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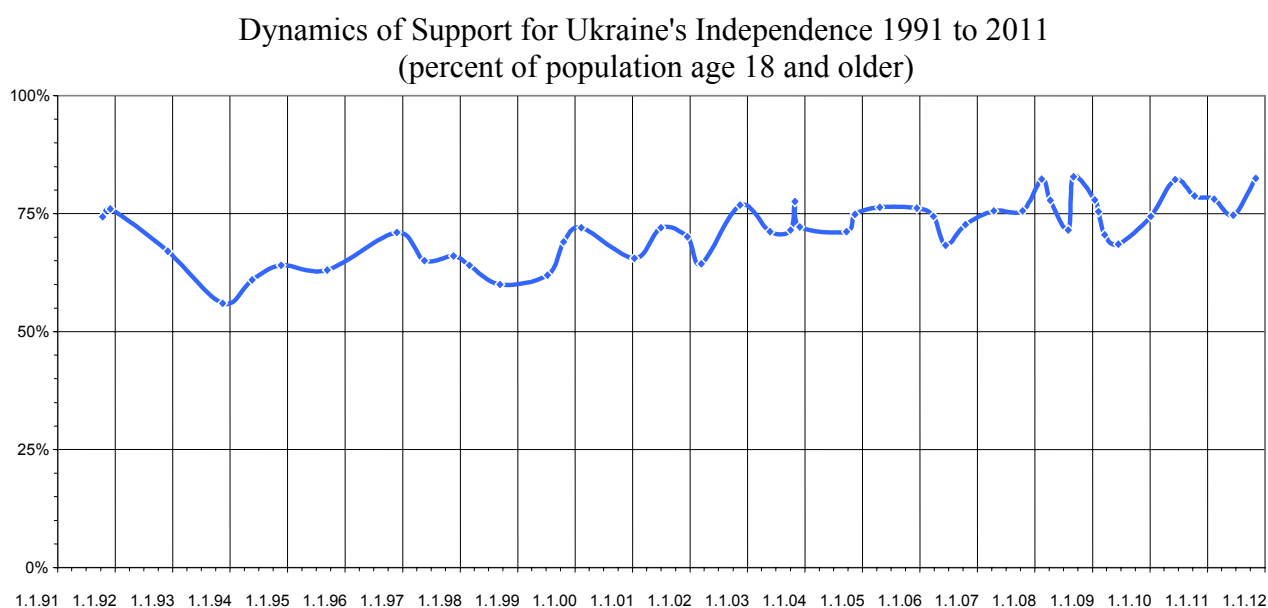
***CITIZENS' ATTITUDES
TOWARDS
UKRAINE'S INDEPENDENCE***

November 4 to 15, 2011, the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) conducted a public opinion survey, representative for Ukraine's population age 18 and older. 2037 respondents were surveyed in all administrative regions of Ukraine ("oblasts"), Crimea and Kyiv.

The sample was stochastic. Its error (with 0.95 probability and 1.5 design-effect) does not exceed 3.3% for indicators approximating 50%, 2.8% for indicators approximating 25%, 2.0% for indicators approximating 10%, and 1.4% for indicators approximating 5%.

Twenty years ago, on December 1, 1991, 90.3% of citizens who participated in the Ukraine-wide referendum supported the decision of the Supreme Council (Verkhovna Rada) to declare Ukraine an independent state. 84.2% of all those eligible to vote participated in the referendum. Therefore, at the time, it was actually 76% of Ukraine's adult population who explicitly expressed their support for Ukraine as an independent state.

That was the first indicator showing the rate of support for the independence of Ukraine among its population. Since then, the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology has monitored citizens' perspectives on Ukraine's independence on a regular basis. Over all these years, subject to various factors, political as well as socio-economic, the level of support for the independence of our country has fluctuated quite significantly, yet it has never dropped below the critical benchmark of 50%. The graph below shows its 20 year dynamics as identified through KIIS public opinion surveys.



The level of support for the independence of Ukraine is defined as the percent of citizens who support Ukraine's independence if faced between two choices: to unite with Russia into one state or to preserve Ukraine's independent statehood (please see the first two answer options in the appendix).

According to KIIS November 2011 survey, 82.6% citizens of Ukraine support its independence. The overwhelming majority (70%) believe that Ukraine and Russia must be independent states *"with open borders, without visas or customs"*. Considerably less respondents (13%) indicate that Ukraine and Russia should have a *visa regime* while

16% believe that these two countries should unite into one state. Only 1% of respondents were not sure which relations between Ukraine and Russia they prefer.

The preferences are similar in all four major regions of the country¹:

- Those who believe that Ukraine and Russia should be independent states with *open borders, no visas or customs* constitute 67% in the Western Region, 75% in the Central, 67% in the Southern, and 68% in the Eastern Region.
- Those who believe that Ukraine and Russia should unite into one state constitute 3% in the Western Region, 13% in the Central, 23% in the Southern, and 25% in the Eastern Region.
- Those who support introducing a visa regime constitute 27% of the population in the Western Region, 10% in the Central, 9% in the Southern, and 7% in the Eastern Region.

A definite majority of population in each of the four regions (over 65% in each) believe that Ukraine and Russia should be independent states, yet have open borders, no visas or customs. Despite the economic hardships and political crises that Ukraine has been through over the past 20 years, citizens' support for the independence of their country has not lowered and has even become stronger.

¹ **Western Region** refers to the eight most Western administrative regions: Volyn', Rivne, L'viv, Ivano-Frankivs'k, Ternopil', Khmel'nyts'k, Zakarpattia, and Chernivtsi Regions (22% of voters).

Central Region: Zhytomyr, Vinnytsia, Kirovohrad, Cherkasy, Poltava, Sumy, Chernihiv, Kyiv Regions and the city of Kyiv (30% of voters).

Southern Region: Dnipropetrovs'k, Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Zaporizhia Regions and Crimea (26% of voters).

Eastern Regions: Kharkiv, Donetsk, and Luhans'k Regions (22% of voters).

The distribution of answers to the question «**Which relations between Ukraine and Russia do you prefer?**» in four major regions (percent of region population age 18 and older)

	Ukraine overall, %	Regions			
		Western	Central	Southern	Eastern
They should be the same as with the other countries: closed borders, visas, customs	13.0	27.3	10.1	8.6	7.3
Ukraine and Russia should be independent, yet have special friendship ties: open borders, no visas or customs	69.5	66.6	75.1	67.4	67.7
Ukraine and Russia should unite into one state	16.1	3.1	13.0	23.3	25.0
Not sure about it / Do not know	1.4	3.1	1.8	0.7	0.0

For the analysis of factors underlying the changes in the level of support for the independence of Ukraine, please see the online article by Valeriy Khmelko ["Sovereignty as One of the National Values: a Sociological Perspective"](#) (in Ukrainian).²

² This one and other publications by Dr. Khmelko are available online at <http://www.kiis.com.ua/ua/about/persona/publicationa.html>