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

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Court Rules CEC to Reconsider Registration

The Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko (BYuT) has won a court ruling that orders Ukraine's Central Election Commission (CEC) to reconsider the registration of 450 BYuT candidates standing for Ukraine's parliamentary elections slated for 30 September.

The Kyiv court instructed the CEC to reconsider the registration by today and found that BYuT was in compliance with all laws. The CEC has two days to appeal the verdict.



▲ Demonstrators picket the Ukraine Central Election Commission headquarters in Kyiv in protest against the politically motivated decision not to register 450 BYuT candidates.

On Friday the CEC made a shock decision to reject the BYuT candidates' registration, effectively shutting out the Leader of the Opposition and her bloc from the electoral process on the grounds that they had not included their full addresses on the registration forms submitted.

The extraordinary decision was made on partisan lines, backed by those members of the CEC who support the pro-Russian Party of Regions, headed by

Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, and by the Communist and Socialist parties.

According to the CEC, BYuT had omitted specific address details on the form, such as house number and street, even though this information was included on accompanying candidate biographies.

The decision was all the more peculiar given that no law or regulation was breached. In fact the candidacy documents were completed in exactly the same fashion as those submitted for the 2006 parliamentary election. Since then there has been no notification of any change in procedure.

The decision was viewed by many dispassionate observers as politically motivated and designed to halt BYuT's election campaign, as technically it is illegal for non-registered parties to campaign.

"There is only a very limited time to campaign, and the other parties are already out among the voters," said Hryhoriy Nemyria, Ms Tymoshenko's foreign affairs adviser, "they are trying to provoke us to commit illegal actions because of the ruling and tie us up in court.

"The Party of Regions claim bizarrely that we orchestrated the situation. This is truly ludicrous as 8 out of the 15 CEC members are from the governing coalition. If this was a ploy why didn't they vote in favour of our registration? And why would we want to prevent our people from campaigning? This statement simply doesn't warrant being taken seriously."



"This is a blatant and rather desperate attempt to undermine the electoral process by eliminating a political party that represents one-third of the country's population," said Yulia Tymoshenko, leader of her eponymous bloc.

Support for BYuT

The move by the CEC has only galvanized support for BYuT and for a fair and democratic electoral process. For the past three days more than a thousand protestors have camped outside the CEC's offices in Kyiv, whilst opposition parties and the international community have lent their vocal support to have the ruling overturned.

BYuT's Orange partners, Our Ukraine – People's Self Defence, condemned the CEC's decision as "an overt political order and manifestation of political repression," and called for an urgent reconsideration of the registration.

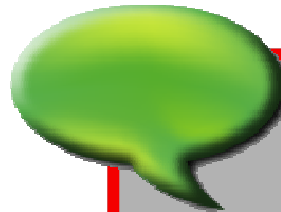
The European Parliament has thrown its weight behind the need for a fair, representative and democratic process. Mr Adrian Severin, MEP and Chairman of the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, is deeply concerned over the election process. "I have to express concern over the recent decision by the Ukraine Central Election Commission not to register members of certain opposition political parties for the early parliamentary elections," remarked Mr Severin in an official statement.

Mr Severin reminded the CEC of a fact-finding trip to Ukraine in which his mission was assured by the chairman of the CEC that the elections would be held in a free and fair manner. "Therefore, the decision to bar opposition politicians to take part in the elections came as

a great surprise and might raise doubt over the fairness of the electoral process," added Mr Severin, who went on to say, "the European Parliament will be participating in the International Observation Mission and will monitor very carefully whether all political forces are assured equal and fair conditions of participation in the Ukrainian elections."

One well-known political analyst told Inform that the "recent events did not bode well for guaranteeing the fairness of the election." They expressed particular concern over the potential for fraud amongst home voters, saying that 3-5 percent of the vote could be manipulated in this way. The CEC has approved an application for home voting, which does not require medical certification. Up to 2 million people are believed to be potential home voters.

BYuT said that it would monitor the situation carefully and demand closer scrutiny.



Quote of the Week

BYuT and the pro-
Presidential Our Ukraine
– People's Self-Defence

(OUPSD) bloc expect to conclude a coalition treaty and agree the distribution of Cabinet posts should they enter the Verkhovna Rada. OUPSD leader Yuriy Lutsenko said:

"We held a meeting with Tymoshenko and her team yesterday. The agreement on cooperation in the future is ready, where it is clearly fixed that those who will obtain the biggest quantity of votes among our Orange teams, will have the post of Prime Minister. And then an effective competent team of like-minded persons will be formed."