

SUPPORT TO UKRAINE FOR DEVELOPING A MODERN PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM



A project funded by the European Union and implemented by a consortium consisting of GFA Consulting Group GmbH, Hamburg, and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, Helsinki. The project continues its activities to assist Ukraine with a focus on advancing its progress towards EU accession under Component 1 and supporting the establishment of a modern Blood Safety System under Component 2.

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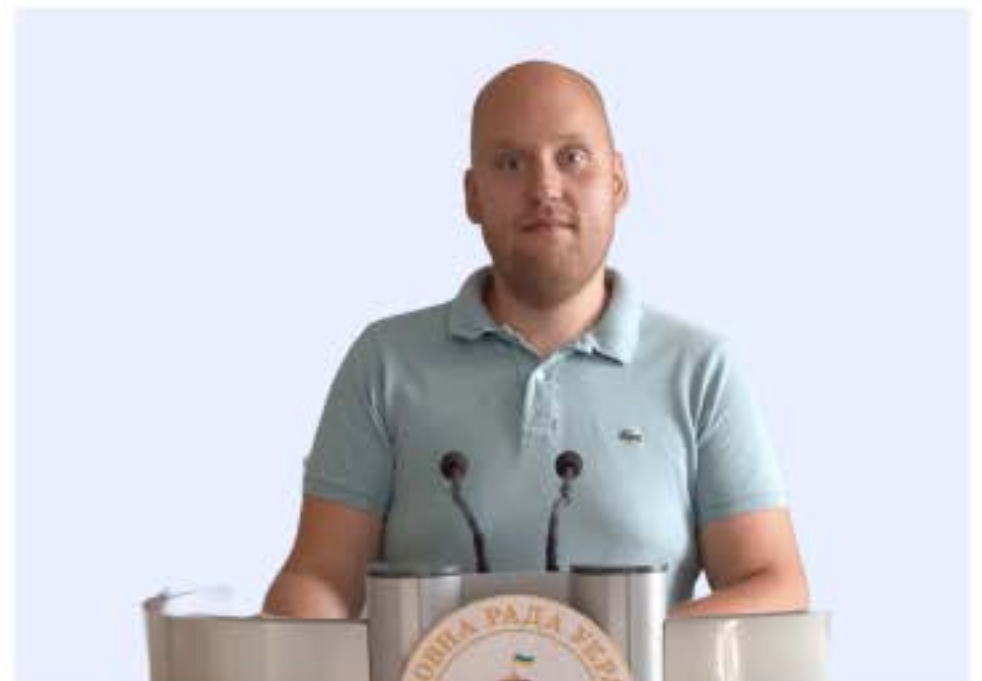
Interview

Andrii Kudria

the junior non-key legal expert of EU Project "Support to Ukraine for Developing a Modern Public Health System"

Ukraine is progressing fast towards European integration. The work of the Ministry of Health in the area of European integration is currently dynamic: a large number of international meetings, internal meetings and brainstorming sessions are held. The main activities of this area are the development of legislative implementation and communication with the EU institutions regarding key topics. These processes are performed in close cooperation between international experts, junior experts of the project and civil servants of the Ministry of Health. The work and support of the Ministry in this format is synergistic, strengthening the work of the structure directly.

One of the most significant examples is the explanatory meeting with the **European Commission**, which took place on 16 April this year, dedicated to the relevant negotiation chapter, which the Ministry of Health is responsible for. Part of the team visited Brussels personally, while the other part participated online in Kyiv.



The meeting lasted around 12 hours. The team of project experts worked extensively to prepare background notes on each EU act and studied the state of their implementation, also preparing a number of crucial questions for the European Commission representatives to clarify, raised by the delegation members who were in Brussels.

The Ministry of Health plans to implement this current priority EU acts, participate in the negotiation process and get ready for the next screening meetings with the European Commission.

One of the areas of European integration work in the healthcare sector is the implementation of EU requirements for cross-border healthcare.

