EU4UKRAINE REVIEW

EU-Ukraine Cooperation Newsletter

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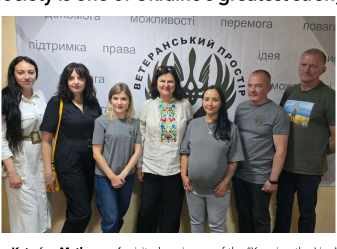
TOGETHER, WE ACT. TOGETHER, WE ARE EUROPE

"Civil society is one of Ukraine's greatest strengths"



EU Ambassador to Ukraine, Katarína Mathernová, visited Vinnytsia in early June. As part of her visit, she promoted the All-Ukrainian communication campaign 'Together, We Act' focused on supporting Ukrainian civil society and independent media. For this reason, Katarína Mathernová visited two EU-funded projects in Vinnytsia.

One of them, Media Support for the EU Delegation to Ukraine, helps journalists. In Vinnytsia, the project hosted a training session "EU: Simply about complex. Vinnytsia".

The media representatives were introduced to the European Union's establishment and development history, as well as various issues related to Ukraine's accession negotiations. They learnt more about the EU's support for Ukraine since the outbreak of the full-scale Russian invasion, cooperation between Vinnytsia region and EU member states, etc.

Such trainings for journalists are organised by Internews Ukraine with the financial support provided by the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine.

Another CSO, the Vinnytsia-based analytical and educational centre VT Prostir (Veteran Space), is currently implementing a project to provide legal and psychological support to veterans and their families. A few months ago, it became one of the winners of the "Keeping the Line" competition held as part of the European Renaissance of Ukraine partnership initiative of the International Renaissance Foundation and the European Union (read more about this project in the Project News section).

"Why I visited projects of this kind here in Vinnytsia is because we are currently running a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of the support the EU provides to civil society and independent media. After all, one of Ukraine's greatest strengths is its civil society," **EU Ambassador Katarína Mathernová** said in Vinnytsia.

More information:

Video about the visit on the EU Delegation to Ukraine's Facebook page

'Together, We Act' communication campaign page on the EU4Ukraine website

Photo by Veteran Space

Independent media in times of war: how they work

As a result of the full-scale war and the introduction of martial law, the work of Ukrainian journalists has become more dangerous and difficult. However, even in the current circumstances, the media effectively fulfil their role as a watchdog of democracy, objectively informing society, continuing to serve as the government oversight instrument, and countering Russian propaganda.

This was raised during the discussion 'Media as a pillar of democracy: shaping the future of Ukraine', held in Kyiv on the occasion of the Journalist's Day by the Institute of Mass Information and Reporters Without Borders with the support of the EU Delegation to Ukraine.

"As we congratulate the Ukrainian media on their professional holiday, we are well aware of the 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 battlefront, join volunteering, restart newsrooms in the de-occupied territories or in places of relocation. But 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," said **Rémi Duflot, Chargé d'affaires of the EU Delegation to Ukraine**

Around 200 journalists, experts, civil society activists, government officials, politicians, diplomats and international organisations representatives attended the event.

"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," said **Oksana Romaniuk, Director of the Institute of Mass Information**

The participants of the event visited the exhibition 'On the Frontlines of Truth' and watched the documentary 'Fixers in Wartime: Invisible Reporters' about the work of Ukrainian journalists in conflict zones and in extreme conditions.

More information:

Website of the EU Delegation to Ukraine

Website of the Institute of Mass Information

TogetherWeAct Fest travels across Ukraine

In June, Khmelnytsky hosted the first regional event of the Together We Act communication campaign. The fest of the same name was held in one of the city's parks.

The fest's programme was intense. Guests could visit the information tent of the EU Delegation to Ukraine and the Alley of CSOs 'Solidarity', several thematic interactive zones and a photo area.

Public discussions focused on the role of civil society and the media. Visitors could complete the 'Together. Europe and Ukraine' quest, and there was a playground for children.

The exhibition 'Together We Act. Support' told the story of civil society organisations that have received assistance from the European Union and have been able to work effectively as a result.

"The European Union is one of the largest donors to Ukraine. We are currently funding 63 projects across the country, and together with sub-grant projects, this number reaches two thousand. The assistance to civil society and the media already exceeds EUR 104 million," said **Mariana Kaminska, Communications Coordinator at the EU Delegation to Ukraine,** to Suspilne. Khmelnytskyi.

