



VITALY PORTNIKOV: “VICIOUS CIRCLE MUST BE BROKEN”

“IF THERE ARE AMBITIONS TO CHANGE THE COUNTRY, YOU JUST HAVE TO GO AHEAD AND DO IT”. INTERVIEW WITH PRIME MINISTER OF UKRAINE DENYS SHMYHAL

GERMAN MEP VIOLA VON CRAMON-TAUBADEL:
“WE SHOULD INCREASE THE PRICE FOR PUTIN
FOR HIS ACTIONS IN UKRAINE”

LIFE IN THE LAND OF WAR COLOURS

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Welcome, welcome, beautiful spring!

Bring us amazing miracles!

(from Vesnyanka (the spring song - *Ukrainian folklore))

Our next issue of the "Brussels Ukraïna Review" is about the events, anniversaries - commemorations and hopes of the spring of 2021:

- opinions of independent journalists on the paradoxes of the Ukrainian-Russian war;
- human stories of the residents of the frontline territories;
- results of the #StopRussian-Brutality flashmob;
- "How Ukrainians get to know about the EU" and "what the European Union thinks about Ukraine's European perspective": a "podcast" about the podcast and a detailed summary of the conference involving Western politicians and experts;


• the obviously introverted though sincere interviews: this time we spoke with the Prime Minister of Ukraine Denys Shmyhal and the Member of the European Parliament Viola von Cramon;

- the results of a provocative sociological survey on the attitude of the Ukrainian-speaking audience to the introduction of vaccination passports and, finally,
- nearly meditative relaxation - about the authentic musical instruments of Ukraine.

Enjoy reading!

Marta Barandiy



 twitter.com/MartaBarandiy

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**VITALY PORTNIKOV,
UKRAINIAN
JOURNALIST,
POLITICAL
COMMENTATOR,
AUTHOR AND
OPINION-MAKER**

UKRAINE- RUSSIA-EU

VICIOUS CIRCLE MUST BE BROKEN

VICIOUS CIRCLE
MUST BE BROKEN



When Volodymyr Zelensky ran for the president of

Ukraine, the commitment to resolve the conflict in Donbas and stop the war was one of his main campaign promises. A large part of Ukrainian society, not only Zelensky himself, deemed that the war in eastern Ukraine continued not only because of the Kremlin's interest, but because Kyiv was interested in that also: to use the conflict for justifying political and economic failures and, needless to say, to thrive on the war.

Today, Zelensky himself and most of his recent supporters, who become increasingly disappointed in their choice, are no longer optimistic about a speedy resolution of the conflict. However, I will not be very surprised if another populist candidate appears before the next presidential election and says the same things addressed to Zelensky: his administration tries to cover up its own failures with the war and “thrives on the conflict.”

At the same time, I do not even think that the obvious things should be denied: politicians in power often use a protracted conflict inside a country to justify their own problems. Meanwhile, corruption may be well-observed in the military sphere as in any other. However, the main problem is the apparent misunderstanding shared by a big part of the Ukrainian society — and Volodymyr Zelensky is a prominent proponent of this notion of reality — as to why the war in Donbas began and what Russian President Vladimir Putin's goal is.

The fundamental reason for this misunderstanding is that Ukraine and Russia have followed

different paths of development over the past three decades, primarily in terms of the vision that the elite and society have about the prospects of their own statehood. In this sense, Ukrainians are united by a common understanding that the Ukrainian state has the right to exist. And what separates them is the understanding of how this state should develop. Some Ukrainian citizens — and their number increases over the years — are confident in the European vector of the country's development. Some citizens — and their number becomes progressively smaller, especially after 2014 — believe that the future of the Ukrainian state lies in the union with Russia and other former Soviet Union countries. And finally, there are many people who have no objection to the European choice but consider that it is possible to reach an agreement with Moscow, believing that Putin really does not need this war.

Indeed, Vladimir Putin does not need a war. He needs Ukraine. He needs it precisely because in the years after the proclamation of independence by the Ukrainian SSR, the Russian elite followed by Russian citizens, began to perceive Russia as a natural successor not to the Soviets but to the pre-revolutionary Russian Empire. Therefore, Ukrainian and Belarusian lands are seen as an integral part of Russia, while Ukrainians and Belarusians — as a part of the Russian people, the so-called “Russian world.” That's why Putin's plan is a very logical and clear plan for the revival of the old state. Its first stage is the annexation of Crimea

as a territory that is regarded by Russian public opinion as a “Russian land” and inhabited by the Russian ethnic majority. The second stage is the establishment of control over eastern Ukraine, over the lands that, according to Vladimir Putin, “were presented to the Ukrainian SSR by the Bolsheviks.” The full list of these territories is cited in the speech of the Russian president at the ceremony dedicated to the accession of the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation. Finally, the third stage is the establishment of control over the rest of Ukrainian territory, possibly without the western regions that became part of the Ukrainian SSR after 1939. The second stage has fixed on the control over part of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions so far. However, the plan may be revisited in the case of new destabilisation in Ukraine or if the Russian president decides to launch another special operation of “pacification by force.”

In practice, this means that no Ukrainian president will be able to reach an agreement with Vladimir Putin because the Ukrainian president is obliged to defend Ukrainian sovereignty, while Putin regards Ukraine merely as a rebellious province. But, at the same time, no Ukrainian president will be able to believe in the real goals of the Kremlin because Ukraine — either European or pro-Russian — is already a constant, while for Putin it is only a temporary state formation on ancestral Russian land.

Is there a way out of this invariable deadlock? Obviously, there is. Ukraine needs to defend its statehood until Russia realises that the Ukrainian matter is closed and Ukraine will never be a part of the Russian state again. Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic integration is the natural guarantee of protecting Ukraine's sovereignty, which is why Russia has always so fiercely opposed Ukraine's accession to NATO and why it has tried to thwart Ukraine's signing of the association agreement with the EU. Ukraine as a NATO and EU member will be a "severed piece" for Russia because the Kremlin will not engage in an open confrontation with NATO and an attempt to destroy the statehood of an EU member state even under Putin's rule.

And here we come closer to finding an answer to the most difficult question: how can a country, the very survival of which depends on joining NATO, join the Alliance without settling the problem of territorial integrity? Moreover, Russia, which encroaches on Ukraine's territorial integrity,

will do everything possible to continue the conflict precisely to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO. And the same problem — but in the longer term — may also arise when Ukraine starts negotiations on accession to the EU. Although in this case, we can mention the experience of Cyprus, which joined the union without its northern part.

Indeed, we should admit that it is a vicious circle for now — even if Ukraine successfully fulfils all the requirements for Euro-Atlantic and European integration. However, if we want this integration of Ukraine and, most importantly, if we do not want a new great war to start in Eastern Europe, we will have to work together to break this circle.



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**“BRUSSELS – ON THE
LINE!” - GET TO KNOW**

THE EU?

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THE LINE!” - GET

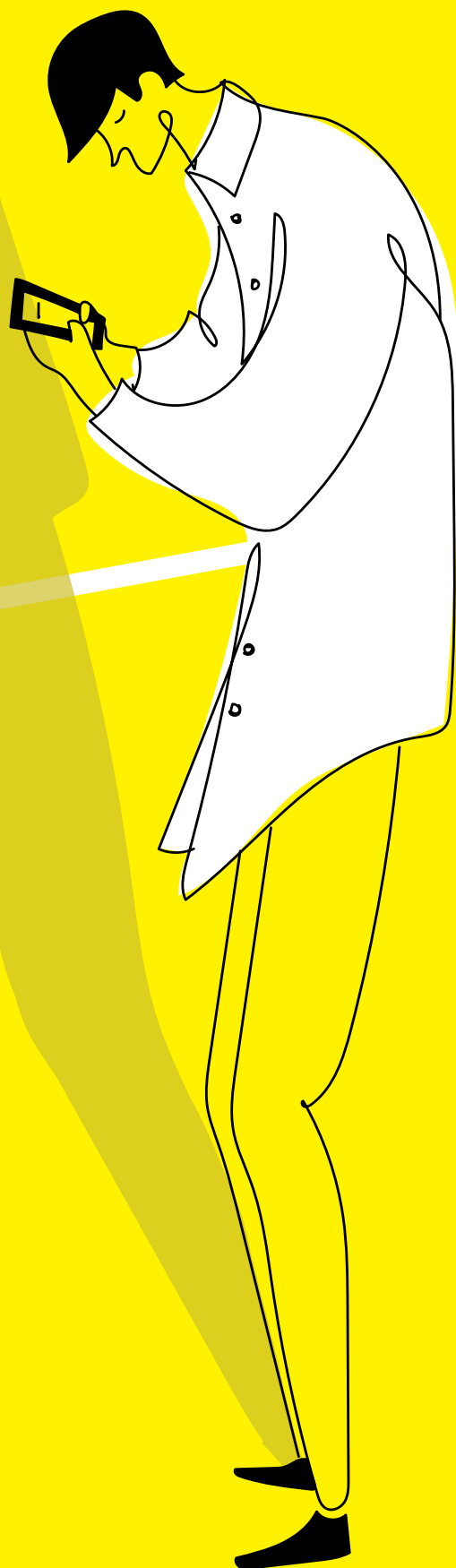
TO KNOW

THE EU?



**KHRYSTYNA
DMYTRYSHYN,
A JOURNALIST OF
POLITCLUB UCU**

**UKRAINE-
EU**



The process of Ukraine's European integration can be shown in different ways. It is long, demanding, and needs cooperation on both sides of Ukraine and the EU.

According to a survey organised by the Center for Social Indicators in 2018, 72% of Ukrainians need more information about the EU and European integration. And this is exactly the promotion our media platform does. But together with students of the Ukrainian Catholic University, we created a new approach to this important task. Now, we offer you an opportunity to learn about our new project - a podcast "Brussels - On the Line!"

Why is it unique?

Well, first of all, "Brussels - On the Line!" is a Ukrainian podcast where we analyse the three latest news stories in the context of the domestic and foreign policy of the European Union and Ukraine's European integration.

Moreover, it is an umbrella project of the UCU POLITclub student organisation (Lviv, Ukraine), the non-profit and non-governmental organisation UCU Alumni Association (Lviv, Ukraine), and Promote Ukraine (Brussels, Belgium).

This approach allows us to accomplish two important goals: to combine theoretical knowledge gained by the UCU students during their university studies with practical experience of Ukrainian diplomats, economists, lawyers, and journalists of "Promote Ukraine," and work abroad.

Another podcast feature is that POLITclub journalists collect comments from three experts on various topics for each episode. The UCU students communicate with experts, do text writing, audio recording, and final editing. For our part, we try to provide contacts with people who would reveal specific topics of a particular episode as best as possible.

If talking about the content, the journalists of "Brussels - On the Line!" write a scenario focusing on topics like law, Foreign Policy, Domestic Policy, Religion, Economics, and Medicine. This fact helps to cover a wide range of issues, starting from the geopolitical meaning of Islamic terrorist attacks in France and ending with the economic consequences of inventing the coronavirus vaccine.

The cooperation of UCU students with Promote Ukraine turned out to be very effective because the idea of producing the podcast was implemented: three episodes have already been released.

In the first episode, we talked about Ukraine's European integration; a violation of the freedom of speech in the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary; and Catalan separatism. The second one covered the issues of EU general government debt, the promotion of vaccination, and how the EU deals with troubled political parties. The third one was just as interesting as the previous ones because our listeners had the opportunity to hear expert opinions on the EU's fight against "online terrorism," the implementation of vaccine passports, and how things are going with Nord Stream-2.

Therefore, the podcast "Brussels - On the Line!" perfectly deals with its main goal: to improve Ukrainians' political competence about geopolitical tendencies and issues connected to the EU and Ukraine's European integration.

What we need now is your support because important ideas deserve to be spread.

Where can you listen to "Brussels - On the Line!"?

Here is the list of online platforms: Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Castbox, Anchor, YouTube. Choose your favourite one and enjoy the podcast.

After all, promoting the European Union in Ukraine is our main concern.



"IF THERE ARE AMBITIONS TO CHANGE THE COUNTRY, YOU JUST HAVE TO GO AHEAD AND DO IT". INTERVIEW WITH PRIME MINISTER OF UKRAINE DENYS SHMYHAL

The recent visit of the Ukrainian high-level delegation to Brussels has been embraced by the leaders of the European institutions and the Members of the European Parliament.

Both, prime minister Denys Shmyhal and vice-prime minister for European integration Olga Stefanishyna and their counterparts discussed the issues of deepening of the European integration of Ukraine as well as Russian occupation of Crimea and eastern Ukraine, efforts to release political prisoners, and the Crimean Platform initiative. We used the opportunity, and talked to the Head of Ukrainian government.



**MARTA BARANDIY,
EDITOR IN CHIEF
OF BRUSSELS
UKRAÏNA
REVIEW**



INTERVIEW

Mr. Prime Minister, what specific steps has Ukraine taken on the path towards Euro-Atlantic integration in economic, political or, perhaps, some other areas during your tenure?

European integration is enshrined in the Constitution, so the path towards Europe is absolutely unwavering to us. Each of the reforms that we currently carry out in Ukraine — and there are more than 20 of them — is a specific step of Ukraine towards European integration. In particular, the launched projects include joint work within the framework of the Green Deal. We also started negotiations on the renewal of trade annexes to the Association Agreement. We signed an agreement on bus transportation, and this year we expect to sign the Common Aviation Area Agreement. In addition, we intensified the work on signing the Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products. Each of the ministers in our Cabinet has a deputy for European integration, and, therefore, we work systematically in all areas.

In your opinion, what have you failed to achieve? Is there a goal you have not reached yet, being in the process so far?

Everything we want to achieve and what was set as our goal is currently being implemented. Of course, Ukraine has very limited time to perform the work that took decades for other countries. I mean improving people's lives, building new infrastructure, reaching a qualitatively new level of economic freedom and creating a favourable business climate. The work is being done in all these areas. We raise minimum wages, raise pensions, launch large-scale road construction and social infrastructure projects, implement all

the necessary projects in order to enter the top 30 of the Doing Business Ranking. Of course, when achieving the goals, new ones emerge in this process. It's absolutely natural. Ukraine changes every day. And it will change further, for the sake of Ukrainians.

The Government intends to deepen cooperation with Ukrainians living abroad. You have declared this intention repeatedly, and this is also a desire of the President of Ukraine. Could you tell us which specific mechanisms will be used?

Meetings with representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora are included in the program of almost every foreign visit of the Government team. Millions of Ukrainians live in foreign countries, and today they are the best ambassadors and promoters of Ukraine all over the world. Therefore, of course, we must keep in touch with the Ukrainian diaspora. By the way, I had a very fruitful and interesting meeting with the leaders of the Ukrainian World Congress in all countries, and we agreed that the UWC forum would be held in Kyiv on the 30th anniversary of independence. Of course, the interaction mechanisms are developed at the state level as well. One of them is drafting a concept of the state target program of cooperation with Ukrainians living abroad, in which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy are involved.

An additional question. You spoke about drafting a concept of cooperation with Ukrainians living abroad. Could you share a rough estimate of when this concept should be ready? Did you set a deadline?

The concept must be presented soon. This is the first step. Afterwards, it will be submitted for an in-depth discussion, including with the involvement of Ukrainians living abroad, and then set forth in a relevant program.

My next question concerns vaccine passports. Ukraine announced that it would support the initiative for the introduction of vaccine passports if the EU countries or the EU itself introduces such passports. Mr. Liashko [Chief State Sanitary Doctor of Ukraine] said that Ukraine would not introduce vaccine passports but it would issue certificates, international certificates of vaccination that already existed before. We see that the WHO's position and the position of the EU are diverging. But what is your position on this issue? And if Ukraine still introduces such passports at the request of the EU, won't this step contradict the visa-free travel regime terms? If the EU introduces vaccine passports, how is the visa-free regime ensured for Ukrainians who will not be vaccinated?