According to the European Commission, this is one of the most challenging sections of the Acquis communautaire, however, its main meaning can be explained in simple words. The European Union is the free movement of people, money, goods and services. This means that, while moving freely within the EU, people have an equal right to receive the same quality of medical care in all these countries, as well as to receive full or partial free medical care, just as they have at home. On the other hand, healthcare providers have the opportunity to offer their services to consumers from other countries, which includes reciprocal recognition of prescriptions for medicines, assessment of medical technologies and coordination of social security systems, etc.

Our achievements in this area include:

- establishing cooperation and holding a thematic online meeting between the National Health Service of Ukraine and the National Insurance Fund of Poland;
- assistance in developing a strategy for the Ministry of Health to implement cross-border healthcare.

Further steps include drafting an implementation draft law and developing the necessary bylaws. It is also planned to hold a conference on European healthcare integration, with a particular block dedicated to cross-border healthcare.

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The experience that helps me in my efforts to approximate Ukrainian legislation to EU standards.

My first medical degree and work as a doctor help me to deal with European integration and be a legal expert in the healthcare sector, because the healthcare system is very comprehensive and difficult to understand. Therefore, it is good to have experience inside. You have a better understanding of the thin subtleties of narrow-profile issues.

My legal education and eight years experience in the secretariat of the Parliamentary Committee on Healthcare helped me to regulate national and European legislation. The development of legislation based on international and European regulation, continuous feedback, and study of its application practices have been and will remain my ongoing task. The inextinguishable desire of learning new skills, exploring the international experience of advanced European countries are the driving force that always motivates me, and I sincerely believe my colleagues as well, in their professional development, thus brings good outcomes for the country in general.

Advancing the skills and knowledge of Competent authority inspectors in blood transfusion area



During the period from 16 to 18 April 2024, the project's Key Expert on blood safety Dr Mohammed Farouk in cooperation with UTCC Deputy Director Dr Oleksandr Serhienko held an online training session for employees of the State Service of Ukraine on Medicines and Drugs Control (Competent Authority in blood transfusion field) with the objectives to familiarize the Competent authority team, who will be responsible for blood transfusion regulatory activities, with the different elements of the blood transfusion chain from donor to patient, as well the related quality management aspects.

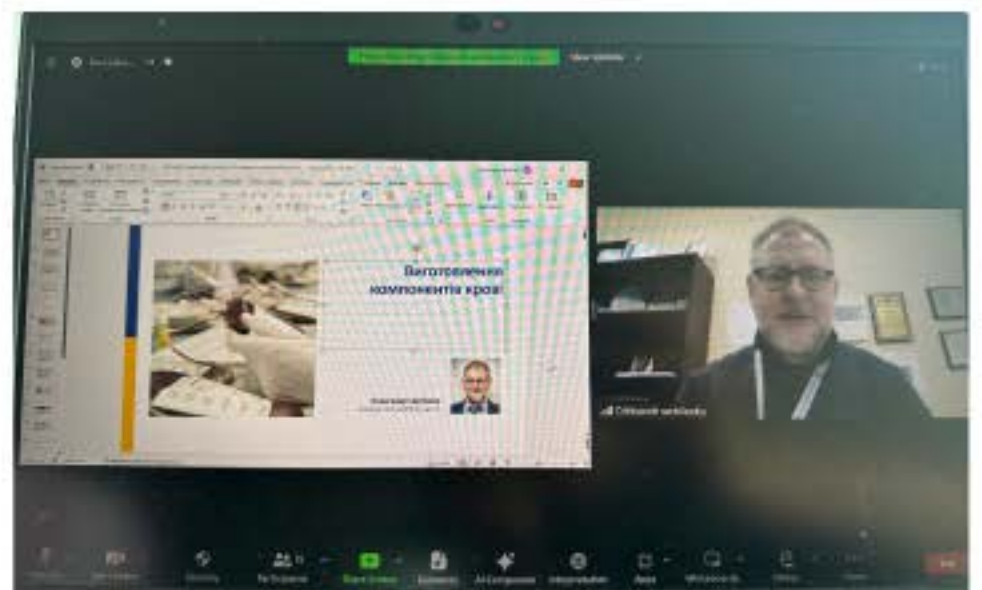
The training focused on the technical operations of the blood system, transfusion chain, haemovigilance, and critical aspects of ensuring safe and effective blood-related processes. The workshop delved into critical elements of the blood transfusion system, emphasizing the need for effective management, coordination, and continuous improvement.



