

A photograph of Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the President of Ukraine, standing at a podium and speaking. He is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and olive green cargo pants. Behind him are the Ukrainian national flag (blue and yellow) and the Presidential Standard of Ukraine (blue with a golden trident). The setting is an ornate room with gold-colored wall decorations and a patterned rug. In the foreground, the back of a person's head and a smartphone recording the event are visible.

Between Freedom and Censorship: Ukraine's Mass Media in Times of Full-scale War

Diana Dutsyk and Andreas Umland

19 June 2025

Executive Summary

The media market in Ukraine has changed dramatically since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The state-controlled so-called Telemarathon, "United News", has become a defining feature of Ukrainian wartime television. TV news channels not under government control can be watched inside Ukraine only via satellite or the internet.

Other forms of journalism have suffered from the war's repercussions but remained largely free since Russia's invasion. The abrupt discontinuation of all USAID support for independent mass media and monitoring NGOs in February 2025 has created a challenging situation for many media outlets.

The predominant social network in Ukraine is now Telegram, through which also considerable amounts of misinformation and disinformation are spread. As possible propaganda tools, espionage instruments and infiltration channels, social media networks are increasingly seen as threats to Ukrainian national security.

Despite the financial challenges, centralising tendencies and war-related structural changes, Ukrainian public discourse has remained relatively pluralistic, albeit with some limitations with regard to television.

In order to improve this situation, Ukraine should:

- restructure, replace or abolish the current Telemarathon;
- provide other civil society-vetted channels with licences;
- support local media with licence applications and logistics; and
- educate the population about the risks of social media use.

Western governmental and non-governmental organisations should:

- communicate to Kyiv the need to maintain a pluralistic media landscape;
- compensate for the cuts in USAID funding for Ukrainian media outlets and monitoring NGOs; and
- support existing and design new anti-disinformation projects.

Introduction: Ukraine's Mass Media Before 2022

The early post-Soviet development of the independent Ukrainian media market was closely linked to the formation of Ukraine's "patronal" political system and its infiltration by the interests of large corporations and their owners.¹ The media sector became a central field in the power struggle between a number of large clans, which competed for political influence and economic preference with the help of, among other things, broadcasting and the press.² In this respect, Ukraine differed fundamentally from most other Eastern/Central European countries. In Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, western ownership came to characterise many large media companies after 1991.³

In Ukraine, in contrast, domestic financial and industrial conglomerates created a kind of national cartel in the media market and obstructed the entry of foreign capital. As a result, a handful of large domestic media combines, which included the most popular television channels, radio stations and print media, determined the country's news agenda and shaped public debate to a considerable degree.⁴ The five most important before 2022 were:

- Inter Media Group, which included the television channels Inter and NTN, owned by Dmytro Firtash and Serhiy Lyovochkin;
- 1+1 media, which included the television channels 1+1 and Ukraine Today, owned by Ihor Kolomoysky;
- StarLightMedia (Starlight Media after 2021), which included the television channels ICTV, STB and Novyy (New), owned by Viktor and Olena Pinchuk (the son-in-law and daughter of former President Leonid Kuchma);
- Media Group "Ukraina," which included the television channels Ukraina and Ukraina24, owned by Rinat Akhmetov; and
- The television stations Priamyy (Direct) and Channel 5, owned by former President Petro Poroshenko.

The pro-Russian politician Viktor Medvedchuk, whose daughter is a godchild of Vladimir Putin, began building a media group in Ukraine a few years before the start of Russia's invasion in 2014. The shares in this group formally belonged to a confidant of Medvedchuk, a former Verkhovna Rada deputy, Taras Kozak. Part of Medvedchuk's media holding comprised television stations such as 112 Ukraina, NewsOne and ZIK, which adopted – sometimes open, sometimes less open – pro-Russian stances. In the context of the escalation in tensions between Kyiv and Moscow in late 2021, the reporting of these channels was classified by Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council as a threat to Ukraine's national security, and they were closed.⁵

1 Henry Hale, *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge, 2014.

2 Diana Dutsyk, Marta Dyczok, „Ukraine's Media. A Field Where Power Is Contested,” in: Matthew Rojansky, Georgiy Kasianov, Mykhail Minakov (eds.), *From "the Ukraine" to Ukraine: A Contemporary History, 1991-2021*. Stuttgart, 2021, pp. 169-206.