I do not see any threats to the visa-free travel regime. The regime is in effect, and we also touched on this topic during our visit to Brussels. Ukraine is ready to introduce vaccine passports in any form. If it is an electronic form, we have a state register of vaccinated people. Based on this register, it will now be possible to obtain an international certificate of vaccination very quickly. That is why we will now follow closely and listen to the consolidated position of Europe and the world. We are ready for any scenario, because we understand that the coronavirus is a difficult challenge, and we need to look for new approaches.

Will Ukraine require citizens of other countries to show such passports or certificates?

I will answer the same way: we will focus on the experience of European countries, as well as consider the recommendations of international institutions. The coronavirus pandemic has affected the whole world, so we must all work together to find best practices on how to overcome it and return to normal life.

The next question is quite difficult, in my opinion. International experts and MEPs talk about the Ukrainian government's inaction in the fight against corruption. How can you, how can we dispel these fears? I will add that my personal experience shows that now there are very few people in Brussels who support Ukraine,

and we were very pleased to see so many messages and so many meetings when you came to Brussels! It seems to me that the prime minister of no other country has received as much attention as you have during this COVID-19 period! And it was very nice to see that. However, in everyday life, we see that Ukraine is still not mentioned very positively when speaking about the fight against corruption, if it is mentioned at all. They switch over to Belarus, to Navalny, and the issue of Ukraine is forgotten and closed. How can we hold attention?

Thank you for this. We actually fostered much effort to make this visit really intensive and successful. Regarding the fight against corruption, institutional changes, which should create conditions under which corruption will be

simply impossible, are important to us. Here are three factors indicating that our Government takes a more active approach to this problem than was taken before: 1) Reducing the share of the state authorities in the economy. In 2020, we had a very successful start of "small-scale privatization" when the budget received more funds than over the previous two years combined. This year, we have a "large-scale privatization" planned, which will help to ensure that even a possibility of corruption is eliminated completely. All international and domestic experts say this will be one of the biggest anti-corruption steps. 2) Creating market conditions and markets. We are the first Government that really started working systematically on the issue of setting up energy markets. In the second half of 2020, the gas market



for households was launched in Ukraine. For 30 years, politicians were afraid to do that, partially because they were interested in the absence of such markets for various reasons. 3) Carrying out digitisation and deregulation. When businesses or citizens do not come into personal contact with officials, it always reduces the opportunities for corruption. We are actively digitising all services. Everything becomes open and transparent. This applies to auctions, licenses, registers, etc. In addition, it contributes to the fact that citizens and businesses no longer need such a large number of paper certificates, the issuance of which often carries corruption risks. This year, Ukraine plans to completely switch over to a paperless format when officials will no longer be able to demand any information in physical paper forms.



I want to thank you for this list because we will try to convey this information as well. The last question. Your personal experience: what have you learned as a manager, as a person, as a professional over the past year? What advice would you give to young people who have ambitions to change the country?

If there are ambitions to change the country, you just have to go ahead and do it. You do not wait for someone to do this.

Of course, last year was difficult. The pandemic, the war with Russia — both military and hybrid — and reforms that must continue against all odds. In addition, we had floods, droughts and a pandemic.

So, the year was difficult. Of course, it teaches us that we must fight for our state and people. This is a unique chance when the President, the Government and the

majority in the Verkhovna Rada work as a whole. It is very important that today there is only one desire to make a breakthrough — a breakthrough in the fight against corruption, the development of our state and infrastructure, increasing living standards, and in the achievement of an objective that Ukraine should be in the family of the European Union states.

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The year was difficult. Of course, it teaches us that we must fight for our state and people.

UKRAINE IN THE EU: TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

UKRAINE IN THE
EU: TO BE OR NOT
TO BE?

For better chances to join the EU, Ukraine should not only make necessary reforms but also convince those Member States that are more sceptical towards enlargement. It would be also a good idea to include an EU membership perspective in a new version of the Association agreement between Kyiv and the European Union, although this proposal might not sound realistic for the moment. These are some points that were discussed by several MEPs and Western experts at the conference *Mind Mapping Ukraine in Europe: Where Does Ukraine Belong? A European Perspective* organised by the Ukrainian Free University in Munich and the magazine Brussels Ukraïna Review to mark 100 years of the University. The participants also said that the EU should increase its pressure on Russia over Crimea and Donbas. In addition, they criticised Berlin's position on building the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

Ukraine and its (possible) place in the EU club

Rebecca Harms, former "green" MEP: "The Association agreements now seem to be projects that cannot lead to EU membership. And I think this is wrong. **I think the Association agreements have to be changed and they have to cover the perspective of membership.** This is from my point of view the real weakness of Association agreements and the EU should decide on this. For me, this has always been the signature of the association agreement that has been the next step to do to get out of this discussion of whether there is a membership perspective or not.

Michael Gahler, German MEP (EPP group), Rapporteur on EU-Ukraine Association agreement: "If there was such a thing as an ideal Ukraine, then on my part, I would say yes (to its EU membership – ed.). The European Union has not extended any specific invitation or confirmation to any state because of Article 49 of the Treaty of Rome, which suggests that any (European) state can become a member if it fulfils the particular criteria. I can imagine that the argument is not specifically Ukraine-related but circumstance-related.

CONFERENCE

For instance, there has been, amongst many Member States and political stakeholders, quite a reluctance to discuss any enlargement perspectives towards any state, even in regard to the Balkans, which is surrounded by the European Union and not located at its periphery.”

Roland Freudenstein, policy director at Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies:

“Objectively speaking, there has been something we can call enlargement fatigue. In other words, it’s the feeling that the enlargements of the 2000s came too fast, too massively, too many countries joined at the same time and that the EU will need even more time than it has had to digest those. The backsliding on democracy and the rule of law inside the EU itself was taken by many enlargement sceptics as additional proof that we have taken too many and too fast and that we should be even more discriminatory in an objective sense. We should be more careful about further enlargements.”

Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, German MEP (“Greens” group):

“The fatigue of enlargement is big. Not in the German delegation but apart from the Germans, now the Swedish - some of the Swedish - the Dutch, the French, are not very much interested. So, if we could give you a good recommendation: really try to reach out to different friends of Ukraine who are not so well aware of the situation and who sometimes speak about it with empathy but sometimes simply with ignorance, and are not very knowledgeable about the situation, and it would help if we could integrate some other nations and some other member states of the EU a little bit into our discourse on Ukrainian’s future.

Michael Gahler: “Of course, we are working, step-by-step, to make Ukrainian accession more probable and a perspective is emerging. I wish that Ukraine, like many other countries, would put together all of the efforts of the many stakeholders, and the real reformers in civil society and even in the European Parliament that are keen on getting Ukraine to the point when it says that it wants to formalise the accession process so that in the end the EU would be able to accept another status for Ukraine than the current one.”

Roland Freudenstein: “If you ask a French, Dutch, Italian, or Portuguese person, the likelihood would be that this person would be highly skeptical about such a prospect (of Ukraine joining the EU – ed.) and would maybe bring forward arguments against. And then the Germans here, (at this conference – ed.) whose hearts beat more for the Ukrainian cause, would make counter arguments. So, with that, I’m trying to say that you should not always preach to the converted. You should tackle those in the EU and its institutions and those Member States and their representatives who happened or tend to be more skeptical, no matter whether it concerns western Balkans or east European countries...”

of European Union) and, of course, every European country that fulfils the criteria has a chance at becoming a member. But, we have learned that to give timelines or to make definite promises before decisive progress has been made in at least coming demonstrably closer to the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union, was a mistake and these mistakes were made in the 2000s, by the way. And we believe that we have learned a lesson from that. Of course, Ukraine is a European country, no doubt about it... Moreover, there are no biological reasons why Ukrainians cannot build a functioning market economy, the rule of law, functional checks and balances.”

I think it would be a good idea to write a perspective of EU membership into a rewritten version of the association agreement. But right now, I don't see this realistically happening in the next couple of years.

If you look at the EU-Ukraine agreements, starting with the association agreement but continuing with basically every declaration after a summit: They all contain this formula “Ukraine has a European perspective.” This is the beauty of eurocratic Brussels that terms like this are what you want them to be. Nothing more and nothing less.

For some Member States, like Poland, the Baltic states and other countries in central Europe, ‘European perspective’ is a code for future membership. For other countries such as France, Austria, and Germany, the European perspective means everything else but not membership. And this is Europe in a nutshell: constant compromise. ‘European perspective’ is what everybody can agree on, whereas if someone proposed to write future membership into such a declaration there would be a bunch of member states that would immediately protest against it.

So, I think (we need) to keep the door open, to say that, aside from official declarations, of course, there is article 49 (of the treaty

Ukraine and its homework on European integration

Michael Gahler: “I am telling Ukrainians that if you do want to be accepted, then make yourself look chic for this event and prepare thoroughly. And at some point, I am convinced that decision-makers at the European Union will say: we would be foolish not to accept such a strong, stable and attractive state, because it would not be in our interests not to have Ukraine inside.

However, we are not there yet, and we are focusing on other issues, whereas enlargement, irrespective of the state, is not that attractive. I would say that it is not because of Russia that we are having this discussion, but it is because of the general circumstances of the situation and, of course, a lot has to be done before we can speak of an ideal Ukraine.”

Rebecca Harms: “The Ukrainians should ask the EU what happens if they fulfil all the requirements. But this question would

be much more serious and would be taken much more seriously, if the Ukrainian partners in the Association Agreement would not always, again and again, based on the agreement, do two reform steps forward and then three steps back. Or one step forward and half a step back. It depends a bit on different fields of reforms... So, to get this positive response from the EU for Ukrainians there is this membership perspective. This is much more realistic if Ukrainians become more reliable in the reform processes.

I know it is not easy, that these are very demanding and difficult processes in different sectors, but it's Ukraine also who wanted to have this agreement. It's a country's desire. For me, it's worrying to observe how difficult, for example, it is to do the reform of the judiciary. It's really a key reform for the country to function better, for all its citizens. And the debate on judicial reform started not on the Association agreement but already during and after the Orange revolution. And still, we are in a very problematic situation when it comes to the influence, the political influence in the judiciary and the lack of clear rule of law, procedures reliable for every Ukrainian.”

Roland Freudenstein: “The signals that have been given by the Ukrainian government in the last couple of years have been mixed in this sense. We've had back and forth, we've had ups and downs, we've had two steps forward/one step back, but there is no clear movement toward a systematic approach in fighting corruption,

in strengthening of the rule of law, in strengthening the independence of the judiciary and in bringing Ukraine closer to the point after which it is possible for the EU to say 'Yes, you have a membership perspective, we are going to start negotiations.' Sorry to sound overly pessimistic, but I'm giving you the nature of things in Brussels and in most capitals of the member states. This is where we are, and we need to make the best of it and, again, I emphasise there is no reason at all that one day in the future Ukraine should not become a member state."

Alexander Motyl, Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University and The Ukrainian Free University in Munich:

"Participants mentioned the halting reform process - one step forward, one step backward, two steps forward, one step backward and that, of course, is true. And, at the same time, it conceals, I think, a certain reality. Namely, that despite this kind of hesitating, hesitant forward and backward movement, if you look at Ukraine's progress over the last 20 or 30 years, there's no question I think that it's a far better country today than it was 30 years ago. Despite the fact that there seems to be kind of an implied status, an implied inability to move forward, and yet, Ukraine moves forward. It somehow or other manages to do this, so perhaps the situation isn't quite as hopeless as it might seem."

Viola von Cramon-Taubadel: "I think that everything that comes to the e-procurement is a big step forward. And it has actually impacted what we would like to see. There's more transparency and policy. There's also more

fairness in terms of where the taxpayers' money goes. There's different, and in some parts, even a different generation of politicians, because they understand that it's not just about earning money in politics. It's about serving the people, serving the citizens. So, that made a big difference, and also when it comes to the e-declaration, of course, maybe that's sometimes a little bit too tight, because that's a little bit disputable, but in general that was also a big step forward."

Roland Freudenstein: "Ukraine managed to keep the economy stable and stabilise the hryvna. It is not strictly speaking a reform, but it certainly is something without which any reform is completely impossible. So, hats off to Ukrainian economic savoir-faire."

Rebecca Harms: "My favourites are the reform of the police, the reform called decentralisation. Both are still ongoing. I also very much appreciate the creation of this pillar of anti-corruption institutions in the judiciary. It is always again and again under attack, but it is huge. And what I always mention as a huge step is the making of the Ukrainian army. This is always forgotten, but it didn't exist when Russian aggression started, and it's a huge thing what happened and also from the European perspective quite an important achievement because what would Ukraine look like if Ukrainians would not have been able to do this? And so there are many, many smaller decisions, smaller creations with the support of government institutions in the field of culture, urban planning and urban development. So, I know that Ukraine has changed a lot even under aggression and even in difficult conditions."

Roland Freudenstein: "I think the cutting edge in what think-tanks are now advising EU institutions and member state governments to do is to generally incentivise the Ukrainian government and Ukrainian institutions for further reform and for a steadier reform course through the "more for more," but also "less for less" principle. In other words, a stronger conditionality on all additional forms of assistance, of help, of support that can be given to Ukraine but also concerning market openings and so on. So, in other words, all this should be much more strictly conditional upon clear and steady progress in strengthening the rule of law. I've just looked at a paper from the German Council on Foreign Relations authored at the end of last year, which claims exactly this and which has, by the way, two female Ukrainian authors. Further and stronger conditionality by the EU tied to concrete progress is not punishment or discrimination or something directed against Ukraine. It is, in fact, the only viable tool of achieving some progress and also progress in bringing Ukraine closer to the EU."

Viola von Cramon-Taubadel: "I maybe would like to see this a bit differently; I wouldn't be too mild. While we see that people around Zelensky are people returning from Russia, having close ties to the Kremlin, and we shouldn't be naïve. Those people have an influence on Zelenky's policy and politics. So, there is a shift in the direction, there's a shift in the reforms agenda, clearly, and what Roland Freudenstein has said with "more for more" and "less for less" is necessary because we would like to see this country being on the right track and being in the right direction and not turning back and making sure that this development is really irreversible."

And we have seen how quickly this can change, how quickly this could be taken back into the hands of a very few oligarchs. Even Zelensky tried to prevent this from happening. There are many people around him who are surely on the ticket of very, very rich businessmen. I would like to make sure that the few achievements in terms of reforms, which could be done and could be achieved, we succeeded together with the civil society and with some of the Maidan activists during the Poroshenko era to achieve reforms. This is what we owe to the civil society and to the western-oriented people. That's not about punishing somebody; that's about clear conditionality.

I don't want to spend any taxpayers' money in Ukraine which will then land in the hand of some of the oligarchs, to make it very blunt and to say it very, very directly. And when I see, for example, this highly corrupted minister for health, what he has done in the first week of his being in office, this is highly corrupt, and I don't want to see those people being in place. And when we give money to Ukraine, to buy and to procure technical equipment for COVID, I don't want to see this money spent three times higher on high prices while the minister takes part of this for himself. And those things need to be considered and need to be said loudly and the people of Ukraine should know this and this is in our interest and this is in the interest of the Ukrainian people.