Just like the previous fest in Kyiv, the event in Khmelnytskyi was geared towards raising awareness about the importance of civil society and independent media and the support provided by the European Union. At the same time, the TogetherWeAct Fests offer visitors not only important and interesting information, but also a chance to relax.

On 30 June, the Fest took place in Rivne, with Vinnytsia and Cherkasy to follow.

More information:

Facebook page of the EU Delegation to Ukraine

Video on Suspilne.Khmelnytskyi

TogetherWeAct quiz: participants competed and learned a lot of new and interesting things

More than 100 participants became winners of the quiz on EU support for civil society and media organisations. In total, about 1,400 people entered the competition.

The winners were awarded water bottles, caps and Rubik's cubes. The competition was held in two categories: junior (under 14 years old) and senior (over 14 years old).

Like all the quizzes on the Euroquiz platform, this one was both a competition and a source of interesting and enlightening information for the quizzers.

For instance, even the questions revealed that the leaders in receiving EU grants and related subgrants are civil society organisations from Kyiv (over 330 projects), as well as Kharkiv (178), Lviv (174), and Sumy (165) regions.

Or that as of the first quarter of 2024, there were 63 EU grant projects in Ukraine with a total budget of more than EUR 104 million - at the same time, about two thousand sub-grant projects that are currently being implemented in Ukraine, and another 346 are being executed through the regional grant mechanism.

Other questions required no knowledge of numbers, but the correct answers also contained interesting facts.

For example, the quizzers had to answer one of the questions on how the EU managed to promptly support Ukrainian civil society organisations in the first days of full-scale Russian aggression. The correct answer is that it did so by diverting previously provided grant funding to meet the urgent needs of survival and protection from the aggression.

The quiz was held as part of the 'TogetherWeAct' communication campaign. It focuses on EU assistance to Ukrainian civil society organisations and media in four main areas: support for reforms that bring Ukraine closer to the European Union; support for CSOs that bring people with common interests together; support for CSOs that focus on helping vulnerable groups in society, including psychological support; and support for independent media.

In fact, correctly naming the number of areas of the Together We Act campaign was also one of the tasks for the quiz participants.

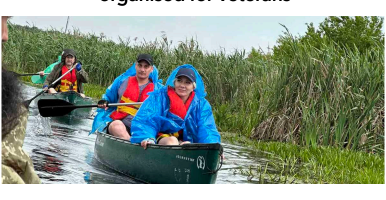
More information:

Quiz results on EU support for CSOs and media

Project News

SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

Unloading and uniting: rafting on the rivers of Vinnytsia region organised for veterans



"You paddle a canoe and just relax. Fresh air, lots of animals, birds on the way. Then you have coffee in the open air, brewed in a coffee pot, and people tell their stories..."

This is how **war veteran Andriy Melnyk** describes his experience of rafting on small rivers in Vinnytsia region. In January 2033, during an assault on enemy positions, he was seriously wounded and lost his leg, and now uses a prosthesis.

"It's such a moral and emotional relief... I forgot about everything and relaxed," Andrii shares his emotions. He also added that he really liked the way the rafting was organised and the professional instructions.

Military medic Olha Drohobetska has been a war veteran since 2021 and is currently on maternity leave. She admits that participating in the rafting trip was a way for her to overcome a barrier in communicating with other veterans.

"I used to catch myself thinking that I avoided communicating with those who became veterans during the 'big' war, because I didn't take part in it," says Olha. *"And such rafting trips or just meetings when veterans, especially those who have recently returned, get together, are great for communication and mutual understanding."*

The rafting is organised by the Vinnytsia-based analytical and educational centre Veterans' Space as part of a project to provide legal and psychological support to veterans and their families. The organisation received a grant from the European Renaissance programme, which is jointly implemented by the EU and the International Renaissance Foundation.

Communication between veterans, bringing them closer together and uniting them is one of the project's goals. The rafting trips have been very popular from the start. This recreational activity for veterans was chosen after a focus group survey with the target audience, which gave rise to the grant application.

"In the Veterans' Space, we organise events to support the families of those who are currently at war, wives who have lost their husbands in the war, and relatives of the missing. We provide legal assistance to veterans," says **Maria Dovzhyk, director of the Veterans' Space and project manager.** *"But we also wanted to do something for female and male veterans. Some activities that would help build their community, where people with combat experience could support each other."*

According to Veterans' Space's plans, the canoe rafting trips will continue until the end of September. They take place on the Riv and Zgar rivers, which flow through Vinnytsia and Khmelnytskyi regions. The rafting trips are one-day, with stopovers in picturesque places.