3 Anna Korbut, „Strengthening Public interest in Ukraine's media sector.” *Chatham House*, 17.5.2021.

4 “75 % media Ukrainy належить політикам і олігархам – monitoring.” *Ukrainska Pravda*, 11.10.2016.

5 “Ukaz Prezidenta Ukrainy № 43/2021.” *Prezident Ukrainy Volodymyr Zelens'kyy*, 2.2.2021, www.president.gov.ua/documents/432021-36441.

The victory of Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the 2019 presidential election, and of his party “Servant of the People” in the parliamentary elections in the same year, marked the beginning of a new era in Ukrainian domestic politics.⁶ The agenda of the new leadership included so-called deoligarchisation. Ukraine’s “plutocrats” were to be cut off, in Zelenskyy’s words, from their “concentrated media resources, opaque access to strategic assets and their ‘krysha’ [literally: ‘roof’, or patronage] in the government”.⁷

From the Ashes of Media Oligarchy

Under the pressure of war, the largest television stations, which had previously been owned by competing media combines, merged to form a single channel.⁸ Having broadcast their own special programmes on the first day of the invasion, Starlight Media, 1+1 media and Inter Media, as well as the television station of the Ukrainian parliament, Rada, began broadcasting the round-the-clock political news and comments programme Telemarathon, “Ednyi novyny” (United News), on 25 February 2022. The united television channel provides time slots for the editorial teams of the member stations, which they fill with their own presenters, shows and reports. Media Group “Ukraina” and public broadcaster National Public Tele-Radio Company of Ukraine, better known as Suspilne movlennia (Public Broadcasting), also joined the Telemarathon. The Public Broadcasting channel left the United News project in May 2024, however, and now operates in parallel with Telemarathon.

Creation of the Telemarathon was initially welcomed by both the public and the journalistic community. In the first months of the war, the joint programming of the previously separate stations played an important role in preserving the cohesion of Ukrainian society. Moreover, in parallel with the Ukrainian-language Telemarathon, Ukraine’s government has since August 2022 also been running a round-the-clock Russian-language news channel called “Freedom”, via satellite and YouTube, that continues on from earlier projects, UATV and “Dom” (House), created in 2015. The existence of this Ukrainian state project in Russian runs counter to the Kremlin’s propaganda narrative regarding ruthless government suppression of the Russian language by the “Kyiv regime”. Despite its existence since 2015, either out of ignorance or deliberately, the operation of this Russian-language channel has mostly been ignored by critical foreign coverage of the evolution of the language situation in Ukraine, after the start of the Russo-Ukrainian War on 20 February 2014.

At the same time, the Ukrainian state has been circumscribing the televisual information space since the start of Russia’s invasion on 24 February 2022. Thus, a number of television stations associated with the opposition or Poroshenko’s circle – such as Channel 5 and Priamyy, as well as Espresso TV which belongs to the son of businessman Kostiantyn Zhevaho – were deliberately and demonstratively excluded from the joint Telemarathon programme. Furthermore, the digital broadcasting of these channels was discontinued on 4 April 2022 without explanation.⁹ Since then, they have only been accessible via the internet or satellite, as well as, partly, via foreign cable transmissions.

6 Andreas Umland, „Die ukrainischen Präsidentschaftswahlen 2019 im historischen Kontext: Paradoxa und Ursachen der Niederlage des Amtsinhabers Petro Poroschenko.“ *Zeitschrift für Politik*, No. 4/2020, pp. 418–436.

7 „Upershe za bahato rokiv v Ukrainy zmenshylasia kil'kist' oliharkhiv, i deoliharkhizatsii tryvatyme - Volodymyr Zelens'kyy.“ *Prezydent Ukrainy Volodymyr Zelens'kyy*, 14.5.2021, www.president.gov.ua/news/upershe-za-bagato-rokiv-v-ukrayini-zmenshylasya-kilkist-olig-68445.