That's why it is important not to look away when it comes to the fight of corruption, and I would like to see that people of Ukraine believe in the EU institutions



The participants also said that the EU should increase its pressure on Russia over Crimea and Donbas. In addition, they criticised Berlin's position on building the Nordstream 2 pipeline.

and that is why we have to stay committed on this path and this right direction. There are many, many, many examples that we have seen during the last weeks and months where there are figures now on the stage in Ukraine which are not sober, which do not have, which do not share the same values and which have a different interest when it comes to energy, when it comes to other structural reforms... Poroshenko had started a very well received health reform. Michael Gahler is very much aware of that, and he has mentioned many times that it could have been really a successful project. But Zelensky himself was being influenced by many people around him and not really convinced about this. I don't want to go into more details but that has to do with some business interest of directors of clinics and so on. And if we do not stop this behaviour, this will harm the ordinary people, the ordinary citizen, and then they have to pay bribes, even more now, and this is what we have to prevent.

Alexander Motyl: "There was recently a decision made by a constitutional court with a series of decisions, which effectively rolled back a number of the anti-corruption measures. I'm not a fan of President Zelensky nor am I his harshest critic, but he faced a dilemma. I mean what are you supposed to do when the constitutional court acting constitutionally subverts the country and its efforts to become more European. And he immediately responded with a series of measures that were arguably non-constitutional. Other people have said well you've got to convoke as the equivalent of a kind of National Assembly where everybody would be assembled

and they would essentially re-write everything. Well, I suppose it's possible, but again strictly speaking, that too might be unconstitutional."

Rebecca Harms: "This is not only the problem of President Zelensky but of all the presidents: they face the situation when they want to do and have to do something and often I thought that they were right. And they did it against the rules or against the constitution. This would normally mean that afterwards you change the law, especially if you have the overwhelming majority behind you or the majority corresponding. But this never happens.

You can see the recent decision on the cancellation of licenses for Medvedchuk on the television channels and the whole story of how they did it. I am completely fine with the cancellation, but I think it would be much better if Ukraine could start to make these decisions based on rules and based on the law. And why is this? Why does this happen again and again that the president or the government are acting against the rules? This is because you have not achieved a situation in which the lawmakers can really independently and out of the group of some big players in industry or economy leave them to do what is necessary. I think this is still for Ukraine a major step to go to split, to keep the direct influence of oligarchs on political decision making.

For the judiciary: I know not only cases in and around the Constitution court. I followed these over the decades also because people involved me even if I didn't want it. I followed some of the cases in which Ukrainians or also German citizens faced: local courts or regional courts in Odesa or in Dnipro or in Bakhmut. So, it is the same situation today in many courts as in hospitals: without paying bribes you will not even have a session of the court if you need it. And this reflects that the independence of the judiciary and working according to the rules and based on rule of law is still a step to be done in Ukraine."

Ukraine and (de)occupation of Crimea and Donbas

Rebecca Harms: "As a member of European Parliament, I worked a lot on Turkey and Cyprus and I am not sure whether the EU will once again or would once again agree to have a member with conflict along its borders or on its territories. I would say probably not, they won't. But the EU and also NATO have to become more serious on the question of how to deal with the perspective of Donbas and Russian aggression and occupation of Ukraine. And I am, since the very beginning, convinced that saying that there must be a political solution – it's good and ok. But if there is, after seven years of war, no political solution, then also the EU and NATO have to revisit their strategies and how they increase the pressure on Russia. Michael Gahler is right: the

Kremlin should not decide who is a member of the European Union or who is not. But with this occupation and the war or on-going conflict, Russia and the Kremlin have a huge impact on the future perspective of Ukraine in the EU."

Viola von Cramon-Taubadel: "Maybe it sounds very hawkish but I would always say to increase the price for Vladimir Putin that the occupation might be much more costly than it is now. But this is true for all of the so-called frozen conflicts. Most of them are not really frozen; people are dying. In Georgia, they are taking each night a square meter or a square kilometer of Georgian territory. They do the same in many other countries. And so we see now they have boots on the ground in Azerbaijan; they have it everywhere.

So, the strategy towards Russia will be discussed in the near future. I think, once again, especially after all the domestic developments within Russia, which we could witness within the last weeks and months, but also the support of Lukashenka and everything that takes place in the neighbourhood, and we actually see only one winner. We see only one, so far, being in place as if nothing had happened before. While I don't think it is the strength of Russia, it is the weakness of the European Union and us not making clear what is the price for this, as long as we just extend the sanctions and are ready to speak about and give press conferences as Josep Borrell has done in February.

I think it's clear for Sergei Lavrov and Vladimir Putin that they're on the right track. It's fairly easy, and that makes our life very difficult. There is a broader majority in the European parliament, which is increasingly unhappy with the situation as it is and especially due to this hybrid war, this disinformation campaign - the situation around the vaccination. Everything is so obvious and it's so orchestrated and it's so frustrating.

Ukraine, Europe, and the new US President

Speaking to the Ukrainian prime minister a couple of months ago, of course, we have to support Ukraine in terms of vaccination much more offensively and much more swiftly. While, of course, Putin has sent a couple of those to the occupied territories in the East and now they question the western Ukrainians: 'Where are your friends? Where is the US? Where is the EU? Who does support you? We at least get Sputnik V.' And so these little bits and pieces show a lot that Putin does use every and each opportunity to destabilise the situation even more. He has no interest, not a single interest, to solve the problem. So, when you ask me, how can we look for a solution; it is not in our hands, at least not - let's say - in a civilised manner. We have to put more sanctions and much more economic pressure on him. It must be explicitly explained what it means to occupy and to annex Crimea. To occupy the east of Ukraine and all the other territories."

Rebecca Harms: "The next case of the enlargement decision will not be a positive experience. I am convinced that Russia's occupation of some parts of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine is connected also to this interest of distortion of a possible enlargement process. Therefore, I would always think that the EU has to be more serious while saying it is not Moscow who decides who becomes a member and not. If they mean it seriously, they need to stand more robust in the way in which they deal with Russian aggression and Russian invasions."

Rebecca Harms: "I think many of the decisions taken in Washington since inauguration day show that the relations between the partners in the West will improve and have already improved. They are also considering the EU's interest. There are many, many names among the nominated people in offices now in Washington which know the EU, which have always been defenders of the good relations in the West. To say it in brief, I think this all looks very good and much better than I had expected before the elections."

There are also some differences in interest, and the real question will be how Washington and Brussels, and the capitals of different member states will be able to deal with different interests and different priorities, also in external action. But I think for Ukraine we will return to a very good cooperation which existed before Trump. So, the Western ambassadors, the EU's, Washington's, Canada's ambassadors had a very close cooperation for many years on all the different issues, and I think there will be a kind of reconnection in this cooperation and Russia's war as a problem for Ukraine and Eastern Partnership. I think for the EU it will be good that the United States will be more demanding on this issue and a bit more clear and outspoken. As this is a real problem."

It's already for the Germans to see Nord Stream 2. The United States have not changed their position but are keeping the line and are also showing the limits of acceptance. So, I am optimistic that for Ukraine this will be a refreshment of support. And what I, on the other hand, sometimes fear

is that Ukrainians immediately think that the real 'allow' for us is Washington, is the US. If you really check who is doing what, then you can easily recognise, based on the figures, that the EU and also some of the member states are by far more important as supporters than the United States. What makes the difference is maybe the delivery of heavy weaponry and this is against something that the EU should consider as important and maybe also should consider its own weakness on Europe's support on Ukraine facing this war."

Roland Freudenstein: "I would have never thought I'd live to see the day in which a green politician advocates arms exports. But I totally subscribe to what Rebecca Harms said, and I also think that these are good times for transatlantic cooperation in Eastern Europe - not only Ukraine but also Belarus. Concerning Russia, the elephant in the room as it was called, I think the recent trip by High Representative Josep Borrell to Moscow actually served a purpose. You know, I mean it really changed the tone, at least in Brussels. I'm not 100% sure about some member state capitals such as Paris, but in Brussels it is now impossible to talk about some kind of reset, or that more talking to Putin will somehow help. No one is saying this anymore. So, in that sense, I would say we're in a very good situation with very good conditions for better transatlantic cooperation on Ukraine and its neighbouring countries."

Viola von Cramon-Taubadel: "So far, the first moves of the young administration were already very valuable and you could see there and there some pushes and pulls in the administration, very helpful. That's the big difference, and everyone is aware of this shift and of this different attitude towards Ukraine. On one hand,

Ukraine and wishes from its friends in the EU

there will be much more empathy, there will be much more interest, but there will also be this form of conditionality that we definitely need, so that we definitely have support when it comes to the fight against corruption and the rule of law and restricting.

And I'm fully in line with Rebecca Harms. I mean Berlin is not helpful with keeping the Nordstream 2 pipeline... This project has no other intention than financial and geopolitical harm to Ukraine. And we recently had a very interesting hearing in our committee for industry technology research and energy and the general directors, that very openly and repeatedly said that there is no common and joined interest in this project, and it's not to increase the energy security of the European Union. So, it stays like a business project that harms the interests of the European Union. And I hope that we find a possibility without real sanctions, but with the support of Washington to stop it, to have any kind of a compromise, which then would have an impact on the relation towards Russia and this would strengthen and surely have more leverage on our foreign policy in Berlin, and also Brussels.

So, I see a huge difference from now and the time during Trump's term and I do hope we can continue. We had already had some talks with people in Washington and this is overall only positive. That's very constructive. These are people who are experienced, diplomats, think tankers. So, you cannot compare the situation with the one several months ago."

Viola von Cramon-Taubadel:

"I really love Ukraine. I've been involved with Ukraine since 1996. And, in the long run, there is a big difference from where we've started after independence and so on. And I see new faces, I mean the decentralisation made sure we have more women in politics. I would like to see more women also in a decision-making process, especially in the hard things such as energy and security.

So, we see there are good developments, no matter how critical we sometimes are in Brussels. But we all love Ukraine; it's our common interest that we move together in the right direction. That even if we are outspoken and direct and blunt and critical, that doesn't mean that we do not love your perfect country and that we would like to see that even more perfect. And when it comes to, for example, science and research, we see that the new Horizon Europe program has just evolved and maybe also in that context we would like to see closer ties, more exchange, more cooperation in innovation technology and in terms of energy efficiency, in terms of charging a battery development or everything where Ukraine is really strong and when it comes to independence of fossil fuels. Especially for us "greens," this is crucial. This needs to be tackled much more seriously than it is now, especially in the current government. So, all these kinds of increased sector policy would be nice if we could be supported by politicians and civil society and the business community.

Rebecca Harms: "I wished we could help the Ukrainians to regain a positive view for the future. I think what I find a bit frightening right now is seeing that so many Ukrainians have to deal with, day by day, with the feeling of uncertainty. I saw some recent figures published on these problems, fears of losing your job, and I think the initiatives taken by the European Union should be strengthened. I personally think that Horizon 2030 is good for the young people and for the students. I very much hope that the ideas of greening the economy and the ideas of a Green deal will help to push some visible innovations, which also increase the appetite of Ukrainians to engage in future-oriented innovative projects."

Roland Freudenstein: "Firstly, try to engage those in the EU who are skeptical about any enlargement, let alone Ukrainian joining. Secondly, another compliment: Ukraine has beautifully managed the cooperation with the expat community of Ukrainians in the West, encompassing several generations, and that community got its act together to help the Ukrainians back home. Having lived in Poland for several years, I know that it doesn't always work that well. So, that works much better in Ukraine than in some other countries. And thirdly, Slava Ukraini!"

GERMAN MEP VIOLA VON CRAMON-TAUBADEL: “WE SHOULD INCREASE THE PRICE FOR PUTIN FOR HIS ACTIONS IN UKRAINE”



**NATALIA RICHARDSON,
JOURNALIST, EDITOR
AT BRUSSELS UKRAÏNA
REVIEW**

INTERVIEW

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*We have other
pipelines, and
we need to
decrease our
dependence
on fossil fuels
instead of
constructing
new pipelines.*



“**T**he EU should strengthen economic sanctions against the Kremlin and exclude Russia from Swift,” said the German “green” MEP **Viola von Cramon-Taubadel** in an exclusive interview to **Natalia Richardson** for Brussels *Ukraine Review*. She is strongly opposed to the launch the Nord Stream 2 and welcomes President Zelensky’s desire to move Ukraine closer to NATO membership. Mrs. von Cramon-Taubadel is one of the most active friends of Ukraine in the European circles, and decision-makers certainly hear her voice. Our journal also found out why this charming German woman loves Ukraine.

The situation on the border of Ukraine is alarming. There are a lot of Russian forces there, and this is the worst-case scenario since 2014. The EU already reacted, so did Germany, France and so on. But what can Europe do to help Ukraine to resolve this issue?

It is important, first of all, to have clear rhetoric and, of course, to express solidarity with Ukrainians and particularly with people in Eastern Ukraine. I think that Putin at least tries to test, more or less, the US and their commitment towards Ukraine. In the end, whether Russia and Putin will go and start a large-scale war, I am not so sure because when he annexed Crimea, the majority of Russians were very enthusiastic, and it created a huge wave of popularity for Putin in 2014. I don’t think that the Russians really would like to have a bigger hard war right now. I know that the popularity of Putin decreased. So, he is under pressure. And there will be elections in the fall.

So this is typical behaviour for Putin looking for any kind of a conflict, any kind of distraction from his own domestic problems. That’s not uncommon.

I think we should be clear about it, this aggression is not about Ukraine, but it is about Putin. It is about him consolidating power in the country. It is foremost about the domestic issues. So, we should probably strengthen the Ukrainian military forces, but there are other ways too to increase the price for Putin, in case he goes for any attack. So, in terms of economic sanctions, we could consider excluding Russia from Swift. This way Russian trade will take a hit, and it will have a huge economic impact. We should have a clear agenda on how high the price might be. If we are not successful in scrapping Nord Stream 2, there should be other countermeasures for Russian aggression. But I would be very reluctant when it comes to military support.

Do you think that the previous sanctions did work? The EU introduced the first ones back in 2014. But are they effective?

Of course. Otherwise, Putin would not be so keen on lobbying to remove these sanctions. If they do not work, if there are no consequences for his people – economically or financially – he would not be so eager to remove them. So, they do work.

President Zelensky said that NATO membership for Ukraine is probably the only way to end the war in Donbas. Do you agree with him?

So far, I was somewhat reluctant when it came to NATO membership. But right now, I think this is definitely the only language that Putin understands. Thus, I would join Zelensky in his request.

Let’s speak about Nord Stream 2. The US State Department said that it is a bad deal for everybody. So, for Germany, for Ukraine, for Central and Eastern European countries. What is your message? What would you say to Putin about the new export gas pipeline?

For Putin, the deal is a strategic instrument to harm Ukraine. It has only one purpose: to go around, to circumvent Ukraine, nothing else. Just to make sure that they can politically and economically destabilise Ukraine even more. Because around 3 billion Euro annual revenue for transferring the Russian gas won’t reach Ukraine’s budget any more. There is no reason for us to get another pipeline. The pipeline Nord Stream 1 is not even used fully but only up to 2/3 of its capacity. We already have the “Druzhba” pipeline, we have other pipelines, and we need to decrease our dependence on fossil fuels instead of constructing new pipelines. This way, the demand for gas will not increase but rather go down making Nord Stream 2 futile. We need to invest in renewables to achieve our climate goal. So for all of us, it is a very anti-European project. Everyone in the European Parliament, apart from some Germans and some Austrians, are absolutely unhappy and very much rejecting this project. It was a very, very bad deal for all of us as it is geostrategically also really hazardous.

Do you think that American sanctions are the only way to stop this project?

Right now, I think Chancellor Merkel is not ready to change the German Government's course, to revise what they decided in 2015-2016. So, apart from sanctions, I have no idea what else would work. Still, the German government is very much willing to proceed as it is. From my point of view, this is a major mistake.

One British expert said that now it is probably too late to stop the completion of Nord Stream 2 because almost everything is ready. Do you agree with him?