"In our application, we stipulated that we would reach at least 35 female and male veterans during the 10 rafting trips. We didn't know how actively they would respond to this proposal," says Maria Dovzhyk. *"But almost 30 people took part in the first four rafting trips, so the project can already be considered a success."*

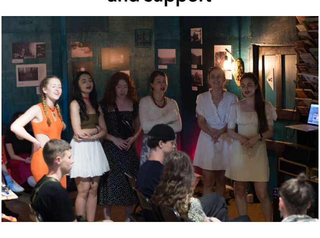
More information:

Facebook page of "Veterans' Space"

Website of the centre

CULTURE

Creative hubs: a new cultural infrastructure seeking attention and support



The RES-POl project (Rapid Expert Support for Culture and Media Policies in Ukraine) investigated the current state and prospects of creative hubs: what are they today, what are their needs, challenges and opportunities? Initially, in-depth interviews were conducted with more than two dozen representatives of such hubs, and in June, the findings were presented and debated in a public discussion.

"Creative hubs are places where the creative potential of Ukraine is consolidated. People in creative professions have the opportunity to develop, strengthen, cooperate with each other and offer solutions that society needs now," says **Kateryna Kravchuk, an expert at the RES-POl project**. *"These are places to integrate and socialise, spaces to create innovations, and intellectually demanding jobs. And especially during the war, they are 'islands of normalcy' where pain can be transformed into the energy of action and co-creation."*

Creative hubs tend to develop better in large cities where there is a circulation of talent - but it is also important to develop them in smaller towns, as they can be a development driver there. There is a lack of analytics, regulation and sustainable funding for such venues. It is in creative spaces that interaction takes place, which gives inspiration to creative people. These are some of the conclusions or points that were made during the public discussion of the RES-POl project's findings.

It was attended by **Oleksandra Venslavovska, the founder and head of the Pich ('stove ledge') cultural space in Vinnytsia**.

"*Pich is a small space of 50 square metres, but it has become a centre for various programmes, including educational and cultural ones. It's a place where ideas, projects, and meetings are constantly generated, where people just gather and feel that there is a cultural ongoing process* in town," says Oleksandra.

However, the demand for the hub does not mean that it will exist without problems. Among other things, she said, the authorities need to pay attention to it or to determine their attitude to such cultural spaces.

"The most important issue now is to continue the operation of creative hubs and ensure their sustainability," she says.

In fact, the survey conducted by the RES-POL project aimed to bring information about the problems and opportunities of cultural hubs to government institutions.

"The findings of the survey will be integrated into a set of policies for the development of creative industries. The goal of the RES-POL project is to support the Ministry of Culture and Information in terms of effective solutions," says Kateryna Kravchuk. *"The development of creative hubs and spaces opens up the possibility of a qualitative remodelling of the outdated cultural infrastructure and offers the possibility of thoughtful investment in human capital development."*

More information:

Online discussion on creative hubs survey findings

Facebook page of the RES-POL project

In the photo: one of the events of the Pich cultural space

EDUCATION

Excavators, bulldozers, a land leveller and more: EU4Skills donates machines to a vocational school in Sarny

Road construction equipment worth almost a million euros was solemnly handed over in June to Higher Vocational School No. 22 in Sarny, Rivne region. The EU4Skills: Modernisation of Vocational Education Infrastructure in Ukraine project has helped to improve the school's facilities.

The school received three excavators, a land leveller, a truck crane, a bulldozer, a loader, a roller - nine pieces of equipment in total - as well as four spare parts and three training units. The machines will be used by students pursuing a degree in road construction machinery.

The project is being implemented by the German KfW Bank through the Ukrainian Social Investment Fund.

"The training quality of skilled workers depends on the material and technical support of an educational institution. Modern equipment and technologies will help institutions meet the challenges of the times, and on the other hand, attract as many students as possible to enter this vocational school," says **Andrey Laktionov**, **Executive Director of the Foundation**. *"It is our shared responsibility to create conditions for students to acquire practical skills for their future profession and apply them in the workplace."*

Sarny Vocational School No. 22 currently trains in 26 licensed occupations. According to **Vitaliy Sashko, Deputy Director for Training and Operations**, the Road Construction Machine Operator speciality is one of the leaders in terms of graduate employment.

"This occupation is in demand now, and after the war and during the reconstruction, it will be one of the most popular, along with the builder's job," he said.

Thanks to the newly acquired equipment, the school plans to introduce training in new specialities, such as Land Leveller Operator and Truck Crane Operator.

