

The future of Ukraine

The future of Ukraine depends most of all on the Ukrainians themselves. They defended their democracy and future 10 years ago, during the Orange Revolution, and are standing up for those values again today. As Europeans grow disenchanted with the idea of a common Europe, people in Ukraine are fighting for that idea and for their country's place in Europe. Defending Ukraine from the authoritarian temptations of its corrupt leaders is in the interests of the democratic world.

We cannot afford to turn our back on Ukraine. The new authoritarians in Kyiv should know that there will be a high price to pay for their repressive policies and for abandoning the European aspirations of the people. It is not too late for us to change things for the better and prevent Ukraine from becoming a dictatorship. Passivity in the face of the authoritarian turn in Ukraine and the country's reintegration into a newly expanding Russian imperial sphere of interests pose a threat to the European Union's integrity. It is a threat not just to the moral integrity of the Union but possibly to its internal institutional integrity as well. Alongside the diplomatic and economic measures taken by individual states and the entire EU, independent democratic initiatives should make efforts to defend victims of repression, support civil society and strengthen independent media.

The quality of any democracy depends to a great extent on what its citizens know about their country and the world. In Ukraine, the picture of the world is shaped by the authorities, who control most of the mass media, and Russian television channels faithful to President Putin. For the sake of democracy, we must support and strengthen independent and pluralistic media in Ukraine.

We must help strengthen civil society, especially the new initiatives that have arisen around the Maidan. No matter what the authorities say, the people fighting to keep their country's future open are not foreign agents – the only ones deserving that name are those pursuing a policy of mass repression to quash Ukraine's hopes of becoming a European democracy.

The letter has already been signed by:

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3. **Lluís Bassets**, Deputy Director, El País, Spain
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5. **Gianni Bonvicini**, Director of the Institute of International Affairs, Italy
6. **José Casanova**, Professor of Sociology, Georgetown University, United States
7. **Bogusław Chrabota**, Editor-In-Chief of Rzeczpospolita daily, Poland
8. **Norman Davies**, Professor of History, University of London, United Kingdom
9. **Aleš Debeljak**, Poet and Cultural Critic, Slovenia
10. **Tibor Dessewffy**, President of the DEMOS Hungary

11. **Uffe Ellemann-Jensen**, former Foreign Minister, Chairman of the Baltic Development Forum, Denmark
12. **Paolo Flores d'Arcais**, Philosopher and Journalist, Editor of MicroMega magazine, Italy
13. **Carl Henrik Fredriksson**, Editor-In-Chief of Eurozine, Sweden-Austria
14. **Ute Frevert**, Director of the Center for the History of Emotions at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Germany
15. **Timothy Garton Ash**, Professor of European Studies, Oxford University, United Kingdom
16. **Carlos Gaspar**, Chairman of the Portuguese Institute of International Relations (IPRI), Portugal
17. **Carl Gershman**, President of the National Endowment for Democracy, United States
18. **Carlo Ginzburg**, Professor of History of Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Italy
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36. **Sonja Licht**, President of Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, Serbia
37. **Tomasz Lis**, Editor-In-Chief of Newsweek Polska weekly, Poland
38. **Adam Michnik**, Editor-In-Chief of Gazeta Wyborcza daily, Poland

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