If the construction is finished, then it should be made sure that no cubic meter of gas goes through it. So nothing, zero gas should be transferred through this pipeline. If this could be guaranteed by the Americans together with the Germans, then fine, they should complete it, but not make money out of that and not threaten Ukraine with it.

One option was not being considered. There were suggestions that Nord Stream 2 should work but in exchange for green energy investments in Ukraine. Do you think it is a good idea?

No, that's not going to cut it. We need green investments in Ukraine anyway, but do we need Nord Stream 2 for this? No, I don't think this is a great idea, no.

Will your party use this topic for the campaign at the forthcoming German elections?

Sure. The Greens were the only ones in the political environment in Germany who opposed that project from the very beginning. Nobody in the Green party was in favour of it because we knew the danger, we saw what would come from the project. So yes, for us it is crucial: at some point, we need a commitment from a new government that this is not the way we are going to treat the European Union and our neighbours. I mean, just doing a special deal with Russia is not what we need in Europe.

Let's speak about European prospects for Ukraine. What obstacles do you see for Ukraine on its way to the EU?

Well, a lot. We need fewer - or even better - no oligarchs in the political circles, and we have to reduce the influence of oligarchs. We have to make sure that the fight against corruption stays high on the agenda. I already said that Ukraine has to invest in renewables, have green investments instead of investing in fossils - oil, gas or coal. There is a lot of transition and transformation that needs to be done in Ukraine.

I hope the government will tackle it more ambitiously. While we, on the one hand, see that there were some backlashes in terms of the rule of law, on the other hand, in terms of procurement and some other issues, we had a good time where there was an opportunity with the government, with the external or international community, donors and civil society to really push for a good reform agenda after Maidan. But this window of opportunity is partly closed, and that's very regrettable. So, it will be up to us, but foremost up to the civil society and Ukrainian public to stay up and intensify oversight of the government and President's office and make sure that a position, for example, like a head of NABU is not being removed based on some sketchy law. And this, of course, is of high concern here in the European Parliament.

Mrs. von Cramon-Taubadel, we see you as a big critic of Ukrainian politics, but we also feel that you love Ukraine, and that's why you criticise Ukraine.

It is true.

What is your personal "love" story with Ukraine? You have been dealing with Ukraine since the mid-'90s. Can you tell us the details, please?

I was in Russia in 1993, and then many times after that I went to Russia to work there. In 1996, I got an offer to work as an assistant for the Deutsche Beratergruppe, for the German Advisory Group for the Ukrainian government. That's when Yushchenko was Head of the Central Bank, and Kuchma was President, and Moroz was the Head of the Parliament. I came to Kyiv, I think, on the 2nd of July, and I thought: ok, Kyiv, Moscow - it is all the same. And then I realised: no, it's not, it is completely different! And I really fell in love with Kyiv. It was a great time, it was very challenging, it was so good to see the country slowly developing. It

was attentive to everything which came from the West and also had its own national identity. I think that the Ukrainian way of handling things and being very flexible and adaptive to things is a big strength. I sometimes admire the way things are being dealt with and taken up in Ukraine. So, there is a big chance, right now. I see, on one hand, many people leave Ukraine, but, on the other hand, there is a lot of new hope in the form of new smart business, smaller start-ups, creative business, digital innovations.

I mean, in many things Ukraine is much more ahead of what we see in Germany. I was always the one who brought journalists, different people, over to Ukraine to show the reality. We had a very narrow perspective when it came to Ukraine, which was mainly driven by Russian propaganda. And I always said: no, it is not true, Ukraine looks completely different, it has an intelligent young generation, vibrant IT sector, smart people, also very responsible people. It is not just a corrupt elite, it is so much more. And it is also important to show people in the West how Ukraine really is. Your country also has very good artists, very good people from the cultural sector, perfect orchestras, musicians, everything. There are so many cultural achievements, successes, and almost nobody knows about that in Germany or in other Western countries. This was always very close to my heart to show people the reality - the new Ukraine. Not the Soviet Ukraine, it is much more. That's why I have been promoting Ukraine since 1996.

It is a wonderful story. Usually, we hear official statements from you but never about your personal experience...

And I met my husband in Kyiv. We are still together. He is Canadian German. And he worked on the same project.

Were your children also born in Ukraine?

One was at least produced in Ukraine (laughs) but not born there. The oldest one visited Ukraine with me right after the war in 2014. I could show him some of my favourite locations in Kyiv, Kharkiv and even Slovyansk and other places. It was interesting to show him around.

Such a remarkable experience! What about the European Parliament? We know that several MEPs deal with Ukraine, and they are very active. But what is the general mood? Are people there interested in Ukraine?

Ukraine is a very important country. When it comes to agriculture, trade, when it comes, unfortunately, also to military goods and production of other things, Ukraine is a strategic partner, and a key European

neighbor of the EU with an aspiration to be much more than just a neighbour. I am not aware of everyone who works in Ukraine, but I am sure it is not just a small group. More things are going on in the digital sector, trade issues, industry issues where many more people are interested in Ukraine. Everyone also hopes that, in political terms, we see much more progress and less movements like "one step forward, half a step backwards." In general, I see there is a positive attitude in the European Parliament towards Ukraine.



"AGENTS", "UNDESIRABLE", "EXTREMISTS". HOW MODERN RUSSIA COMBATS DISSENT

If you open today any publication of Meduza, well-known independent online media outlet, you can see the message right below the title of an article: "This message (content) was created and (or) distributed by a foreign mass media outlet executing the functions of a foreign agent..." This is a requirement of Russian legislation. By the decision of the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, the media outlet is recognised as a foreign agent, so it must label its content in the above-mentioned manner. If the editorial staff does not comply with these instructions, it will face fines of about \$4,000-6,000 for each violation. If the fine is ignored, the website will be blocked in Russia. Labelling is not the only problem for the media outlet that has the status of a foreign agent. Cooperation with "labelled" media is dangerous for Russian advertisers. According to Meduza editorial staff, after the media outlet was recognised as a foreign agent on 23 April this year, advertising revenues fell sharply, and employees' salaries

had to be reduced by 30-50%.

A formal reason for recognising Meduza as a foreign agent was the fact that the media outlet was registered in Latvia. Indeed, SIA "Medusa Project" company has Latvian jurisdiction, but this does not mean that official Riga has any influence on the outlet's editorial policy. Once, Russian journalists tried to protect themselves from possible pressure by the authorities and so decided to register the media outlet in this Baltic country, a member of the European Union. "This is a foreign media outlet registered in Latvia. Foreign media outlets work in Russia according to certain legislation, they have to bear a certain legislative burden, the same way as Russian media work abroad," head of the Moscow Union of Journalists Pavel Gusev commented on the situation around Meduza. These words outline the real motive: mirror sanctions and revenge: Latvia blocks the broadcasting of 17 Russian propaganda channels, and Moscow retaliates against the Latvian-registered Meduza (in fact, the influential independent media outlet, whose readers live mainly in Russia).

**SPECIAL RESEARCH OF
PROMOTE UKRAINE**

Imitation of protection

A starting point for Russia's current confrontation with the West, and especially the United States, is Vladimir Putin's 2007 Munich speech, in which the Russian leader slammed the unipolar world and virtually revived the Cold War rhetoric. Subsequently, the confrontation announced by the Russian president spilled over into the legal field. In the United States, the Magnitsky Act was initiated in 2010 and passed by the Congress in 2012. The Magnitsky Act imposed personal sanctions on 60 Russian security officers and restored the Jackson-Vanik amendment (economic sanctions once imposed by the United States against the Soviet Union over human rights violations). The reason for such actions by the United States was the case of Sergei Magnitsky – an auditor of a consulting company, who died in a Moscow pre-trial detention facility. As estimated by the Council of Europe, Freedom House, and Amnesty International, the trial of Magnitsky was politically motivated, and Russian law enforcement officials might have been involved in his death. In response, in December 2012, the State Duma of Russia adopted the law "On measures to influence persons involved in the violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms, the rights and freedoms of citizens of the Russian Federation." This document is often called "Dima Yakovlev law" (after Russian boy Dima Yakovlev who died in the United States as a result of negligence by his adoptive parents). In addition to banning United States citizens from adopting Russian children, the law creates a wide field for combating dissent, as it introduces the notions of "foreign agent status of individual" and "undesirable organisation" into the legal framework.

In fact, "foreign agents" as a definition for organisations in Russia appeared a little earlier. In the summer of 2012, the relevant amendments were made to the law "On non-profit organisations." By definition, this category includes "non-profit organisations that receive funds and other property from foreign states, their government agencies, international and foreign organisations... and that participate, including in the interests of foreign sources, in political activities carried out in the territory of the Russian Federation." The main requirement for such structures is to be registered in the relevant register of the Russian Ministry of Justice. The organisations with a status of "foreign agent" must undergo an annual financial audit, provide information about their employees, inform about their status when applying to the authorities, when communicating with the media.

One can get on the "foreign agents" list following the petition filed by "vigilant citizens." This is what happened to the Russian NGO Nasiliu.net [No to Violence] which provides assistance to victims of domestic violence. After a statement had been filed by "Mr Trubetskoy" (other details of the applicant are unknown), Russian regulators carried out an inspection and established that the organisation had been funded from abroad. Regulators regarded taking part in rallies and pickets, as well as drafting law on domestic violence prevention as political activities. According to Nasiliu.net director Anna Rivina, the organisation did not receive stable funding from abroad, did not receive grants from there, and had only a few private donations from foreigners. However, this was enough to get the appropriate status. Anna Rivina pointed out that the inclusion of the organisation into the register of "foreign agents" did not

hinder further activities. They even expanded their activities as they now work with victims of not only domestic but also police violence.

Since 2013, 200 organisations have been included in the register of "foreign agents" in Russia. Most of them have either dissolved themselves or lost the status of "agent" (this is possible in case of submission of documents on the lack of foreign funding), or have been liquidated by court decisions. To date, there are 74 operating organisations on the list. Most of them are associations related in one way or another to human rights and civic education.

There has been no full-fledged parliamentary opposition in Russia long since. The alternative candidates sometimes have a success at the local level, but the Kremlin tries to prevent the opposition from uniting. Alexei Navalny's imprisonment is the clearest proof. NGOs have become essentially the last islands of democracy in this country. As the Soviet dissidents were primarily human rights defenders and educators, so current Russian activists are trying to at least record, report, and, where possible, prevent the tyranny of the authorities. The introduction of lists of "foreign agents" has become what is called an asymmetric response in Putin's rhetoric. Controlling and labelling NGOs should be seen as a kind of warning: today their life is made difficult and they face unnecessary reporting, and tomorrow a total ban on all "foreign agents" may be imposed at once.

The Russian leader has already found a justification for this: in his recent address to the Federal Assembly, Putin stated that Russia was being bullied constantly and unreasonably. According to his logic, blocking "agent" organisations could be something like another alleged defensive action against the West, which seemingly imposes its agenda on Russia (this message is widely disseminated by Russian propaganda).

The media having a “foreign agent” status deserve special attention. Currently, 14 mass media and five individuals are recognised as such. As for the media, these are mostly various subprojects of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (such as the Tatar-Bashkir service Azatliq Radiosi) and several independent Russian media outlets (such as the aforementioned Meduza). It is noteworthy that Crimea. Realities project of the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Ukrainian Service, which covers the events in the occupied Crimea, was put on list of “foreign agents.” At the same time, the RFE/RL Ukrainian Service also has Donbas. Realities project dedicated to the occupied areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions controlled by the Government of Ukraine. This project was not included in the list of “foreign agents.” This example shows a difference in Moscow’s approach to the occupied territories. For the Kremlin, the broadcast of “enemy voices” (as Radio Liberty, Voice of America, etc., were called in Soviet times) in the territory of national autonomies and in Crimea poses greater threat than similar programmes for the self-proclaimed republics of Donbas.

The burden of “agent” status forced Radio Liberty and Current Time to announce the transfer of their employees to offices in Kyiv and Prague. At the same time, the representation offices in Russia will not be closed.


Inclusion of individual citizens in the list of “foreign agents” is a relatively new but extremely toxic Russian practice. According to the amendments made in December 2019 to the already mentioned “Dima Yakovlev law,” “an individual, regardless of their citizenship or in the absence of such, may be recognised as an individual acting as a foreign agent, if they carry out in the territory of the Russia Federation in the interests of a foreign state, its bodies, international or foreign organisation... political ac-

tivity and (or) purposeful collection of information in the field of military, military-technical activities of the Russian Federation which, if received by a foreign source, can be used against the security of the Russian Federation.”

In its content, this wording resembles a paraphrased article of the Criminal Code on espionage. Individuals with a “foreign agent” status are also entered in the register and must at least once every six months submit reports on their activities, including financial (on the expenditure of funds received from “foreign sources”). The same as legal entities with a “foreign agent” status, the individuals, who fell into this category, must inform about their status when disseminating information materials, appealing to the authorities, non-governmental or educational organisations.

Since there are currently only five people on the Russian list of individuals acting as foreign agents, it is worth mentioning each of them separately.

1. Lev Ponomaryov. A Russian human rights activist. In 1997, he founded For Human Rights movement known for its opposition activities. In 2014, he condemned Russia’s policy towards Crimea, won several cases in the European Court of Human Rights (on violations of the right to freedom of assembly). He has been repeatedly detained and arrested for participating in rallies and pickets. In 2019, his For Human Rights movement was included in the list of “foreign agents” and later was liquidated by a decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation. Ponomaryov had to disband the organisation of the same name as it united a large number of human rights activists who did not keep accounts, so they actually switched to the “guerrilla” regime. The “foreign agent” status makes it virtually impossible for him to establish any non-governmental human rights associations in the future.



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2. Lyudmila Savitskaya and Denis Kamalyangin. The two journalists work in one media outlet – the regional newspaper Pskovskaya Guberniya. This newspaper became known to the whole world when its journalists wrote about the death of soldiers of the 76th Airborne Assault Division (the division is stationed in the Pskov region), whose units took part in the battles for the Luhansk Airport. The newspaper is the only independent media outlet in the region and is known for many high-profile articles.

3. Sergey Markelov. A journalist from Petrozavodsk (Republic of Karelia). He also collaborates with the Radio Liberty’s Realities.

North project, but his principal place of employment is the local outlet 7x7. Sergey is known for his media materials about corruption in the republic, as well as investigation into political prisoners in Uzbekistan.

4. Darya Apokhonchich. A performance artist from St. Petersburg. Darya has not been involved in traditional media activities. Her performances were aimed at supporting LGBT activists and victims of domestic violence, for which she was detained and fined.

A public enemy status for the mentioned persons is, first of all, a restriction on professional self-fulfillment, a label of “unreliable” in the eyes of bureaucrats, citizens and potential employers loyal to the government. As Sergey Markelov recalled, after his name was entered into the register of “foreign agents,” the number of orders for his media materials decreased significantly. After all, if a media outlet does not have the status of “foreign agent,” it should still label the articles and stories by the authors included in the relevant registers. Journalists are trying to appeal against the decision of the Ministry of Justice in court. The entry in the register is suspended during the trial, but the plaintiffs have little chance to win an action as they themselves admit.

People whose names are on the register of “foreign agents” will de facto not be able to head the media or non-governmental organisations; they must mention this status everywhere in the public space. Such is the struggle against the dissent in modern Russia, which the official authorities are trying to cover up with a “protection” against aggressive external influence.

Officially undesirable

However, the status of a “foreign agent” is not the worst among those that can be “conferred” by the Russian authorities. Getting on the list of undesirable organisations in Russia is much more dangerous.

