



Kyiv, June 6, 2024

On the Journalist's Day, role of the media as a civil society instrument in securing democracy and protecting rights, freedoms of citizens in Ukraine was discussed

On the occasion of the Journalist's Day, the Institute of Mass Information and Reporters Without Borders, with the support from the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine, held a public discussion 'Media as a pillar of democracy: shaping the future of Ukraine' in Kyiv.

Around 200 journalists, experts, civil society activists, government officials, MPs, diplomats and international organisations representatives discussed the role of the media in ensuring Ukraine's democratic development, respect for rights and freedoms, and instilling democratic principles of thought and action in the country's citizens. The plenary speeches and panel discussions focused on the challenges faced by the Ukrainian media in times of war and the country's transformation in the context of recovery and European integration.

Rémi Duflot, Charge d'affaires a.i. at the EU Delegation to Ukraine:

"As we congratulate Ukrainian media on their professional holiday, we are well aware of difficult challenges facing journalists in a country at war and reforming at the same time. Since the beginning of the large-scale Russian war, many of them have had to fight or put on a helmet and bulletproof vest with the PRESS label, take over the work of colleagues who went to the battlefield, join volunteering, and restart newsrooms in the de-occupied territories or in places of relocation. Nevertheless, they continue to work with courage and inspiration, remaining committed to the criteria of truth, democracy and freedom of speech, debunking Russian disinformation and propaganda. During this time, Ukraine has risen 18 positions in the Reporters Without Borders index and achieved good results in terms of trust among the world's media. This is a worthy result of your hard work."

The latest report by the Institute of Mass Information shows that 599 crimes have been committed against Ukrainian journalists since the beginning of Russia's large-scale war, including murder, direct physical threats, shelling, digital attacks, etc. At the same time, the introduction of martial law in the interests of national security has limited the operational capacity and freedom of reporting, making it difficult for media to operate. However, even in such circumstances, Ukrainian journalists, adhering to the democratic principles of transparency and accountability, play a key role in a democratic society, acting as a source of information for citizens, an enabling and efficient tool for monitoring government at all levels, and countering Russian disinformation and propaganda. But they need both support and protection from partners and government, as well as consolidation within the media community and with civil society.

The panel discussion 'The Role of the Media as a Civil Society Actor' was dedicated to these issues. Its participants stressed the importance of networking and interaction in the professional environment, as well as dialogue and cooperation of the media with civil society and government. A special emphasis was placed on journalist safety, in particular in and around combat zones, as well as on preventing political pressure on mass media and ensuring their protection by law enforcement agencies.

Oksana Romaniuk, Director of the Institute of Mass Information:

"Ukrainian journalists and media professionals are working in a high-risk environment. According to the Institute of Mass Information, 81 journalists have been killed since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, at least 10 of whom were killed on the job. Hundreds of media outlets have disappeared, and thousands of our colleagues have suffered from various threats related to the Russian aggression. At least 30 Ukrainian journalists are currently being held hostage by Russia. Despite all these challenges, Ukrainian journalists continue to work actively and even grow professionally. Not only do they conduct serious investigations and produce high-quality and important reports, but they are not fearful of defending their independence. The work of Ukrainian journalists is a vivid proof that mass media play a key role in upholding democratic principles, informing society and ensuring transparency and accountability of the authorities."

New professional challenges and tasks of the media were discussed by the participants of the second panel 'Fixers in Wartime: The Invisible Reporters' after the screening of the same-named film presented by Reporters Without Borders.





Thibaut Bruttin, Assistant Director General, Reporters Without Borders

“Since the start of the large-scale Russian invasion in 2022, Reporters Without Borders has been actively supporting the work of journalists in Ukraine. This event, organized with our local partner Institute of Mass Information and the European Union delegation to Ukraine, is an opportunity to salute the incredible resilience and work of the media in Ukraine. They shape the future of democracy in Ukraine. It's also an honour to be screening for the first time in Kyiv our documentary on fixers of war in Ukraine, which shows these invisible heroes of the information.”

The visitors of the event had a chance to see the exhibition ‘On the Frontlines of Truth’, which presented the work of Ukrainian journalists in conflict zones and in extreme conditions. Like the film Fixers in Wartime: The Invisible Reporters, it is yet another testament to the exceptional role the media play in covering and recording Russian crimes in Ukraine and in exposing disinformation and lies spread by the aggressor state.

Join the activities as part of the ‘Together We Act. Together We Are Europe’ communication campaign and follow its events on the dedicated [website](#), as well as on the EU Delegation to Ukraine’s pages on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter/X](#).

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Background:

The Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine joined the event to mark the Journalist’s Day ‘Media as a pillar of democracy: shaping the future of Ukraine’ as part of the All-Ukrainian communication campaign on the European Union’s support for civil society and independent media ‘Together We Act. Together We Are Europe’, which runs from May to July 2024 throughout Ukraine (except for the occupied territories and combat zones) and includes awareness-raising activities, interactive sessions, discussions and seminars with CSOs, the public and the media. The campaign will include press tours and press meetings for the media.

The media partner of the campaign is [Suspilne](#).

The European Union has always supported Ukraine’s independent media, and since the first days of the invasion has tripled its support for civil society in Ukraine and independent media. Thus, the EU has already allocated EUR 15 million to support 150 different media outlets at the national and regional levels, including the journalist protection sector in Ukraine. This support will continue, as it is about the value of human life, freedom of speech, and democracy - the basic principles of the European Union.