8 Otar Dovzhenko, „Iz kozhnoi prasky: Use, shcho varto znaty pro natsional'nyy telemarafon.“ *Detektor media*, 24.5.2022.

9 „Monomarafon: Chomu vlada prypanyla movlennia 5 kanalu, Priamoho ta 'Espresso'.“ *Detektor media*, 19.4.2022.

Over time, the Telemarathon has become the subject of increasing criticism.¹⁰ One year after the start of the war, Ukrainian media experts were suggesting that the unified format had exhausted itself.¹¹ From the critics' point of view, one problem is that the state is spending considerable sums on financing the Telemarathon every year. In 2024, for example, around 465 million UAH (€10.5 million) was provided from the state budget. In addition, the Telemarathon is no longer perceived by viewers as a source of objective information. While 69 per cent of the Ukrainian population trusted the United News in its year of creation, according to an all-Ukrainian survey by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KMIS), this figure had almost halved to 36 per cent by 2024.¹²

In its 2024 report on EU enlargement, the European Commission criticised the Kyiv leadership with regard to the Telemarathon, pointing out that Ukraine would have to build a pluralistic media landscape if it wanted to become a member of the EU.¹³ The Commission report expressed concern about government funding and the lack of objectivity of United News. Minister of Culture and Strategic Communications Mykola Tochytskyy, appointed in 2024, responded that the Commission's recommendations regarding the United News would be taken into account. However, the plan was only to "stop supporting the Telemarathon after the end of martial law and then focus on sustainable development of the media infrastructure".¹⁴

Other points of view are offered by television channels that are not part of the Telemarathon and have a critical view of the government. These include Espresso TV and the channels once owned by Poroshenko, which are still close to him today. Before the 2022 invasion, the former-president had moved to limit his control over his broadcasting empire. He sold his media outlets, including Channel 5 and Priamyy, to the holding company Vilni media (Free Media) in November 2021, but retains indirect influence over them.¹⁵

The war has not just affected the national television market. There have been even greater changes in other media sectors. Regional and local newspapers, television channels and websites, especially in the areas occupied by Russia or in the immediate vicinity of the front line, have been severely affected by the war. According to the most recent reliable data, from the National Council for Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine in 2022, around 15 per cent of television and radio stations – mainly in eastern and southern Ukraine – ceased broadcasting due to Russian aggression, and many print titles were also closed.¹⁶

The market for printed newspapers and magazines has largely come to a standstill. There is currently not a single national printed mass periodical with a focus on serious social and political affairs, such as the daily newspaper *Gazeta po-ukrainskyy*, nor a single political print magazine with regular editions, such as the weekly magazine *Ukrainskyy tyzhden* (Ukrainian Week).

10 Nataliia Dan'kova, „Do peremohy i dali? Shcho bude z edynym telemarafonom.“ *Detektor media*, 9.8.2023

11 Nataliia Dan'kova, „Biudzhety-2024: skil'ky hroshey zaplanovano na mediynu, kul'turnu sfery, kino, 'Armiia TB', 'Dim', 'FreeDom' i marafon.“ *Detektor media*, 29.11.2023.

12 Anton Hrushets'kyy, „Dovira do telemarafonu 'Edyni novyny'.“ *Kyivs'kyj mizhnarodnyj institut sotsiologii*, 19.2.2024.

13 “Ukraine Report 2024.” *European Commission: European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR)*, 30.10.2024, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/ukraine-report-2024_en.

14 “Ministr Tochyts'kyy vidpoviv na krytyku telemarafonu z boku ES.” *Radio Svoboda*, 31.10.2024.

15 Ira Kryts'ka, Denys Krasnikov, „Vplyv za \$10 mln na rik.“ *Forbes*, 10.11.2021.

16 „15 % teleradiokompaniy prypynyly movlennia cherez nastup Rosii.“ *Detektor media*, 17.6.2022.

Most are now fully online and some, such as NV.ua, have become multimedia platforms producing texts, videos and podcasts. These new enterprises typically use a variety of channels to distribute content and have not only a website, but also their own accounts on Telegram, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and so on.