The trainers covered various modules of the blood transfusion ecosystem, stressing the importance of proper management of blood supplies, safe transportation, and distribution. The topics of blood transfusion coordination and laboratory transformations gain momentum under martial law circumstances.

The online training was complemented, on 19 of April 2024, with a visit to Kyiv Regional Blood Service Centre in order to enable trainees to observe practically the various stages of the blood transfusion chain.

The training session emphasised the critical role of effective coordination, proper procedures, and continuous monitoring in blood transfusion services to ensure patient safety and improve quality of healthcare.



Enhancing features of electronic donors' registries

The Ministry of Health of Ukraine (MoH) is implementing the eKrov system to automate the data management aspects of the blood donation processes, increase safety and monitoring, and improve blood supply management in the country. The system's capabilities will allow to have timely and reliable information on blood needs, as well as to monitor blood stocks at the national and regional levels.

In anticipation of the upcoming launch of electronic donors' registries as part of the eKrov system, a priority for MoH in 2024 aiming to fulfil Ukraine's European integration commitment of ensuring the safety and quality of donor blood and its components, the project experts have been actively involved in updating and testing the functionality of these registries.

Training materials for the registers were developed in various formats, including text and video, targeting different user groups. These materials are essential for effective implementation and provide step-by-step instructions on how to use the registry system; educate users on how to navigate the registry, input data correctly, and utilize its features efficiently. User guides were created to provide detailed instructions on using the registers, including their reporting modules. Furthermore, a video instruction manual was prepared to enhance user understanding.



For the license register, a support concept was outlined, detailing the responsibilities and tasks of support teams at different levels. Materials were also prepared to educate users on the register of persons willing to donate blood and/or its components. Additionally, a comprehensive training program was developed for end users of the register of donors' awards.

These materials serve as crucial resources for training project stakeholders, ensuring smooth operation and maximizing the benefits of the implemented systems.



Valentyna Chernenko

project national non-key expert in communications and public and media relations

In March 2024, the Government of Ukraine adopted the Strategy for the development of voluntary non-remunerated donation of blood and blood components until 2028. The document represents a significant step towards aligning the country's blood service with European standards and commitments under the Association Agreement with the European Union. Two strategic goals have been set - to support voluntary non-remunerated donation of blood and its components through comprehensive policy implementation and capacity building of blood system actors, striving to achieve the globally recognized gold standard.

The Strategy has been approved for the period up to 2028, along with a corresponding action plan for its implementation from 2024 to 2026. This action plan consolidates the efforts of Ukrainian government bodies to support voluntary non-remunerated donation of blood and blood components. However, ongoing efforts to promote voluntary non-remunerated blood donation continue beyond the action plan period.

The Ukrainian Transplant Coordination Center (UTCC) is a specialized state institution responsible for coordinating the transplantation system and the blood system in Ukraine. It plays a pivotal role in leading the state's efforts in this crucial area. UTCC effectively collaborates with international organizations as well as public and private entities to accomplish its strategic objectives.

Leadership and cooperation with the public sector

Ukraine has a strong tradition of engaging with the public sector, which plays a vital role in promoting and supporting blood donation. Several influential NGOs in the country actively support donors and blood donation, boasting a strong track record of successful information campaigns. These organizations are eager to engage in active cooperation efforts.

The state, particularly through the Ukrainian Transplant Coordination Center, is prepared to assume leadership roles, strengthening necessary activities by collaborating with the public sector.

Since the beginning of 2024, several meetings have been conducted with NGOs and proactive citizens committed to making blood donation their mission. Consequently, memorandums of cooperation and collaboration were signed with the All-Ukrainian Association of Donors of Ukraine, Blood Agents, and NGO "Solomianski Kotyky".

Additionally, the concept of expanding the cooperation program with donor ambassadors — individuals who possess influence within specific segments of society and are willing to promote free voluntary donation while encouraging others to participate — has been developed and is currently being implemented.

