

Heinrich Böll Foundation's Representative Office in Ukraine is honored to invite you to the public podium discussion:

**Is the Period of Immunity Against Right-Wing Extremism Over?
The determinants, circumstances and consequences of the recent rise of Ukrainian radical nationalism**

Time: September 29th, 2011, at 18:30

Registration at 18:00

Place: Kyiv, Goethe Institute, vul. Voloska, 12/4, 4th floor



With the support of the Goethe Institute in Ukraine

For two decades, post-Soviet Ukrainian society has been demonstrating an impressive immunity against extremely right-wing, clearly ultra-nationalist parties, on national-level politics. Currently, however, Western Ukraine is following a worrying all-European trend in that a radically nationalist party, the former Social-National Party renamed "Svoboda" in 2004, is gaining political popularity and a foothold, within Galician society, in particular. Moreover, "Svoboda" has chances to get into the Ukrainian Parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, in the upcoming elections 2012.

Not only "Svoboda" but also other radically right-wing organizations and movements (Bandera's Tryzub, the Social-National Assembly etc.) are becoming more active and gaining the support of Ukrainian citizens. They plead for a monoracial and monoethnic state, call for "racial hygiene" and struggle against migrants, use both slogans of economic populism and violent methods against their ideological opponents.

If an immunity against right radicalism existed in Ukraine before, why isn't it effective now? Has our country, in fact, ever had such an immunity? How to explain this new phenomenon in Ukrainian politics – the explosive increase of Svoboda supporter – and how to interpret it? What is the nature of "Svoboda's" nationalism? Is it merely populist and largely defensive, or actually racist and even fascist? How to explain the impressive gains in votes during the October 2010 local elections? Is the rise of "Svoboda" just a product of cunning political technology? Or is it the expression of substantive trends in Ukrainian society? Has "Svoboda" the potential to change the nature of Ukrainian political conflict? Could it become a factor of social division? Is the rise of "Svoboda" a mere distraction from more important issues, or a worrisome and, perhaps, even dangerous phenomenon? What role do such organizations as "Russian-Speaking Ukraine" or "Russian World" play for the formation of radical nationalism in today's Ukraine? What has to be done in order to create strong, ideologically stable and non-populist left parties that would propose an alternative to the today's Ukrainian traditionally right-wing discourse?

This podium discussion will try to provide answers to these and some related issues.

