



Inform

Newsletter for the international community providing views and analysis from the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc (BYuT)

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Tymoshenko Appeals for Clean Campaign

Yulia Tymoshenko, Ukraine's Leader of the Opposition, has called upon all political parties preparing for the 30 September parliamentary election, to campaign fairly and refrain from



▲ Campaigning is underway: BYuT leader Yulia Tymoshenko appears on the Svoboda Slova talk show on Ukrainian television.

personal attacks. The BYuT leader appealed to all political forces to conduct themselves in a dignified fashion and to uphold the best principles of democratic behaviour.

The opposition leader drove home a powerful message that the electorate is tired of political squabbling and expects more from its leaders. "I call upon all the parties to behave responsibly and maturely. The people have grown tired. They are disillusioned with politics so it is up to us to restore their faith in the political and democratic process. Therefore, let us show our people and the world that Ukraine stands for free and fair elections and for campaigning that is devoid of personal rancour."

In contrast to the fraud-marred presidential election of 2004, the March 2006 parliamentary election won plaudits from the international

community for being both fair and remarkably free from muckraking. A report by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe described it as a "democratic breakthrough," while the former-US Ambassador to Ukraine, John Herbst, declared the campaign as "Ukraine's most democratic and honest."

Although there were isolated outbreaks of what can only be described as "dirty-tricks," campaigning in 2006 failed to descend into the gloves-off free for all that is often associated with some of the world's more mature democracies. In comparison, what mudslinging there was tended to have an amateur component, such as a short-lived campaign involving the circulation of specially printed leaflets bearing the BYuT logo, inviting people to celebrate Ms Tymoshenko's birthday with a discounted meal at McDonald's.

Last week there was perhaps a portent of this year's campaign when a tape was released of an alleged recording of President Viktor Yushchenko in fierce debate with Ms Tymoshenko. The BYuT press office was quick to stamp on its authenticity – declaring it for what it was – a feeble attempt to subvert attention from the real issues.

"Let us show our people and the world that Ukraine stands for free and fair elections and for campaigning that is devoid of personal rancour."



"We will not be dragged into gutter politics," said Ms Tymoshenko, "our campaign will be based upon solid policies aimed at improving economic and social conditions in this country. This is what is needed if we are to improve the lives of ordinary people and Ukraine's standing in the international community. I call upon all political forces to follow suit, for the measure of democracy in our country will be judged by our actions over the coming months. Let us behave responsibly and maturely."

Questions or comments? E-mail us at taras@byti.org.ua