On the other hand, the online media market is developing rapidly, and a number of high-quality analytical portals and news sites operate according to professional standards and ethical principles. These media outlets are primarily those on the so-called White List compiled by the Ukrainian NGO Institute of Mass Information (IMI), on the basis of an audit of compliance with professional standards. The following media outlets were on this list in the second half of 2024: Suspilne, Ukrainska Pravda, NV.ua, Radio Svoboda, Dzerkalo tyzhnia, Babel, Hromadske, Teksty, Hromadske radio, Espresso TV, Slovo i dilo, Graty and Ukrainsky tyzhden.¹⁷

In terms of media consumption, traditional radio and press outlets have continued to lose popularity during the war. Social media entities, on the other hand, have experienced a rise in popularity. According to the annual survey conducted by the InMind Agency on behalf of the Ukrainian branch of Internews and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the vast majority of Ukrainians consumed news mainly via social media in 2024 (84 per cent). Significantly fewer used news websites or television (30 per cent), radio (12 per cent) or print media (5 per cent). For the first time since the 2022 invasion, respondents' trust in the media fell in the autumn of 2024 to less than half of those surveyed (47 per cent).¹⁸

Telegram Instead of Television

The biggest challenge for traditional media today is the competition from social media networks. The Internews/USAID survey mentioned above found that Telegram is now the leading news provider in Ukraine. In 2024, 73 per cent of Ukrainians surveyed used this platform to find out about events. YouTube was in second place at 19 per cent.

Telegram's political channels reached an increasingly large audience following the invasion. According to a December 2022 survey for the Ukrainian Media and Communications Institute (UMCI) by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KMIS), 63.3 per cent of Ukrainians started using Telegram channels to receive political news after 24 February 2022, while only 35.9 per cent were doing so before the full-scale invasion. Against a backdrop of the escalating war, a large number of partly anonymous Telegram channels were formed, which in some cases reach millions of subscribers.

The huge popularity of Telegram can be explained by the suitability of its design for a wartime situation. In the above UMCI/KMIS survey, 41 per cent of respondents said that Telegram channels are useful because they are convenient to use; 39 per cent value them for their timely information on missile/drone launches and possible impact times/areas; and 37.6 per cent appreciated them for their speed. A further 23.5 per cent of respondents use Telegram channels because they publish news that is not available from traditional media.¹⁹

17 „Bilyj spysok IMI za druhe pivrichchia 2024 roku: uvishly 13 media.“ *Instytut masovoi informatsii*. 1.11.2024.

18 „Ukrainsi chastishe vyznachaiut' informatsini manipuliatsii iak zahal'nu problemu, shcho vplyvae na ikhne zhyttia, khocha vrazlyvist' shchodo rosis'koi dezinformatsii zrostaе.“ *Internews*, 7.11.2024.

19 Diana Dutsyk, Yuliya Dukach, Olha Iurkova, Anastasiya Plys, Oksana Pochapska, Anastasiia Sychova, *How Non-*

On the other hand, the new prominence of the partly anonymous Telegram channels has facilitated the spread of disinformation and become a tool for influencing public opinion. The founder of Telegram, Pavel Durov, is Russian, which – from a Ukrainian perspective – raises the risk of cooperation with the Russian secret services and the transfer of Ukrainian user data to Russia. Most of the Telegram channels with an audience of millions examined in the UMCI study only partially disclose their sources of information, if at all, and also disregard other ethical and journalistic standards. The style of news presentation in anonymous Telegram channels varies from informative and factual to highly emotional, and occasionally contains obscenities or even hate speech.

Despite criticism of Telegram from media experts, civil society organisations, parliamentarians and the government, official channels of public institutions began to appear on Telegram after 24 February 2022, including representatives of state organs and local government. These various public actors were following a dominant social trend. The proliferation of the social network also forced traditional media outlets to set up their own Telegram channels. Even the military now communicates with the population via Telegram.

