fair elections and an instrument of voter control in Ukraine.

DIF takes part in coalitions of different formats, which unites different public or non-government organizations. It was one of the founders and participants of the Freedom of Choice coalition, later the New Citizen coalition and the Chesno (Fair) movement and today the Reanimation Package of Reforms.

DIF has risen to new levels of cooperation with foreign think tanks and from time to time it presents its studies on the course of reform in Ukraine abroad. Since 2010 DIF is a member of the PASOS international network of think tanks, which significantly fostered its capabilities as a think tank. In 2014 DIF became a member of the Association of Ukrainian Think Tanks, which consolidates its efforts in promoting reform and European integration in Ukraine through the Ukrainian Think Tanks Liaison Office in Brussels. DIF is also a member of the Ukrainian national platform Forum of Civil Society of Eastern Partnership in Brussels.