Under the umbrella of such cooperation, several events were organized to commemorate World Blood Donor Day, celebrated worldwide on June 14th.

All activities and initiatives are aimed at creating the necessary conditions to attract potential donors of blood and blood components, including those who are currently inactive or temporarily suspended. These individuals can contribute not only by donating directly but also by encouraging others to become donors.

Public-private partnerships

Our strength lies in unity. We have decided to unite the efforts of the public, state, and private sectors to achieve a synergistic effect, where all levels cooperate for the same purpose: to promote voluntary blood donation.

As a result, we have consolidated our efforts and launched the Donor platform, which contains all the necessary information for current and potential donors in Ukraine.

This platform was created as a social project with the support of businesses and aims to provide everyone who wants to become a donor with complete, reliable, and official information.

One of the sections will feature a panel where each donor can add their photo, along with a section called 'life stories', where we will share compelling narratives of individuals who have become donors, serving as inspiring examples for others.

We aim for every potential donor to feel like they are part of an important cause, as their gift is truly priceless. The slogan of the information campaign we are launching in Ukraine is 'Donation is priceless'. All our activities are designed to inspire more people to become voluntary and regular donors of blood and blood components. Our ambitious goal is for as many people as possible to become voluntary non-remunerated donors, serving as motivational examples for others.



Liudmyla Hordon

Deputy Director General
of the UTCC



The current communication with present and potential donors with a message about the invaluable contribution of each of them is a logical continuation of our previous information campaign 'Your blood can fight. Become a donor - become a hero'.

We are expanding our target audience, including active donors who have donated blood and are ready to motivate others to donate before their next donation. In this way, they will encourage other people to donate blood and blood components voluntarily.

Another important block is communication with employees of blood system entities, because the final trust of donors and the functioning blood system depends on contact with them.

Service for the donor

An extremely important strategic goal, outlined in the approved Strategy is to strengthen the capacity of blood system entities to create a favourable environment for the promotion of voluntary non-remunerated donation.

For a donor to return to a blood center, they must have a positive experience and service at the center, which is a crucial component of attracting both new and regular donors.

To achieve this goal, UTCC, in collaboration with international partners and NGOs, has planned a series of educational events for blood center staff. This includes training for specialists whose direct responsibilities include donor recruitment.

In addition to acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills, recruiters from blood centers will have the opportunity to earn continuing professional development points. These points are essential for healthcare workers in Ukraine to confirm their qualifications.



Oleksandr Serhienko

Deputy Director General
of the UTCC



"With the adoption of the Strategy, a legal framework for enhancing the organization of work within blood system entities to encourage the population to participate in voluntary donation of blood and blood components has emerged.

Specifically, the provision requires institutions to establish positions for employees responsible for attracting new donors and supporting regular donors (donor recruiters). While some blood system entities already have positive experience in this area, it's valuable that the importance of this aspect of their activities is now defined in the legal document.

The functional responsibilities of donor recruiters will include, among others, the following tasks:



Attracting and encouraging voluntary non-remunerated donors of blood and blood components to the blood system entities;



Creating favourable conditions for individuals who are or have expressed a desire to become donors of blood and blood components, and ensuring accessibility to the places of procurement;



Communicating with blood and blood component donors.

The implementation of strategic goals for the development of the blood and blood components donation system is crucial for bringing around significant changes in our society.

This is how we can make voluntary donation a social norm in Ukraine, which is our ambitious goal.

We aim to instill in society the belief that donation is an act of kindness and self-sacrifice, where everyone can feel that their actions are important for the community and contribute to making the world a better place.

The culture of voluntary donation is already bringing like-minded people together today, and our objective is to exponentially scale this culture.



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БЕЗЦІННЕ

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the project "Support to Ukraine for Developing a Modern Public Health System" and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

The overall project's objective is to support the modernisation and development of a sustainable Public Health System that is able to ensure disease prevention and control standards in line with EU legislation, requirements, and practices. The project shall contribute to strengthening national leadership and capacity in Public Health policy programming and implementation. The project continues its activities to assist Ukraine with a focus on advancing its progress towards EU accession under Component 1 and supporting the establishment of a modern Blood Safety System under Component 2.