The paradox of the success of the Telegram strategy is that governmental bodies responsible for information policy and state security agencies repeatedly highlight the risk that this network poses to the country. The head of Ukraine's military intelligence service (HUR), Kyrylo Budanov, for example, considers Telegram to be a threat to Ukrainian national security.²⁰ Among other things, Russia's secret services have used certain Telegram channels to recruit young Ukrainians for acts of sabotage, such as setting fire to vehicles of the Ukrainian armed forces.²¹

How the War has Changed the Media Business

The large media groups are also moving away from traditional television to various digital formats, broadcasting not only via satellite but also via cable, video channels, the internet and live streaming. Using these methods, Starlight Media, for instance, generated revenues of UAH 300 million, or around €7 million, from distributing entertainment content via YouTube in 2024. The total income of the company's digital division amounted to around half a billion hryvnias in 2024, which is roughly three times more than in 2023.²² The media group has created and developed more than 100 YouTube channels with almost 50 million subscribers and now translates its content into English, Spanish, Portuguese and Polish.

Ukrainian broadcasters are also trying to monetise content produced in previous years in new ways, making increasing use of free ad-supported streaming television (FAST). These live channels are financed by advertising and run over the internet. In the Ukrainian market, FAST is often used by channels to broadcast popular old content and remarket it via an over-the-top (OTT) media service, which is a multimedia streaming service offered to viewers directly over the internet, bypassing cable, terrestrial and satellite television platforms.

Institutionalized News Telegram Channels Operate and Capture the Audience in Ukrainian Segment. UMCI. Kyiv, 2023, <www.jta.com.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Telegram-Channels-2023_EN.pdf>.

20 „Budanov: Telegram - tse zagroza natsbezpetsi.“ *UkrInform*, 7.9.2024.

21 Iryna Sysak, Valeriia Egoshyna, Iuliia Khymeriyk, „Nebezbechnyj trend.“ *Radio Svoboda*, 8.10.2024.

22 Vitaliy Gusev, „Melodramy dlia Meksyky ta SShA.“ *Forbes*, 26.11.2024.

Other prominent forms of fundraising include grants from international organisations and crowdfunding – an approach used by independent and regional media in particular. In the first half of 2022, for example, crowdfunding campaigns and donations raised more than €2.2 million for six months of operations for 13 national media companies, covering around 60 per cent of their needs for this period. The beneficiaries were Ukrainska Pravda, NV.ua, Liga, Ukrainer, Hromadske, Detektor media, Bihus.info, Slidstvo.Info, Zaborona, Dzerkalo tyzhnia, The Village Ukraine, Forbes and Babel.²³

War-related and Other Restrictions

Kyiv did not introduce direct government censorship on independent organs following the imposition of martial law in 2022; only certain restrictions were placed on Ukrainian mass media. The then Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, Valeriy Zaluzhnyy, issued an order outlining these limits at the start of Russia's full-scale invasion. It specified the method for accreditation of media representatives during the state of emergency, defined a list of militarily sensitive information about troops and their operations that must not be disclosed, and regulated the work of journalists in the frontline area and the transmission of visual material.²⁴

Before the invasion, Ukraine had adopted one of the most progressive laws on access to public information, opening up most state registers and the databases of ministries and other government agencies to investigative journalists and other interested persons. After martial law was declared, however, access to government information was restricted. The authorities often no longer adhere to prescribed deadlines for processing requests from journalists and citizens or for disclosing public information on official websites.²⁵ For example, 51 per cent of journalists surveyed in 2023 complained about the refusal of authorities to provide socially important information and 17 per cent complained about accreditations not being granted.²⁶

Most of the grant assistance to Ukrainian media was, until early 2025, provided by the US government through USAID and other organisations. The decision by the administration of the newly elected US President, Donald J. Trump, to end all non-military support programmes around the world, including in Ukraine, has had a negative impact on independent Ukrainian media. First and foremost, it affects small regional newsrooms, especially those that have been relocated from regions that are either temporarily occupied or located in the battle zone.²⁷ The decision will also have negative consequences for investigative journalism.

23 „Ukrains'ki ta mizhnarodni media y orhanizatsii zibrali na kraudfandynhu ponad 4,8 mln evro.“ *Forbes*, 30.6.2022.

