

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**A CRIMINAL CASE LAUNCHED AGAINST THE NEWS PORTAL LB.UA**

Today, on 18 July 2012, the Kyiv City Prosecutor's Office launched a criminal case against the news portal LB.ua on the fact of committing a crime against the member of Parliament from the Party of Regions **Volodymyr Landik**, provided for by articles 163 and 182 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (violation of secrecy of written communication or other correspondence of a statesperson, transmitted via communications means and illegal collection, use and sharing of confidential information on the person, which has caused a substantial harm to the legitimate rights, freedoms and interests of the person).

As it is known, in November 2011, V.Landik applied to the Prosecutor's Office requesting to launch a criminal case against LB.ua. The MP was indignant with the photographs published by the internet publication on 18 October 2011, on the day of the Parliament's adoption of the law on elections, documenting V.Landik in the plenary sessions hall of the Parliament, having SMS correspondence on the situation of his son who was at the moment on trial on a charge of beating a young lady.

In the beginning of July 2012, V.Landik stated that he had no claims to LB.ua and he asked the Prosecutor's Office to abandon the criminal prosecution on the publication journalists.

The site LB.ua is a project of Gorshenin Institute, and legally is part of its structure. Commenting on the decision of the Prosecutor's Office, President of Gorshenin Institute, **Vadym Omelchenko**, stated: "To give an assessment to the decision of the Prosecutor's Office, the following factors should be taken into account. The member of the Parliament Volodymyr Landik applied to the Prosecutor's Office only once: in November 2011. Since then, no claims to launch a criminal case against the site were filed by him. He personally stated that numerous times, including the comment specially given to LB.ua and the interview to Radio Liberty. Furthermore, Volodymyr Landik addressed in a written form the Prosecutor's Office stating that he had no claims to the journalists of LB.ua and asking to stop their persecution. Despite this, the case has been launched. This fact could not be read otherwise but as a pressure on the independent publication LB.ua, as well as on the independent think-tank Gorshenin Institute whose project is the site, using the law enforcement bodies".

The editor-in-chief of LB.ua, **Sonya Koshkina**, noted in her comment that the case launched is the second attempt of the law enforcement bodies to intervene with the activity of the site based on a fraudulent pretext. "We consider this as a revenge of the authorities for a series of critical publications on the site. We have no doubt about the outcome of the case. This case will be processed by the Pechersk District Court which is known for having passed a number of politically motivated verdicts to the leaders of the opposition. These recent days, a criminal case was launched against the director General of the Ukrainian independent TV channel – TVi – **Mykola Kniazhytskyi**. In this context, the actions of the Prosecutor's Office should be considered as an organized pressure on independent media in Ukraine on the eve of the electoral campaign. Such actions of the authorities is a signal to all Ukrainian media and experts as well as to the civil society, that from now on, everybody in the country who professes the principles

of the freedom of speech and democracy may be subject to criminal prosecution for any fabricated reason”, said S.Koshkina.

On 18 July 2012, four members of the Ukrainian Parliament – **Yuriy Stets, Oleksandr Abdullin, Olena Kondratyuk** and **Viktor Ukolov** – who are members of the parliamentary committee for the freedom of speech and information, stated that they deem the launching of the criminal case against LB.ua to be a politically motivated prosecution on the internet publication.

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