In total, the EU4Skills: Modernisation of Vocational Education Infrastructure in Ukraine project delivered 34 units of agricultural machinery (tractors, harvesters, seeders, reapers, etc.), nine units of road construction machinery and more than 60 units of sewing equipment to five vocational schools participating in the programme.

"The selection of equipment was based on the needs of the institutions, in accordance with their profile, and was agreed upon by the donor, in particular in terms of the available budget for such purposes. And the actual procurement and delivery process was accompanied by qualified specialists in the field of road and agricultural machinery engaged by the foundation," says Andriy Laktionov.

In addition to providing equipment to the schools, the project is helping to modernise the infrastructure of eight vocational schools, and construction work is currently underway at six of them.

"As of today, during the full-scale invasion, the amount of direct damage caused to Ukraine's infrastructure has reached more than USD 500 billion! This means hundreds of thousands of destroyed apartment buildings, private houses, infrastructure facilities and tens of thousands of kilometres of roads that need to be rebuilt. For us, these figures are yet another reminder of how relevant, important and indispensable blue-collar jobs will become in Ukraine of the future," says USIF Executive Director.

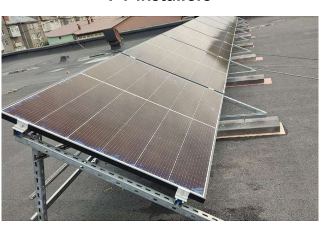
More information:

Project page on USIF website

USIF Facebook page

EU4Ukraine website

A shortage occupation: Vocational school gets ready to train PV installers



In the next academic year, Khmelnytsky Higher Vocational School No. 25 may introduce a new speciality – PV station installer. The vocational school is technically ready for this: it has its own PV station, classroom, and instructional resources.

All of this came about as a result of the EU-funded project Solar Energy as an Educational Component, which the school implemented together with the Khmelnytskyi Energy Cluster CSO.

Olena Zahika, the school's director, says that the institution has had plans to introduce solar energy into the learning process for a long time. And the project became a catalyst that allowed them to reach the level of dedicated training capacity.

"The station was installed by our instructors together with the students. The instructors were also trained as part of the project and received certificates," says the headmaster.

The school's power station is a training facility with a capacity of 3.5 kW. It is mounted on the roof of one of the buildings and is capable of illuminating production workshops if necessary.

"The job of a PV power plant installer will be very popular," says Olena Zahika. *"Because traditional generation is not enough any longer, we have constant blackouts. Now the school is preparing documents for licensing this speciality and we may start enrolment."*

The Solar Energy as an Educational Component project became one of the award winners of the grant call for green energy projects, which is being held with EU support by the Ecoclub and Ecodia civil society organisations.

"It is important that the installation of the station was carried out by masters and apprentices," says **Stepan Kushnir, Chairman of the Board of the Khmelnytsky Energy Cluster** CSO. *"They acquired practical experience in working with the equipment. Training must be based not on pictures from the Internet, but on the material and technical base where students and instructors can work together."*

Thanks to the project, solar energy is already being taught at the school as a course for students majoring in electrical maintenance and repair. Stepan Kushnir says that in view of the likely introduction of the speciality of solar station installer, the organisation would like to help the school develop its training facilities.

"We want to have other small solar stations on the premises of the school - ground-mounted, wall-mounted, with a tracking system. This will allow students to explore all the available technologies on the market," says the chairman of the Khmelnytsky Energy Cluster.

More information:

Website of the Khmelnytskyi Energy Cluster

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Looking to the future: communities work on their development strategies

The Moshny and Lesky communities of Cherkasy region are currently working hard to draft their development strategies. They are being assisted in this by the Renaissance and Development Association (RDA) as part of the project entitled Strengthening the Resilience of Cherkasy Regional Communities through Engaging People in Recovery and Strategic Planning.

It is being implemented by the RDA with the support of the EU and the International Renaissance Foundation. The communities' development strategies is a step-by-step process based on a series of training activities for officials and activists that provide a good understanding of development-related issues.

In June, three regular training sessions were held in the communities for the working groups responsible for drafting the strategies. During these and previous trainings, they discussed gender mainstreaming, environmental issues, and SWOT analysis. The Association's experts, together with local residents, considered possible scenarios for community development and devised operational goals. The Association says that the training sessions are popular, with 20-30 people attending, depending on the subject matter and scope.