The definition and procedure for inclusion in the relevant registers is prescribed in the same law “On measures to influence persons involved in the violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms, the rights and freedoms of citizens of the Russian Federation” also known as the “Dima Yakovlev law.” The category of undesirable includes organisations that “pose a threat to the foundations of the constitutional order of the Russian Federation, the country’s defense capabilities and security and the state.” Only foreign or international (de jure registered outside the Russian Federation) fall into this category. Organisations with this status are virtually banned from operating in Russia: they cannot create structural units, disseminate information materials, or implement any projects or programmes.

The mechanism for declaring an organisation as undesirable is as follows: the Federation Council (upper house of the Parliament of Russia) forms a so-called patriotic stop list – a list of organisations whose activities, according to MPs, are undesirable. In itself, the formation of this list (its appearance is an initiative of the representatives of the Liberal Democratic Party of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy) does not have any legal consequences. The final decision is made by the Prosecutor General’s Office of the Russian Federation, which is to endorse a decision to declare an organisation undesirable.

Today, 31 organisations have the undesirable status. They can be conditionally divided into the following categories:

- International organisations contributing to the development of a democratic society (European Platform for Democratic Elections, Open Society Foundation, European Endowment for Democracy, etc.)

- Research centres, think tanks (Association of the Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe, Atlantic Council, James-town Foundation, etc.)

- Organisations whose recognition as undesirable is a kind of favour to China. It is hard to believe that the European Falun Dafa Association, Friends of Falun Gong, or the Dragon Springs Buddhist pose a threat to Russia’s constitutional order. These and four other organisations are apparently on the undesirable list because they are related to the Falun Gong spiritual movement which is persecuted in China and classified among the “five poisons” (along with the Uighur movement, the democratic opposition, supporters of Taiwan and Tibet independence) that endanger the ruling regime in China.

- The People in Need Czech human rights organisation and the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) stand somewhat apart from the rest. The latter was included in the undesirable list without much discussions and explanations. According to UWC President Eugene Czolij, he learned about the relevant decision by the Federation Council (on inclusion in the “patriotic stop list”) and the Prosecutor General’s Office from the media. Apparently, adding a world union of Ukrainians to the list of undesirable organisations is an attempt to prevent the mobilisation of a large community of Ukrainians in Russia.

Involvement in an undesirable organisation triggers repression. The Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation contains Article 20.33, according to which participation in such an organisation shall be punishable with a fine of RUB 5,000 for individuals and of up to RUB 100,000 for legal entities. Those, who are held liable twice during the year under this article, fall under Article 284.1 of the Criminal Code which provides for fines and community service, as well as imprisonment for up to six years. These sanctions are often imposed on representatives of Open Russia. This movement originated in Russia in 2001.

It was initiated by a businessman, and later a political prisoner and politician Mikhail Khodorkovsky. In different periods, Open Russia was engaged in civic education, protection of human rights, support for independent media. Its representatives participated in regional elections, supported Alexei Navalny. In April 2017, Open Russia was declared undesirable in Russia. Although the organisation in the classic sense did not exist at that time, Open Russia already functioned as a network movement. Five Russian citizens involved in the movement were already charged under Article 284.1:

1. Anastasia Shevchenko, Rostov-on-Don activist, was given a four-year suspended sentence (Amnesty International recognised her as a prisoner of conscience). Anastasia is a well-known figure in Russian democratic circles. In 2018, she headed the regional campaign headquarters of Ksenia Sobchak. In 2019, she won the Boris Nemtsov Prize for courage in defending democratic values. Investigation, searches, and restriction on movement imposed because of them played a tragic role in Anastasia's life. Three children were under her guardianship, including a seriously ill daughter Alina, who was being treated in a special institution. Her mother visited her regularly and provided assistance. Investigators did not let Anastasia visit her daughter for a long time, she was able to get to her only when the girl was already in critical condition in the intensive care unit, where she died soon after. The death of Anastasia Shevchenko's daughter sparked a rally in Rostov-on-Don under the slogan "Regime killed Anastasia's child."

2. Maksim Vernikov, leader of Open Russia office in Yekaterinburg, was sentenced to 300 hours of community service.

3. Yana Antonova, activist from Krasnodar, was ordered to pay a fine of RUB 15,000.

4. Anton Mikhalechuk, coordinator of the movement in Tyumen, emigrated in 2018 and is still wanted by the federal authorities.

5. The trial of Nizhny Novgorod journalist and businessman Mikhail Iosilevich, who is also accused of collaborating with Open Russia, continues up to this day.

Beware of extremism!

Banning extremist organisations is a common practice in every rule-of-law state. However, in Russia, such activities have their own specifics as the list of 83 organisations includes the group of skinheads, football hooligans, neo-Nazi organisations alongside with numerous associations of Jehovah's Witnesses, followers of the aforementioned Falun Gong movement, indigenous national movements, human rights organisations. Thus, the Karelian regional branch of the inter-regional youth NGO Youth Human Rights Group was recognised as extremist. The reason for this was the criticism of the Russian Orthodox Church clergy by the branch leader Maksim Yefimov.

Six Ukrainian organisations are among those recognised as extremist in Russia: Right Sector, UNA-UNSO, Stepan Bandera Sports-Patriotic Association Tryzub (Trident), Brotherhood, Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, and Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). Regarding the latter, the decision is obviously curious, because UPA exists in modern Ukraine only in the form of Brotherhood of the OUN-UPA veteran organisation.

At the end of March 2014, Kyiv recognised Mejlis as the highest representative body of the Crimean Tatar people. The organisations and activists quickly got under blow by the occupation authorities. The organisation was declared extremist in 2015, its leaders were banned from entering Crimea and accused of collaborating with Isla-

mist organisations such as Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami, which is considered terrorist in Russia (for them, there is a separate FSB list which includes mostly fundamentalist organisations, as well as a Crimean branch of Right Sector – a structure that never existed). Moscow needed a ban on the Majlis in order to split the Crimean Tatar community and create its own loyal body of the indigenous people, the Kyrym movement led by Remzi Ilyasov.

Right Sector, Stepan Bandera Sports-Patriotic Association Tryzub (Trident), UNA-UNSO, and Brotherhood are the few Ukrainian organisations whose power is mythologised by Russian propaganda. FSB periodically reports on detention of individuals who are allegedly the "Right Sector militants." Either famous filmmaker Oleg Sentsov or just a group of migrant workers can be named so. Russian citizens are regularly intimidated by saboteurs from the mentioned organisation to increase the degree of anti-Ukrainian sentiments in society.

The blockade of Ukrainian information resources in Russia is motivated by the fight against extremism. According to the Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Telecom, Information Technologies and Mass Communications, more than 20 Ukrainian online media outlets are currently banned. The reason is usually mentioning "extremist organisation" or quoting works that are considered extremist in Russia (there are more than 5,000 such works, including dozens of Ukrainian historical works on the Holodomor, the Liberation War, the crimes of Bolshevism).

There are also more sophisticated ways to put pressure on the Ukrainian media. On 19 July 2019, Ukrayinskyi Tyzhden media outlet received an e-mail from German provider Hetzner Online GmbH (the outlet located website on its servers) with a request to delete the article about Right Sector within 24 hours. The reason was the appeal



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of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation and the Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Telecom, Information Technologies and Mass Communications to this provider which with a demand to remove the article (which was a common story about Right Sector and its interaction with the Ukrainian Armed Forces) about “extremist organisation,” citing the Russian legislation. Hetzner Online GmbH promised to block the website of Ukrayinskyi Tyzhden in case of non-compliance with these requirements. However, after the editorial office had communicated with the provider company and the situation had been made public at the diplomatic level, the matter was closed.

To act from abroad

Unlike Belarus, where several generations of political emigrants have formed during the years of Alexander Lukashenka's dictatorship creating a number of organisations abroad, Russian oppositionists and activists in exile do not have their own extensive networks.

The annexation of Crimea and the aggression in Donbas became a kind of trigger for the activation of Russian emigration. Thus, in 2014, Free Russia Foundation was established in Washington, uniting abroad Russians who decided to support pro-democracy movements in Russia, fight propaganda, and engage in human rights activities. A branch of the foundation was the opening of the Free Russia House in Ukraine in 2017 – “an alternative embassy of Russian civil society.” Its founders were Russians who emigrated to Ukraine (mostly journalists). They stated that they wanted the House to become a “place of assembly” for Russian emigrants in Eastern Europe. In 2019, Free Russia was declared undesirable in Russia.

Already mentioned Mikhail Khodorkovsky has been in exile since 2013. In 2014, he resumed the Open Russia activities. Most activists of this organisation continue to work in Russia. Khodorkovsky also funded the activities of two online media outlets, Open Media and MBKh-Media. The Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Telecom, Information Technologies and Mass Communications has repeatedly blocked them (due to cooperation with the “undesirable” Open Russia, so they are forced to broadcast through social media groups).

Olga Romanova is another important figure among Russian exiles. A well-known journalist (headed the Russian Business Week), she had an active public life. In 2012, Romanova joined the coordination council of the Russian opposition. After her husband's arrest in 2008, she founded the illegal human rights movement Russia Behind Bars which records human rights violations in the penitentiary system and provides assistance to families of prisoners. In 2017, Olga Romanova emigrated to Germany where she continues to manage the organisation she founded.

Despite all the intimidation and repression, there are still a large number of civil society activists in Russia who are able to unite (formally or informally) and continue the struggle within the country. An example for them is obviously Alexei Navalny, who had the opportunity to emigrate but decided to stay in Russia despite persecution and imprisonment.

Organisations with «foreign agent» status

№	Name	Scope of activity
1	Autonomous Non-profit Organisation "Center for Work with the Problem of Violence "Nasiliu.net"	Assistance to victims of violence
2	Krasnoyarsk Regional Youth NGO "We are against AIDS"	Advice to socially vulnerable citizens
3	Program-Target Candle Charitable Foundation	Advice to socially vulnerable citizens
4	Non-Profit Organisation "Foundation for the Protection of Citizens' Rights"	Defence of human rights
5	Autonomous Non-Profit Organization "Accent"	Defence of human rights
6	Interregional NGO for Implementation of Social and Educational Initiatives and Educational Projects "Open St. Petersburg"	Education
7	Socially-Oriented Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation for Prevention and Protection of Public Health "Phoenix PLUS"	Healthcare
8	St. Petersburg Charitable Foundation "Humanitarian Action"	Advice to socially vulnerable citizens
9	League for Promotion of Legal Education of Population "League of Voters"	Civic education
10	Non-Profit Organization "Legal Initiative Foundation"	Defence of human rights
11	Non-Profit Organization "Civil Fund for Social Development "Genesis"	Defence of human rights
12	Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation of Information and Legal Services "Civil Initiative Against Environmental Crime"	Ecology
13	Non-Profit Organisation "Anti-Corruption Foundation"	Anti-corruption activism
14	Penza Regional Public Charity Foundation "Civil Union"	Social policy
15	Russian Red Cross (Ingush Republican branch)	Healthcare
16	Non-Governmental Organisation "Hasdei Yerushalaim (Mercy) Saratov Regional Jewish Charitable Centre"	Charity
17	Private institution "Centre for Support and Promotion of Mass Media Development"	Support for media
18	Regional NGO for Human Rights Promotion "Hot Line"	Defence of human rights
19	Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation "Institute for Globalisation and Social Movements"	Defence of human rights
20	Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation "Centre for Social and Information Initiatives "Action"	Advice to socially vulnerable citizens
21	Chelyabinsk Regional Diabetic Social Movement "Together"	Healthcare
22	Charitable Foundation for Health Care and Protection of Citizens' Rights	Advice to socially vulnerable citizens
23	Charitable Foundation for Assistance to Convicts and Their Families	Defence of human rights
24	City charitable foundation "Tolyatti Fund"	Social policy
25	Sverdlovsk Regional Non-Governmental Fund for Social Projects "New Time"	Advice to socially vulnerable citizens
26	Foundation for Sustainable Development "Silver Taiga"	Ecology
27	Foundation for Promotion of Mass Communications and Legal Education "Well, well, well"	Defence of human rights
28	Regional NGO for Legal Education Promotion "Owl"	Defence of human rights
29	Regional NGO for Assistance to Women and Children in Crisis "Anna"	Assistance to victims of violence
30	Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation of Social Support for Population "April"	Healthcare
31	Samara Province Regional Charitable Foundation	Social policy
32	Sverdlovsk Regional Non-Governmental Foundation "Era of Health"	Healthcare
33	International Historical Educational Charitable and Human Rights Society "Memorial"	Remembrance policy
34	Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation "Analytical Centre of Yuri Levada"	Sociology
35	Autonomous Nonprofit Organisation "Publisher" Gagarin Park "	Media
36	Andrey Rylkov Foundation for Health and Social Justice	Advice to socially vulnerable citizens

Organisations with «foreign agent» status

№	Name	Scope of activity
37	Charitable Foundation for Social and Legal Assistance "Sfera"	Defence of human rights
38	Omsk Regional NGO "Sibalt"	Advice to socially vulnerable citizens
39	Chelyabinsk Regional Body of Civil Initiative "Ural Human Rights Group"	Defence of human rights
40	Chelyabinsk Regional Body of Civil Initiative "Women of Eurasia"	Defence of human rights
41	Ryazan Branch of Memorial	Historical memory
42	Yekaterinburg Memorial Society	Historical memory
43	Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation "Institute of Human Rights"	Defence of human rights
44	Non-Profit Organisation "Foundation for Protection of Publicity"	Defence of human rights
45	St. Petersburg Branch of Memorial	Historical memory
46	Union of Non-Governmental Associations Russian Research Center for Human Rights	Defence of human rights
47	Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation "Far Eastern Centre for Civil Initiatives and Social Partnership"	Defence of human rights
48	Non-Governmental Organisation "Perm Regional Human Rights Centre"	Defence of human rights
49	Civil Action Foundation	Defence of human rights
50	Interregional Non-Governmental Fund for Civil Society Development "VOICE-Ural"	Defence of human rights
51	Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation "Centre for Independent Sociological Research"	Sociology
52	Non-Governmental Educational Institution "Human Rights Academy"	Civic education
53	Sverdlovsk Regional NGO "Sutyazhnik"	Defence of human rights
54	Private Institution in Kaliningrad for Administrative Support for Programmes and Projects of Nordic Council of Ministers	Self-government
55	Interregional Charitable NGO "Centre for Development of Non-Profit Organisations"	Education
56	Regional Non-Governmental Charitable Organisation for Assistance to Refugees and Migrants "Civil Action"	Defence of human rights
57	Transparency International (Russia)	Anti-corruption activism
58	Regional Foundation "Centre for Protection of Media Rights"	Freedom of speech
59	Non-Profit Organisation "Institute of Press Development - Siberia"	Freedom of speech
60	Private Institution in St. Petersburg for Administrative Support for Programmes and Projects of Nordic Council of Ministers	Self-government
61	Yekaterinburg Memorial Society	Historical memory
62	Freedom of the Press Foundation	Freedom of speech
63	International Human Rights Organisation "Man and the Law"	Defence of human rights
64	St. Petersburg Non-Governmental Human Rights Organisation "Civil Control"	Defence of human rights
65	Kaliningrad Regional Non-Governmental Organisation "Human Rights Center"	Defence of human rights
66	Regional Non-Governmental Organisation "Non-Governmental Commission for the Preservation of the Heritage of Academician Sakharov"	Education
67	Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation "Moscow School of Civic Education"	Civic education
68	MEMO.ru News Agency	Historical memory
69	Non-Profit Organisation "Institute of Regional Press"	Freedom of speech
70	Foundation "Institute for Development of Freedom of Information"	Freedom of speech
71	Interregional NGO "Human Rights Centre "Memorial"	Historical memory/defence of human rights
72	Kaliningrad Regional Non-Governmental Organisation "Environmental Protection! - Women's Council"	Environment protection/defence of human rights
73	Foundation for Assistance in the Protection of Citizen's Rights and Freedoms "Public Verdict"	Defence of human rights
74	Eurasian Antimonopoly Association	Legal advice

