UKRAINE: TIME TO CHOOSE TIME

*Time is mindful of its rights not only over men but also over the states.*

*(Johann Goethe)*

This fall the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has twice changed its decision regarding the changes the country’s transition to winter time. The issue caused heated debates not only in political circles, but also has gained great popularity among the common people, workers of the energy field, geographers and doctors.

Time transferring question in Ukraine can be examined not only from the internal lifestyle point of view, but also as a political issue, the selection of the geopolitical strategy of our state.

According to Vice-President of the Academy of Higher Education of Ukraine, Doctor of Science, Maxim Strikha, seasonal change of time is a requirement of European legislation. “Since we are going to Europe, then, obviously, this issue should be considered also”, – the scientist says.

In June 2011 the Russian Federation, according to the President Dmitry Medvedev initiative, abolished the transition to winter time.

“In the political and logistical sense, Russia could be more advantageous being synchronized with Europe”, – the chief editor of “Air Transport Review” Andrew Synytsky. Experts say time transferring denial will lead to market problems, transport links with European countries and will create a huge problem for the Kaliningrad region.

The Ukrainian political circles the discussing of the time transferring cancellation issue began immediately after the announcement of the President Medvedev Decree. Ukraine, for a long-term habit followed Russia’s example in this seemingly domestic issue as time transfer, possibly due to the existence of a
really closer relationship with Russia than with the countries of Europe. September 20, 2011 was issued a resolution “On the change of time calculating order in Ukraine” which, after the example of our northern neighbor, abolished the transition to winter time. However, numerous disputes that have been generated by this resolution, which, incidentally, was adopted surprisingly quickly – without proper discussion with experts, consultation with scholars or taking into account thought of diplomats, led to a reconsideration of the decision. As a result, on October 18, 2011 Parliament repealed the previous ordinance.

Such variability in the outcomes indicates the uncertainty of the precise foreign policy course of Ukraine, as well as inadequate knowledge of Ukrainian officials geographical and geopolitical peculiarities of our country. While making such decisions it should be taken into account not only the social component of the issue, but also the foreign policy and economic consequences.

Today Ukraine is like between the “two poles”, and making its final choice in favor of only one side is not appropriate because, due to the geopolitical situation of our country, we have a unique opportunity to be a kind of “bridge” between Europe and Asia and use our position with the greatest possible benefit.

In diplomatic practice, symbolism of making internal policy decisions play a significant role in building relations with the surrounding states. It is possible that Ukraine will continue to live in the winter time, without further summer time transferring. This decision would testify the fact that we still take the example of Russia, aware of the correctness of this decision particularly with regard to the health of the citizens, but from the other side – we are inclining to Europe, because the difference in time with it will not be as different as with our northern neighbor. This would again demonstrate Ukraine’s aspirations to be an equivalent partner for both the West and the East.