"We learn something new during each training session. We are shown how this or that can be applied in practice," says **Tamara Duzha, secretary of the Moshny Community Council**. *"We get an understanding of what the community is missing and what needs to be created or developed."*

According to her, there are already outlines of some strategic areas of the community's development, such as increasing tourist attractiveness and supporting small businesses.

Petro Mikhno, deputy head of the Lesky Community, says that more than 30 people volunteered to join the working group to develop the strategy - members of the executive committee, educators, civil society organisations, businesses, and active community leaders. And more than 350 residents took part in a survey on the current state of the community and its development priorities.

"The development and approval of a rural community development strategy is of great importance, especially when it comes to increasing local activism," says Petro Mikhno. - *"When people are involved in the planning and development of the strategy, they feel that their voices are heard and matter. This contributes to a more cohesive and active community."*

The work on the strategies will continue until October this year. Earlier, the Renaissance and Development Association conducted a survey of all communities in the Cherkasy region to determine whether they had strategic documents and found that 50 out of 66 already had their development strategies in place.

Olena Holovkina, RDA project manager, says that communities need to have such strategies for a number of reasons.

"Firstly, from 2027, community budget funding will be available only for the areas included in the development strategy," she explains. *"Secondly, the availability of a strategy eliminates or significantly reduces the risks posed by the change of community leadership with possible arbitrary decisions of the new administration - after all, the implementation of an approved public document is the responsibility of every government. Ultimately, strategic planning for a community is a look into the future, a certainty about its place and condition in the long run."*

The project plans to hold a rural community conference this October.

"Initially, it was conceived as a final event for the Lesky and Moshny communities, but during the work we found out that many people are interested in strategic development. So, we will involve other communities in the conference," says Olena Holovkina.

More information:

Facebook page of the Renaissance and Development Association

Website of Moshny territorial community

Website of Lesky territorial community

Opportunities

EU ACCESSION

The Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine is looking for schoolchildren, students and postgraduates to participate in the EU Study Days-2024 Online School. 40 participants will take part in 10 training modules on the history of the EU, its institutions, values, policies, European integration of Ukraine, etc. The programme includes lectures by Ukrainian and European experts, online webinars and interactive classes; implementation of micro-projects aimed at communicating information about EU values and policies, and the idea of European integration. The training will run from August 5 to October 8, 2024.

Deadline – 20 July 2024

Read more

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Chambers of commerce, crafts or industry, innovation agencies, regional development agencies, trade promotion agencies, universities, research organisations and/or technology transfer entities are eligible to apply for the new Enterprise Europe Network. The goal of the projects should be to help small and medium-sized businesses to innovate, grow and become sustainable.

Deadline – 19 September 2024

Read more

The Innov8 Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is accepting applications for participation in the Science2Business practical programme to support Ukrainian scientists who want to monetise their research and projects and turn them into innovative businesses. The programme is part of the Seeds of Bravery project and is implemented by INNOV8 in partnership with Aalto University, EIT Health, and the Erasmus Centre for Entrepreneurship. The initiative is funded by the European Union through the European Innovation Council. The selection of the first cohort of 50 scientists will last until July 10.

Read more

YOUTH

Registration for the Business Academy for Girls 1.0 is open. Girls aged 17-23 who are not studying or have not studied finance, entrepreneurship and related subjects in formal education, but who are interested in this field and want to develop in it, can apply. The project alumnae will be able to develop a business model, business plan, and financial plan for their own enterprise with a social purpose.

Deadline – 10 July 2024

Read more

MEDIA

The European Commission invites aspiring journalists from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine to participate in the Youth4Regions programme. The events will take place on 5-11 October 2024 in Brussels. The programme includes trainings, mentoring from experienced journalists, and visits to media organisations and EU institutions.

Deadline – 8 July 2024.

Read more

CULTURE

The Global Cultural Relations Programme (the flagship training programme of the Cultural Relations Platform) is now accepting applications from people engaged in the cultural and creative industries or in the field of building safer societies. This year's programme will take place in Marrakech, Morocco, from November 25 to 28, 2024.

Deadline – 14 July 2024

Read more

IDP SUPPORT

With the support of the EU, the Projector Foundation announces the third call for free training for 1000 female IDPs. This is the latest wave of a large-scale project to support career opportunities for Ukrainian women in the creative and IT industries.

Deadline – 7 July 2024

Read more

ARCHIVES

The House of Europe project invites archivists to join Digital Labs, a free online programme that will help them adapt their archives to EU standards. The lab will be running from October 8 to 16, 2024, and will focus on the best approaches to storing, transporting and digitising documents, etc.

Deadline – 16 July 2024

Read more

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