Undesirable organisations

№	Name UA/RU	Name EN
1	Национальный фонд в поддержку демократии/Національний фонд на підтримку демократії	National Endowment for Democracy
2	Институт «Открытое общество»/«Інститут Відкрите суспільство»	OSI Assistance Foundation
3	Фонд «Открытое общество»/Фонд «Відкрите суспільство»	Open Society Foundation
4	Американо-российский фонд по экономическому и правовому развитию/Американо-російський фонд з економічного і правового розвитку	U.S. RUSSIA FOUNDATION FOR ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND THE RULE OF LAW
5	Национальный Демократический Институт Международных Отношений/Національний демократичний інститут міжнародних відносин	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
6	Инвестиционный фонд развития СМИ/Інвестиційний фонд розвитку ЗМІ	MEDIA DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT FUND
7	Корпорация «Международный Республиканский Институт»/Корпорація «Міжнародний республіканський інститут»	International Republican Institute
8	Общественное сетевое движение «Открытая Россия»/Громадський рух «Відкрита Росія»	Open Russia Civic Movement, Open Russia*
9	Открытая Россия/Відкрита Росія	Open Russia
10	Институт современной России/Інститут сучасної Росії	Institute of Modern Russia, Inc
11	Черноморский фонд регионального сотрудничества/Чорноморський фонд регіональної співпраці	The Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation
12	Европейская Платформа за Демократические Выборы/Європейська платформа за демократичні вибори	European Platform for Democratic Elections
13	Международный центр электоральных исследований/Міжнародний центр електоральних досліджень	International Elections Study Center
14	Германский фонд Маршалла/Німецький фонд Маршалла	The German Marshall Fund
15	Тихоокеанский центр защиты окружающей среды и природных ресурсов/Тихоокеанський центр захисту довкілля і природних ресурсів	Pacific Environment
16	Фонд «Свободная Россия»/Фонд «Вільна Росія»	Free Russia Foundation
17	Світовий конгрес українців	Ukrainian World Congress
18	Атлантический совет/Атлантична рада	Atlantic Council
19	Человек в беде/Людина в біді	People In Need
20	Европейский фонд поддержки демократии/Європейський фонд підтримки демократії	European Endowment for Democracy
21	Джеймстаунский фонд/Джеймстаунський фонд	Jamestown Foundation
22	Прект «Гармония»/Проект «Гармонія»	Project Harmony
23	«Буддистское сообщество «Родники дракона»/Буддійська спільнота «Джерела дракона»	Dragon Springs Buddhist Inc.
24	Врачи против насильственного извлечения органов/Лікарі проти насильницького вилучення органів	Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting
25	Европейская ассоциация «Фалунь Дафа»/Європейська асоціація «Фалунь Дафа»	European Falun Dafa Association
26	Друзья Фалуньгун/Друзі Фалуньгун	Friends of Falun Gong Inc
27	Всемирный совет по спасению подвергаемых гонениям адептов «Фалуньгун»/Світова рада із порятунку гнаних адептів «Фалуньгун»	Global Mission to Rescue Persecuted Falun Gong Practitioners
28	Коалиция по расследованию преследования в отношении Фалуньгун в Китае/Коаліція із розслідування переслідувань щодо Фалуньгун в Китаї	Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong in China
29	Всемирная организация по расследованию преследований Фалуньгун/Світова організація із розслідування переслідувань Фалуньгун	World Organization to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong
30	Пражский Центр Гражданского Общества/Празький центр громадянського суспільства	Prague Civil Society Centre
31	Ассоциация школ политических исследований при Совете Европы/Асоціація шкіл політичних досліджень при Раді Європи	Association of Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe

* such an organisation is not registered with UK government's Companies House

Media outlets with “foreign agent” status

№	Legal entities Name
1	Voice of America
2	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)
3	Idel. Realities (RFE/RL's project)
4	Caucasus.Realities (RFE/RL's North Caucasus Service)
5	Siberia.Realities (RFE/RL's Russian Service)
6	RFE/RL's Tatar-Bashkir Service
7	North.Realities (RFE/RL's Russian Service)
8	Crimea.Realities (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)
9	Current Time TV channel
10	Factograph
11	Medium Orient Czech information agency
12	First Anti-corruption Mass Media (PASMI)
13	SIA Medusa project

№	Individuals Name	Occupation
1	Lev Ponomaryov	human rights defender
2	Lyudmila Savitskaya	journalist
3	Sergey Markelov	journalist
4	Denis Kamalyangin	journalist
5	Darya Apokhonchich	performance artist

LIFE IN THE LAND OF WAR COLOURS

WAR OF RUSSIA HUMAN TOUCH





**INNA KRUPNYK IS A
 FREELANCE JOURNALIST,
 COMMENTATOR AND
 COPYWRITER. SHE
 HAS MORE THAN 15
 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
 IN MARKETING
 AND ADVERTISING
 BOTH AS A PART OF
 STAFF IN A SYSTEM
 COMPANY AND AS A
 FREELANCE MARKETING
 ENTREPRENEUR.
 SPHERES OF
 JOURNALISTIC
 INTEREST: NATIONAL
 REVIVAL, REFORMS,
 HISTORICAL PARALLELS,
 CULTURAL PROCESSES,
 MICROECONOMIC
 PROCESSES IN UKRAINE,
 GENDER EQUALITY.
 PARTICIPANT IN
 CONFERENCES, FORUMS
 AND SEMINARS IN
 MATTERS RELATED TO
 POLITICAL PROCESSES
 AND REFORMING THE
 ECONOMY.**

A vdiivka, Krasnohorivka, Marinka, Shyrokyne, Hnutove, Popasna, Shchastia, and Pisky are toponyms of Donbas that are often mentioned in news about the war in eastern Ukraine. This is only a small part of the 155 settlements of Donbas located on the line of contact in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Individual human destinies and stories are hidden in the names of towns and villages. Terrible, piercing, life-affirming, and sometimes just ordinary ones. Statistics of international organisations attribute about 3,500,000 people as victims of the humanitarian disaster in Donbas. Of these, about 1,800,000 people live in the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The rest live in the territories controlled by Kyiv, including about 450,000 people living in the frontline zone. Each of these 450,000 residents of the red line of demarcation has his or her own war on a daily basis - the war for life in the land of war colours.

Iryna Ustymova, 38, who left Donetsk in September 2014, joined the ranks of local teachers in Avdiivka. There is always a shortage of teachers and doctors in the region. In 2014-2015, there was a real boom in migration of the population to the frontline towns. The increase was, on average, 15% due to the so-called "refugees from the war and the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR)." These people did not go deep into Ukraine, but only moved within Donbas. Therefore, Ms. Ustymova teaches children in one of the schools in Avdiivka from morning

until 8 p.m. due to the rapid increase in the number of pupils. Internally displaced persons are now a separate social stratum of the population from the most densely populated region of the state – Donbas – which it was before the war. As of 4 January 2021, according to the Unified Information Database of Internally Displaced Persons, 1,459,170 internally displaced persons from the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea were registered.

Raisa Taranenka, 73, a pensioner from the village of Zaitseve, Bakhmut district, Donetsk region, badly damaged by shelling, looks at its traces on the walls of her house every day. Until 2016, her house was located in the so-called "gray" buffer zone of Zaitseve. That's why she managed to live some 600 meters from the separatist trenches. The firewood stacked near the wall for the winter served as a protective barrier against shells. In 2019, the repair of damaged by shelling began with funds from the Norwegian Refugee Council in Ukraine (NRC). First of all, the restoration will apply to houses of pensioners, who make up 35-40% of the population of the frontline zones. The civil-military administrations of these towns help to obtain compensation for the destroyed housing or new housing for the victims. Life in the frontline zone has become more peaceful, and the intensity of shelling is much lower. But more money is not allocated for repairs because it is a red zone. Therefore, hypothetically, all the investments may be lost due to possible destruction.

Mykola Yushkov, 70, from Mayorske, regularly visits his daughter, who lives with her family in pro-Russian separatist-controlled territory. Every day, about 30,000 “tourists” cross the 427-kilometer demarcation line at five checkpoints in both directions. Someone does this to visit a family divided by the war, others to receive a pension or social security benefits, or to buy or sell food. Sometimes even old people are forced to participate in such schemes of earning money on food. Needless to say, it is not always safe. Mariia Kryslenko, 80, stands in long lines at the checkpoint every day and brings food from Stanytsia Luhanska to Luhansk, where her grandchildren live. “I was going to die in 2013. My back ached and I could not walk. And now, I have been making efforts for four years of war, otherwise my grandchildren will die without me,” she says. As of 30 August 2015, there were about 600 residents in Stanytsia Luhanska. As of January 2020, about 12,000 people lived in the village due to internal migration.

The Semeniuk family from Zhovanka, the spouses, went through the traumatic experience of being kidnapped by militants and having a difficult return home. It happened in early 2015. At the time, Zhovanka was also a “grey zone,” and Russian hybrid forces quietly penetrated there. The spouses were taken to Yenakiyevo, where they were beaten and bullied. But, fortunately, they were released. After that, the family left for the Poltava region. When Zhovanka was back under control of the Ukrainian army, they returned home. After such stories, the fear of being kidnapped existed in many frontline houses and in occupied territories for a long time.

There is also a collective story. Students of the local vocational school of the mining town of Hirniak regularly painted out pro-Russian inscriptions around the town during the most difficult years of 2014-2015. In the first years of the war, they were almost the only Ukrainian center in their hometown. In the first years of the war, teenagers and vocational school teachers often did not find support and understanding among the majority of the townspeople. Now, the situation is changing. “People are not blind, albeit zombified by Russian propaganda. They see what Ukraine gives and what the DPR does. They gradually accept Ukrainian side. They even come to our vocational school club to talk about life at the front,” says Mykola Drazhny, a 17-year-old vocational school student.

Some of these 450,000 frontline residents had to become more persistent, escaping from a hard life. Vasyl Hotko, whose car was destroyed as a result of the shelling of Mariupol in January 2015, is still actively fighting for compensation from the state. Natalia Krasna, who left the dangerous Shyrokyne with her family, went through several stages of infernal part-time jobs before starting her own business in Mariupol. The woman claims that without the war, she wouldn’t have found all those wonderful people with whom she stands together as entrepreneurs of the new Donbas.

Events in the East forced many residents of the Donetsk region to become more socially active and learn to contribute to the life of the community. Grant projects teach them to defend the right to a dignified life, control the local budget, and implement public initiatives. In particular, a project called “Increasing the ability of community members to influence local governments in the frontline towns of Ukraine” was launched at the end of 2020 and will be im-

plemented in eight frontline towns. There have been no local elections in the frontline zone since 2010, including elections last autumn. In these territories, there are civil-military administrations, the heads of which are appointed, not elected. To prevent the creation of an autocracy, members of local communities should be involved in the decision-making process and realising the interests and needs of frontline towns. “We live in the line of fire. Nobody knows how it will end for us. We have no other choice but to be constantly in good shape. When we wake up every morning, we must ask ourselves what we have done to make our town a little better while the war is going on. If we sit down and just wait, the budget money will not come to us,” a Toretsk resident said.

Many lives in the frontline zone were cut short. According to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, 3,375 civilians have died since the beginning of the Russian Federation’s armed aggression in Donbas. More than 7,000 civilians have been injured. The mortality rate of the civilian population is 25-26% of the total death toll (3,375 out of 13,100-13,300). During the war, this ratio has changed significantly: from 33-34% in 2014 to 4-5% in 2019-2020. During the entire period of the war in Donbas, the number of civilian casualties was the lowest in 2019. The worst thing is that since the beginning of hostilities in the East of Ukraine (from April 2014 to August 2020) at least 42 children have been injured by mines and explosives in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. Due to the active conflict, it is still impossible to implement a demining plan, which can take at least 25-30 years. Since the beginning of the Russian aggression, the total size of mined areas is about 7,000 square kilometers in the controlled area and about 14,000 square kilometers in the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.



Some residents of the frontline towns live creatively, despite the proximity of the front. They are shooting amateur films. They become heroes of professional documentaries. For example, Hanna Hladka from Krasnohorivka, a mother of four children, became the heroine of Iryna Tsilyk's documentary "The Earth Is Blue as an Orange." The film won the Directing Award: World Cinema Documentary at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. "The Earth" is a film within a film. For a whole year, the director watched Hanna and her eldest daughter Myroslava, who were filming their everyday life in the frontline zone. "In fact, our film is not about war, it is only a background here. This is a film about growing up, about balancing between war and peace, about self-therapy with the help of cinema, and about many other things that can be close and understandable to different people in the world," Tsilyk said in an interview with Moviegram. Despite the surreal combination of art and war, the film did not get dramatic. Various funny scenes from the life of the family are demonstrated; there are no loud "popular" discussions about resolving military conflicts or accusations of the authorities. Cinematography helps the protagonists cope with the unpleasant experience of war. Mother Hanna and her children speak frankly about their experiences of the war only in the episodes where they interview each other. Tsilyk noted in an interview with The Village: "I want to share the stories of such people. Ukrainians are very different; we tend to feel sorry for ourselves, we focus more on problems. But there are a lot of people around who amaze me. I like the way they take their lives into their own hands and live and even know how to enjoy their life. I am terribly impressed with such people, and I want to tell about them." The amateur movie of My-

roslava Trofimchuk, the daughter of Hanna Gladka, has already been screened at two festivals (Open Nights and Bardak).

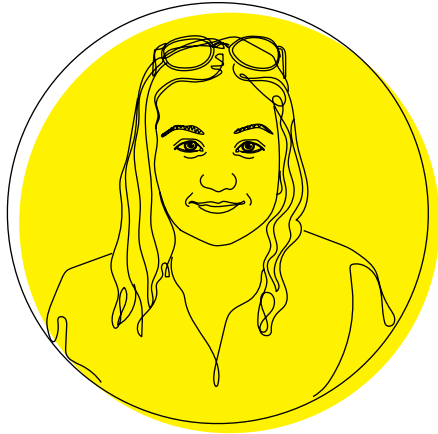
Peace in the frontline zones is still very fragile. The soldiers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine provide the local population food and medical assistance. The hostilities and shelling do not cease on the part of the enemy, even in the context of the current ceasefire. Among the lower-level problems, the most critical are access to health care services, ambulances, staff shortages, road conditions, transport links, crossing the contact line, and rising prices for coal, firewood and utilities.

But the frontline zone for 450,000 people has long become a place of real life. Life with hope for the best, small victories, daily routines, and the gradual growth of social consciousness. And all of them, residents of the Donbas frontline villages and towns, will definitely and finally win their war: the war for life in the land of the colour of war.

There is also a collective story. Students of the local vocational school of the mining town of Hirniak regularly painted out pro-Russian inscriptions around the town during the most difficult years of 2014-2015. In the first years of the war, they were almost the only Ukrainian center in their hometown. In the first years of the war, teenagers and vocational school teachers often did not find support and understanding among the majority of the townspeople.

FLASHMOB

#STOPRUSSIANBRUTALITY
#STOPRUSSIANBRUTALITY



*IVANNA MALCHEVSKA, PROJECT
MANAGER AT PROMOTE UKRAINE,
INITIATOR OF THE FLASHMOB
#STOPRUSSIANBRUTALITY*



For more than seven years, the war at the border the Eastern border of Europe has been going on and has already taken the lives of thousands of citizens - citizens of Ukraine who know exactly what the value of the country, freedom, culture and self-determination is.

For more than seven years, Ukrainians have been defending the whole of Europe from Russian armed aggression at the cost of their own lives.



But does Europe remember it?

