

Yesterday the long-prayed for reform bill on education passed the first reading in the Ukrainian Parliament! If the amendment is fully passed, Ukraine will grant full equal rights to religious organizations to found Christian educational institutions including elementary and high schools.

This is the first time in the history of Ukraine that any kind of bill on this issue has even made it to the parliament's agenda; it has been rejected several times over the years in parliamentary committees previously staffed by secular lawmakers. The amendment covers needed reforms at all levels of education from pre-schools to universities and even vocational schools and after-school programs! We are highly encouraged that the amendment (developed mainly by civically active Christians) not only made it all the way to parliament--but was passed as a "first reading" and is likely to pass a "second reading" in July. If the amendment is passed and becomes law--and the prognosis is very good-- all denominations in Ukraine are likely to begin organizing Christian schools. This, of course, has huge implications for our work here. We urge you to pray with us and the Christians of Ukraine during the next few months.

(Note: Christian schools have in fact existed in Ukraine since 1992, but they have not been fully recognized by the authorities as such. They were merely granted the legal right to operate as private schools with their Christian character and components unrecognized officially. The above amendment will change all that, give more freedom and hopefully motivate churches to get more involved in the education of children.)

Thank you for your prayers. Please don't stop!