On February 26, the Day of Crimean resistance to the Russian occupation, we launched a large-scale #StopRussianBrutality campaign.

#StopRussianBrutality is a flashmob to remind the world, high-ranking officials, members of the European Parliament, PACE, OSCE, NATO and other institutions about Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, illegal armed occupation of Crimea, numerous human rights violations, forced relocation and repression against Ukrainians in the occupied territories.

As part of the campaign, more than 2,000 high-ranking officials across Europe received paper postcards in which Russian aggression covered Donbas with a wave of blood, surrounded occupied Crimea and tarnished European countries. With this image, we once again remind about the ongoing war, the ongoing crimes, the ongoing violation of international law and the joint participation of each country in the fight against Russian aggression.

The initiative lasted until March 16 - the Day of the fake referendum in Crimea under the barrels of Russian guns and we managed to reach more than **2,000,000 people!**

MEPs joined the campaign, in particular: Andrius Kubilius, Robert Biedroń, José Ramón Bauzá, Rasa Juknevičienė, Witold Waszczykowski, Sandra Kalniete, Dace Melbārde, Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, Michael Gahler, Marek Balt.

Among the **Ukrainian Members of the Parliament** joining were Sofiya Fedyna, Iryna Gerashchenko, Mykhailo Bondar, Natalia Pipa, Andriy Osadchuk, Roman Lozynskyi, Halyna Vasylychenko, and Maria Mezentsseva.

The campaign was supported by the Mission of Ukraine to NATO, the Embassy of Ukraine in Kyrgyzstan, the Embassy of Ukraine in the Kingdom of Belgium, and the Embassy of Ukraine in Brazil.

*On March 16,
the political
world was stirred
by the public
correspondence
of MEP Sandra
Kalniete with
the Chairman of
Majlis of Crimean
Tatar People Refat
Chubarov.*



Public support for the campaign was expressed by the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Lithuania to the International Organisations in Vienna, noting that “Lithuania stands by Ukraine and will continue doing so until Russia ceases its illegal annexation & until sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine is fully restored.”

Among the **NGOs** joining the campaign were Texty.org.ua, VoxUkraine, EuromaidanPress, the Center for Civil Liberties, Ukraine/World, the Center for Public Diplomacy, the Institute of Democratisation and Development, Prisoners Voice and the Let My Ppl Go campaign.

Equally important was the participation of **civil activists and opinion leaders**, including the policy director of the Martens Centre Roland Freudenstein, journalists Vitaly Portnikov and Taras Berezovets, a business club president Serhiy Gaydaychuk, a businessman and influencer Roman Salabay, the former Kremlin political prisoner Roman Sushchenko, the former Chief Military Prosecutor of Ukraine Viktor Chumak, the former spokesman for the EU Delegation in Kyiv David Stulik, and the Chairman of Majlis of Crimean Tatar People Refat Chubarov.

On March 16, **the political world was stirred by the public correspondence of MEP Sandra Kalniete with the Chairman of Majlis of Crimean Tatar People Refat Chubarov.** In her letter, Ms. Kalniete expressed her strong support for the entire Crimean Tatar people and the Ukrainian state and wished them strength in the fight against Russian aggression.

**From the letter of
Sandra Kalniete:**

“Refat, I am absolutely sure that the Ukrainian people will never give up and will not tolerate the annexation of Crimea. This cruel act will never be recognised by the Crimean Tatars who were forced to be deported for the second time over a century. You must remember that you are not alone as this act of aggression and violation of international law by the Russian regime has been condemned by the EU, the US, Canada, and other members of the international community who call for the restoration of Ukraine’s territorial integrity. Tough sanctions on Russia will remain in place until the territory is returned.”

**From the letter of
Refat Chubarov:**

“Like you, I believe that justice, truth and international law will be able to overcome evil. There is no doubt that Ukraine’s state sovereignty over Crimea and the adjacent waters of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov will be restored, and the Russian Federation will bear full responsibility and punishment in accordance with international law for crimes it has committed in the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea and certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.”

Thus, on the anniversary of Russia’s horrific crimes against Ukraine - occupation and referendum - the Promote Ukraine team, with the broad support of MEPs,

On February 26, the Day of Crimean resistance to the Russian occupation, we launched a large-scale #StopRussianBrutality campaign. #StopRussianBrutality is a flashmob to remind the world, high-ranking officials, members of the European Parliament, PACE, OSCE, NATO and other institutions about Russia’s ongoing war against Ukraine, illegal armed occupation of Crimea, numerous human rights violations, forced relocation and repression against Ukrainians in the occupied territories.

MPs, NGOs, diplomatic missions and the public, managed to remind people about the ongoing war, ongoing killings, shelling, human rights violations and illegal imprisonment, forced relocations and repression, for which only one state is responsible - Russia.

Unfortunately, the actual end of the campaign doesn't stop the war and occupation, so the illustration and tag **#StopRussianBrutality** remain relevant.

Use them the next time Russia commits another crime - either it is the shelling of Donbas, or another illegal imprisonment of Crimean Tatars or a new cyber attack or disinformation.

Russia's crimes must be noticed. Russia must be punished.

Only in this way we can restore the territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine and thus the territorial integrity and independence of the whole of Europe!

Thanks to each and every one of you who supported the campaign and helped to spread it!

Together we can #StopRussianBrutality!



**REPORT ON THE
ONLINE SURVEY
RESULTS ABOUT
THE ATTITUDE
OF UKRAINIAN
POPULATION
TO VACCINE
PASSPORTS,
THEIR
IMPORTANCE FOR
GUARANTEE OR
PRESERVATION
OF DEMOCRACY,
PROVISION OF
HUMAN RIGHTS
AND FREEDOMS**



VACCINATION PASSPORTS SURVEY

For more than 15 years, the end of April has been marked by the World Immunization Week - the initiative of the World Health Organization. This year, in addition to promoting routine immunization, World Immunization Week focused on COVID-19 vaccines and vaccinations. The campaign was highlighting the message “Vaccines bring us closer” and aimed to strengthen solidarity and trust in vaccination as a public good.

The European Union has also initiated the introduction of a “vaccine passport” - the so-called “Digital Green Certificate”, which should serve as proof of vaccination against the Covid-19, a negative test result or a recent recovery.

To understand whether the introduction of a similar initiative in Ukraine might be appropriate, Promote Ukraine conducted an online survey of the population of Ukraine and the Ukrainian-speaking audience in general, about vaccine passports, their importance for guaranteeing or preserving democracy, and human rights and freedoms.

Survey Methodology: The survey was conducted in 26-29 April 2021 by means of the CAWI method and Google forms. The link to the survey was posted on the site of Promote Ukraine, Facebook, and has been mailed to the interested audience. The survey was performed by 627 respondents aged 18 and above.

Development of the survey tools and information processing have been provided by the Institute of Sociological Research at Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman.

The sociological data obtained is descriptive in nature and reflects general attitude of the Ukrainian-speaking audience to

vaccine passports, their importance for guarantee or preservation of democracy, provision of human rights and freedoms.

The survey was performed by 672 respondents, 69,35% women and 30,65% men. The most active were the age categories from 41 to 55 years and from 29 to 40 years (44.79% and 40.78%, respectively).

17,26 % of the respondents have been affected by COVID-19 (confirmed by laboratory tests), 23,51 % have been also affected by COVID-19 having symptoms but without lab confirmation. 41,52 % of respondents did not experienced COVID-19 and 17,71 % are not sure about that.

Close surrounding (relatives, children, parents, colleagues, neighbors) of 45,24 % of respondents have been affected by COVID-19 (confirmed by laboratory tests), 15,63 % of respondents mentioned that their close surrounding have been also affected by COVID-19 having symptoms but without lab confirmation. In 16,36 % of answers the relatives (children, parents), colleagues, neighbors of respondents did not experience COVID-19 and 9,97 % are not sure about that. 12,80 % of respondents preferred not to answer that question.

The tables below provide distribution of responds to the questions of the Promote Ukraine's survey. Moreover, the respondents have added hundreds of comments using the option “Other” which was available for some questions. Here are the most typical of them for your consideration.

Distribution of respondents to the question:
“Flu vaccine for you ...” in %

Is the usual thing I do and plan to do	9,82
Is what I've tried	7,29
Is what I've never inoculated	75,45
I'm not sure	7,44

Distribution of respondents to the question:
**“Traditional vaccination (against a certain standard list of diseases)
and COVID-19 vaccination for you are ...” in %**

Different issues	31,55
Equally important	20,54
Equally nonsense	41,22
I'm not sure	3,87
Other	2,82

The “Other” variants obtained:

- The COVID-19 vaccine has not been sufficiently studied.
- The COVID-19 vaccines are not needed at all.

Distribution of respondents to the question:
“COVID-19 vaccination for you is ...” in %

Personal issue (self-protection)	34,82
Social issue (protection of people around you)	19,35
Not needed at all	41,22
I'm not sure	0,89
Other	3,72

The “Other” variants obtained:

- The vaccine is needed if it is effective. But you can't force everyone to get vaccinated, because there are many people with contraindications.
- Commercial and socio-political scam
- Needed only by risk groups and only after all stages of testing

Distribution of respondents to the question:
**“Why do you agree to be vaccinated against COVID-19
(choose 2 most relevant reasons for you)” in %**
(the total sum exceeds 100%, as the respondents could choose several variants)

To travel	13,6
To visit public places	5,6
To go to work	4,1
To protect myself	26,9
To protect other people	16,8
Do not agree	64,7
I'm not sure	2,9

The “Other” variants obtained:

- I do not agree to be vaccinated because it is human rights violation.
- I do not agree to be vaccinated for any money.
- For the sake of all the above points, but only in the case of a fully studied tested vaccine without side effects.
- It is everyone's personal choice.

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“Are you ready to be vaccinated against COVID-19 every six months, if necessary?” in %

Yes	14,73
Slightly yes (more likely yes than no)	8,63
Slightly no (more likely no than yes)	6,10
No	35,57
I'm not sure	2,68
I don't support the idea of being vaccinated	32,29

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“Are you ready to vaccinate your children against COVID-19?” in %

Yes	13,10
Slightly yes (more likely yes than no)	8,04
Slightly no (more likely no than yes)	3,26
No	34,52
I'm not sure	2,98
I don't support the idea of being vaccinated	31,40
Have no children	6,70

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“The responsibility for quantitative indicators of vaccination of the population (to vaccinate up to 70% of the population by the end of a certain period) is the responsibility of...” in %

The State	27,23
International organizations like WHO	4,32
Vaccine producers	5,51
Every citizen	18,15
Other	21,87
I'm not sure	22,92

The “Other” variants obtained:

- To be vaccinated or is not everyone's choice, so everyone takes responsibility. Therefore, no one has the right to force or intimidate with vaccination!
- Globalists
- The state should provide everyone with the opportunity to be vaccinated with the vaccine he / she wants.
- Voluntarily vaccination, no one has the right to force!
- To Agree to be vaccinated is irresponsible for one's health and a threat to the health of others.
- The concept of collective immunity was introduced 30 years before the start of vaccination. Therefore, talking about 70% is a myth.
- There can be no question of responsibility here. You need to trust the state, WHO and medicine to take responsibility. And there is no trust.
- Just business.



Distribution of respondents to the question:

“Responsibility for qualitative indicators of vaccination of the population (increase of the number of COVID-19 incidents with no complications from vaccination) is a responsibility of ...” in %

The State	27,53
International organizations like WHO	6,10
Vaccine producers	21,73
Every citizen	10,12
Other	15,17
I'm not sure	19,35

The “Other” variants obtained:

- *Responsibility should be borne for side effects.*
- *Everyone should be responsible.*
- *Doctors who advocate vaccination and vaccine manufacturers should be responsible for side effects.*
- *The number of vaccinations is not related to the incidence rate.*
- *Everyone's own business.*

Distribution of respondents to the question:
“Will you be satisfied with financial compensation for deteriorating health and / or disability caused by ‘unsuccessful’ vaccination in the form of side effects?” in %

Yes	11,31
Slightly yes (more likely yes than no)	7,44
Slightly no (more likely no than yes)	5,21
No	68,90
I'm not sure	7,14
Not aware of that	-

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“Which source of information on the state of health of the nation and the course of vaccination of the population you consider the most reliable?” in %

WHO	19,64
National authorities on health protection	6,25
The EU	8,04
News sites	4,46
Social networks	12,50
Friends, neighbours, acquaintances	14,14
Other	34,97

The “Other” variants obtained:

- *International research*
- *Adequate physicians*
- *Analysis of all sources*
- *Own observations*
- *I trust no source! Constant manipulation and propaganda*

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“When in public places, is it important for you to be surrounded by people vaccinated against COVID-19?” in %

Yes	18,01
Slightly yes (more likely yes than no)	8,04
Slightly no (more likely no than yes)	4,02
No	66,82
I'm not sure	3,11

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“Would you feel safer being vaccinated against COVID-19 when another person coughed in a public place next to you?” in %

Yes	15,77
Slightly yes (more likely yes than no)	8,91
Slightly no (more likely no than yes)	4,32
No	58,04
I'm not sure	12,95

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“How would you like to identify the vaccinated person next to you?” in %

Special bracelet or other external accessories (on clothes, on the hand, etc.)	3,57
Through the mobile application (considering the requirements for personal data protection)	2,53
Vaccine passport (paper or digital), which can be shown upon request	7,29
Visible tatoo	1,19
No identification is needed	71,58
I'm not sure	2,68
Other	11,16

The “Other” variants obtained:

- It is a crime even to offer such an identification!
- There is no sense of identification because the effectiveness of the vaccine is unknown.

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“Do you support the idea of introducing a vaccine passport for free travelling as it was before pandemic?” in %

Yes	15,63
Slightly yes (more likely yes than no)	7,44
Slightly no (more likely no than yes)	2,53
No	73,66
I'm not sure	0,74

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“Do you support the idea of introducing a vaccine passport for free access to museums, restaurants, hairdressers, shops?” in %

Yes	11,46
Slightly yes (more likely yes than no)	5,80
Slightly no (more likely no than yes)	2,98
No	78,12
I'm not sure	1,64

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“In your opinion, the vaccine passport should contain information about ...” in %

All the vaccinations provided and recommended by the Ministry of Health Care	12,80
Only about vaccine against COVID-19	11,76
The vaccine passport should not be introduced at all	66,96
I'm not sure	2,83
Other	5,65

The “Other” variants obtained:

- No passport. Everyone must keep his/her immunity trained.
- Knowing our corruption, I do not believe in any passports and indeed, it is against the freedoms of citizens. But if it is necessary for travel, I will try to get a passport, most likely.
- Vaccination passport is a guarantee of segregation of society on medical grounds.
- Vaccination passport is a violation of human rights!

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“Are you afraid that the information from your vaccine passport may be used for other purposes?” in %

Yes	19,49
Slightly yes (more likely yes than no)	6,41
Slightly no (more likely no than yes)	8,48
No	13,24
I'm not sure	3,72
I do not plan to have a vaccine passport	48,66

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“Do you agree that information about vaccinations to be equated with personal data and therefore protected accordingly?” in %

Yes	54,91
Slightly yes (more likely yes than no)	4,46
Slightly no (more likely no than yes)	4,91
No	20,98
I'm not sure	14,73

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“How do vaccine passports correlate with the human rights?” in %

They violate human rights	68,45
They temporally violate human rights	4,02
They violate human rights of non-vaccinated people, but it is the choice of the latter	10,86
They do not violate human rights	12,65
I'm not sure	4,02

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“What is your attitude to those who support the idea of vaccine passports?” in %

Supportive	19,20
Neutral	23,21
Blaming	51,79
I'm not sure	5,80

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“What scares you most?” in %

To transmit COVID-19 to other people	11,90
To be infected with COVID-19	18,15
I'm not sure	30,51
Other	39,44

The “Other” variants obtained:

- when people are forced to inject the vaccine against human will!!
- To see the division of society because of COVID-19
- The worst thing is the medical terror that is now being introduced in the world.
- The worst thing is when there are not enough vaccines for everyone.
- When human rights are violated!
- To become a disenfranchised slave
- Cancer, GMO products

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“Have you been affected by COVID-19?” in %

Yes (confirmed by lab tests)	17,26
Yes (there were symptoms but without lab confirmation)	23,51
No	41,52
I'm not sure	17,71

Distribution of respondents to the question:

“Have your relatives (children, parents, colleagues, neighbours) been affected by COVID-19?” in %

Yes (confirmed by lab tests)	45,24
Yes (there were symptoms but without lab confirmation)	15,63
No	16,36
I'm not sure	9,97
Do not want to answer	12,80

Distribution of respondents to the question:
"Your age:" in %

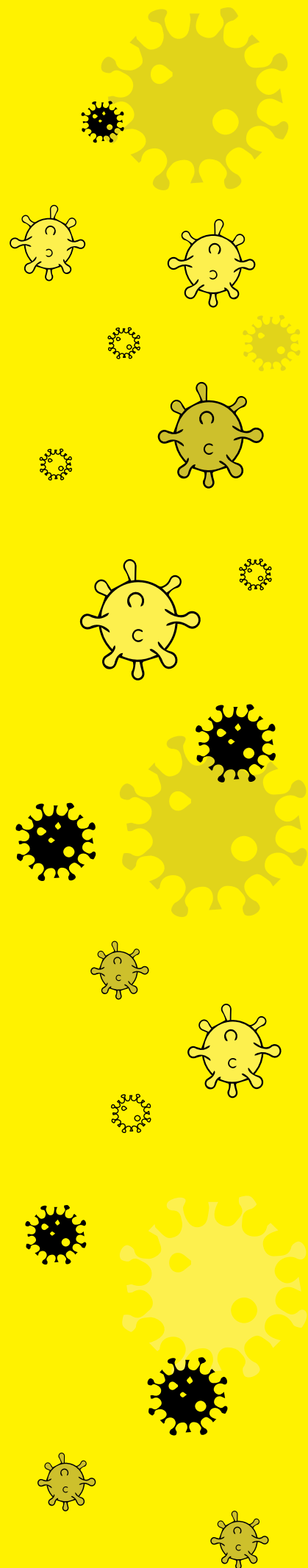
18-28	6,99
29-40	40,78
41-55	44,79
56-65	4,61
66 and older	2,83

Distribution of respondents to the question:
"Your sex:" in %

Female	69,35
Male	30,65

We are looking forward to getting your feedback
on the columns of the next issue or on the journal page
<https://www.promoteukraine.org/uk/zhurnal/>

*Prepared by
Yuliia Horbova
and Evhenia Kolomiyets-Ludwig*





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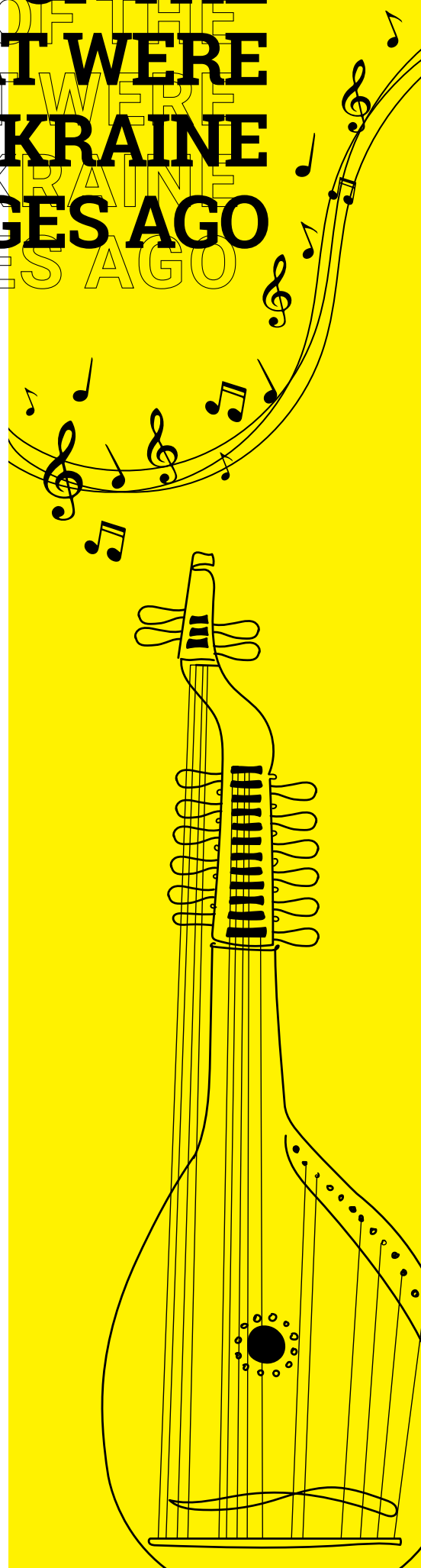
MASTER OF THE INSTRUMENTS THAT WERE PLAYED IN UKRAINE AGES AGO



**NATALIA RICHARDSON,
JOURNALIST, EDITOR
AT BRUSSELS UKRAİNA
REVIEW**



The Viksnins' family performance



To revive and popularise authentic Ukrainian musical instruments - this is the challenge Vadym Viksnin has set himself. This Kyiv master makes hurdy-gurdies, kobzas, tsymbaly, banduras, but he may be prouder of reviving such a forgotten instrument as a torban. Also, the artist's daughter Maria is the only person in the world who plays a torban in a classical style.

The Viksnin family, as well as Shevchenko (on his mother's side), were musicians, and Vadym's father and uncle were well-known violin makers in the Soviet Union, while his great-grandfather, and grandparents were musicians... The master has spent a lifetime repairing, restoring and making classical musical instruments, and for the last 13 years, antique ones. The majority of modern Ukrainians cannot tell the difference between a torban, a lute and a kobza. Meanwhile, even if great-great-grandparents of contemporary inhabitants of Ukraine did not play these instruments, at least they knew what a kobza or torban looked like.

Musical instruments of Ukraine: a little history

Before the revolution of 1917 there were professional musicians in Ukraine who played the bandura, hurdy-gurdy, torban and kobza. Inexplicably, all these people are now often called "kobzars." Also, some Ukrainian authentic instruments are attributed to Moscow: for example, the table gusli was very popular in Ukraine, and children learnt to play it at parochial schools. The



Maria and Daryna with a torban and a flute at the Easter Egg Festival

Donskoy Ryley is also of non-Russian origin; it is a Ukrainian lyre, otherwise relya because this instrument has two strings "D" (re) and one "A" (la). Registered Cossacks loved this lyre. When the institution of Cossacks began to be destroyed and Cossacks went to the Don, they took their favourite relya with them.

The torban was also highly respected in Ukraine. For example, more than 100 years ago, one magazine announced a competition for the best story, and the prize for the winner was a three-month course on the torban. Hetmans Razumovsky and Doroshenko played the torban. We can see their instruments in museums in Vienna and Dresden. Several virtuoso players on the torban have left their mark on history. They are three generations of Widorts from Austria, who have lived in Ukraine since the late 18th century: Gregor, his son Kajetan and grandson Franz. A famous Ukrainian musician in the 19th century was Timko Padura - whom the Soviet authorities considered a mythical torban

performer. However, the reality of his existence is proved at least by the fact that Vadym Viksnin found at Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine an edition of Padura's sheet music, published in Lviv in the mid-19th century. According to Vadym, it is now accepted in Russia that Padura did exist, but they say he wrote everything for the piano, not for the torban. Another Ukrainian torban and lute player, singer and composer Timofiy Bilohradsky - once world-famous in the 18th century - was considered a Russian musician: apparently, because he worked in the St. Petersburg court singing chapel. According to some sources, Johann Sebastian Bach attended one of Bilohradsky's concerts, and he was so delighted with the performance of the Ukrainian player that he wrote six lute suites especially for him.



Electro kobza and bass kobza, made to order for the rock band

Torban, lute and bandura in modern Ukraine

“The modern generation knows about the torban only what Mykola Lysenko (Ukrainian composer in the 19th-20th centuries - ed.) wrote in an article about the last torban performer from the dynasty of Widort. Before him, the torban was held like a lute, and Widort played the torban like a German zither with the instrument lying on his lap and two hands playing from above. It is a very interesting school, which was more widespread in Russia than in Ukraine. But there it was destroyed, along with the torban, after the conflict between Hetman Mazepa and Peter the Great,” says Vadym.

Over the years of Ukraine's independence, interest in authentic musical instruments has increased, but not significantly. At music schools, children learn how to play the Chernihiv bandura, which Mr. Viksnin calls Stalin-ka. It was under Stalin when this musical instrument was invented for Ukraine, but it has nothing to

do with the authentic Ukrainian bandura. And today even professional musicians on classical instruments are a little ashamed by the Ukrainian kobza, lute or torban. It is remarkable that the Russian Ministry of Culture, on its own initiative, contacted Mr. Viksnin and offered him more than 20 grants to produce musical instruments. At the same time, the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture did not respond at all to the master's requests for the funding of various projects.

The master has spent a lifetime repairing, restoring and making classical musical instruments, and for the last 13 years, antique ones.



The Viksnins: before and now

Vadym Viksnin belongs to the fourth and his children to the fifth generation of musicians, respectively. His maternal great-grandfather Kindrat Shevchenko, together with his grandmother, grandfather and grandmother's brother, created a bandura quartet and travelled all over Ukraine with concerts. In the 1930s, grandmother Maria Shevchenko and grandfather Hryhoriy Pidhorny went to work in Russia.

Why? In Ukraine, in those days, artists were allowed to give 10 concerts a month maximum, while in Russia, 21 concerts a month minimum. See the difference? And Shevchenko's bandura players worked intensively: they could do two or three concerts a day. They travelled all over the Soviet Union with their performances. During the Second World War, grandfather was taken to the front. He came back, but with a girlfriend, that was his comrade-in-arms. Grandmother stayed in Vladivostok with her little daughter (Vadym's mother). Later she met a bandura player from Poltava (Mykola Yavdochenko), whom she married after the war. The bandura duo Shevchenko and Yavdochenko worked hard. During the war, they gave concerts at the front-line and in hospitals, and in peacetime, they worked in Kazakhstan where many ethnic Ukrainians live. "They were called the duo of Taras and Odarka there," smiles Vadym. - I don't know why exactly those names. I have this photo: two trucks with the sides thrown back were placed next to each other, so it became a scene. The photo was taken from the performers' back, and you can see the steppe and the crowd to the skyline in front of them. They always sang the Ukrainian repertoire, with the audience particularly looking forward to a performance of 'Dumy' by Taras Shevchenko. Later, the

grandparents moved to live in Chelyabinsk - for the trivial reason that the local philharmonic gave them a flat."

Vadym's paternal great-grandfather, the Baltic German Richard Frank, was a violin maker and violinist who, by a twist of fate, ended up in northern Russia. Vadym's father Roman and uncle Robert also made violins and were renowned throughout the Soviet Union. Vadym Viksnin, for his part, graduated from the Tchaikovsky South Ural State Institute of Arts and from courses at the Steinway & Sony factory as a piano tuner. He is a member of the National All-Ukrainian Music Union, the Association of Master Artists of Bowed Instruments of Ukraine. Mr. Viksnin has changed several professions. He was a teacher of percussion instruments, a piano tuner. He even worked for a while in a furniture factory. After the collapse of the USSR, Vadym moved with his parents from the very industrial city of Chelyabinsk to their native Ukraine - first to Zaporizhzhia and then to Kyiv, where he has been living with his family for many years. Now, he works as a restorer of musical instruments at the Museum of Theatre, Music and Film Art of Ukraine, which is located on the territory of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. Vadym has been repairing and restoring musical instruments since his school years, but his interest in authentic instruments emerged after he moved to Ukraine. The master restores and makes various musical instruments, but his greatest love with a torban. Among other things, he has made an exact copy of one of Hetman Ivan Mazepa's torbans.

Vadym is married to the artist Oksana Viksnina (Bondarenko). She is a laureate of international and all-Ukrainian arts and crafts

competitions. The spouses have five children, and all of them have something to do with music.

The elder daughter Tatiana graduated from the Maimonid Academy of Music in Moscow, where she took a violin class. Daughter Maria graduated from the music school and Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts, class of Professor Yesipko as a torban performer. Daughter Daryna graduated in flute from the music school and the Inter-regional Jewellery Art Centre. Son Svyatoslav is studying to become a master woodworker at a technical school. Perhaps he will also become a music craftsman. The youngest daughter, 14-year-old Anastasia, plays the oboe. As the daughter Maria is the most dedicated to music, there is a separate chapter about her.



Souvenir bandura, painting
by Oksana Viksnina

Maria and the torban

There are several people in the world who play the torban in the style Lysenko wrote - roughly like a bandura. Maria first picked up a torban at the age of 10 when she attended music school as a bandura player. Her first songs were from a collection of Ukrainian folk songs that belonged to her great-grandmother. The girl's first torban was diatonic and was well suited for playing folk songs. With this torban, Maria took part in a concert by the American harp guitarist John Doan. Then, her father made a chromatic torban, which is suitable for playing classical repertoire.

As a schoolgirl Maria participated at the Borys Lyatoshynsky Classical Music Ensemble, performing the music of Handel, and she played the part of two Vivaldi theorbos simultaneously on the torban. There was a striking case: the girl played on the torban the part for the lute from the oratorio of the Kyiv composer Oleksandr Kostin, who was delighted with such a performance of his composition. During her time at university, she had the opportunity to study in the summer lute courses by Evangelina Mascardi in Italy, by Anton Birula and Anna Kowalska in Warsaw and by Siegfried Andreae in Berlin. Maria is now studying for her master's degree at the Berlin University of the Arts. Her professor Sam Chapman is very keen on classical Ukrainian culture, especially the torban and Renaissance kobza.

Who buys a bandura, kobza or torban nowadays?

There is little demand for authentic musical instruments in Ukraine, says Viksnin. Recently, the Kyiv Operetta Theatre approached him and ordered a hurdy-gurdy for its performances. The Lviv interactive museum of musical instruments has asked for recordings of torban playing. Among the private customers are residents of different countries. Kobzas were ordered by musicians from Ukraine and Australia, cymbals from France and the USA. Many requests for hurdy-gurdies have come from Germany, the USA, Brazil and Ireland. "People are interested in what more specific instruments sound like. Because Ukrainian lyres differ from Western ones, so not only ethnic Ukrainians buy lyres, just like cymbals," says Vadym.

Can we expect demand to increase if an average Ukrainian does not know the difference between a torban and a lute or a kobza, and if the state is in no hurry to help the master in reviv-

ing folk instruments? But there is hope. Mr. Viksnin says that usually, when his children, eager to popularise folk instruments, play them at Mamayeva Sloboda (recreated Cossack village) or at the Open-Air Museum in Pyrohiv, their viewers call a torban a bandura at best. But one day, Vadym's daughters went to play at "Montmartre of Kyiv" - Andriivskyy Descent: Daryna on the flute and Maria on the torban. A young family with a girl of seven or eight, all wearing Ukrainian vyshyvanka's (embroidered shirts), walked past. Having seen Viksnin's duo, the child shouted: "Look, it's a torban!" The story struck a chord with Vadym. "The new generation already knows that there was a torban, that it was a Ukrainian instrument, knows how it sounded. It is worth a lot," the music-maker is sure.



Vadym and his son Svyatoslav work in the workshop



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