24 „Nakaz Holovnokomanduvacha Zbroynykh Syl Ukrainy 73.“ *Ministerstvo oborony Ukrainy*, 3.3.2022, www.mil.gov.ua/content/mou_orders/nakaz_73_zi_zminamu.pdf.

25 Daria Opyrshko, *Monitorynh media pliuralizmu v tsyfrovi eru*. Florence, 2023.

26 “Pid chas viyny zberhaet'sia svoboda slova v Ukraini, ale edynyj marafon treba prypyniaty – opytuvannia zhurnalistiv.” *Zmina*, 3.5.2023.

27 David L. Stern and Robyn Dixon, „Independent media in Russia, Ukraine lose their funding with USAID freeze,“ *The Washington Post*, 7.2.2025. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/02/07/ukraine-russia-independent-media-trump-usaid/>.

According to the media expert, Galyna Piskorska, “80 per cent of Ukrainian media outlets received funding through USAID. [...] without donor aid or state budget support in 2025, newspapers and magazines may decrease by a further 20 per cent in Ukraine, while subscription circulation could drop by 25–30 per cent.”²⁸ According to a survey of 120 newsrooms, 7.5 per cent had begun to cut staff after the suspension of US funding in February 2025, 9.5 per cent were facing problems with office rent, 11 per cent had reduced content production and 10.5 per cent were cutting salaries and switching to part-time work.²⁹ This reliance on foreign funding may appear unhealthy, but Ukraine's wartime economy provides few alternative ways for non-entertainment media to earn money and develop.

The end of USAID funding will not only negatively impact the pluralism of Ukraine's media landscape, but could also weaken freedom of speech in Eastern Europe more broadly. Ukrainian media experts expect Russia to intensify its disinformation and propaganda campaigns in view of the Trump administration's withdrawal of support for projects aimed at countering disinformation. Activists in Kyiv are already noting that the Chinese government is stepping in to fill the void left by USAID in Ukraine. Moreover, the position of Russia, and that of other subversive powers, has been strengthened by the decision of tech giants such as Meta to weaken their review and fact-checking mechanisms, which were established in response to the spread of fake news and hate speech. This creates a new reality and novel challenges for Ukrainian media outlets and individual journalists.

Conclusions

The functions and functioning of the Ukrainian mass media changed fundamentally after 24 February 2022. The former oligarch-controlled channels disappeared and were partly merged into the state-financed Telemarathon, United News. The remaining independent broadcasters, news agencies, web portals and periodicals had to reinvent themselves and seek new audiences, publication formats, communication channels and funding sources. The importance of social media – especially Telegram – has skyrocketed. The media landscape has become less open due to the presence of military censorship, government centralisation and political self-censorship.

In spite of these and other challenges stemming from wartime conditions and martial law since 2022, the Ukrainian public discourse remains essentially pluralistic, nevertheless. According to a sociological survey of journalists conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation in cooperation with the ZMINA Human Rights Centre in 2023, journalists rated the state of freedom of expression at 6.4 on a 10-point scale, with 10 being very good.³⁰

28 Galyna Piskorska, „Local newspapers are a lifeline in Ukraine, but USAID cuts may force many to close or become biased mouthpieces,” *The Conversation*, 17.3.2025. <https://theconversation.com/local-newspapers-are-a-lifeline-in-ukraine-but-usaid-cuts-may-force-many-to-close-or-become-biased-mouthpieces-250917>.

29 Anita Prasad, „Mayzhe 60% zhurnalistiv ochikuiut katastrofichnykh naslidkiv dlia media vid zupynky dopomohy SSHa – opytuvannia IMI,” *Forbes*, 4.2.2025. <https://forbes.ua/news/mayzhe-60-zhurnalistiv-ochikuyut-katastrofichnykh-naslidkiv-dlya-media-vid-zupinki-inozemnoi-dopomogi-ssha-opytuvannya-imi-04022025-26868>.

30 “Pid chas viyny zberihaet'sia svoboda slova v Ukraini.”

Diversity of opinion has been ensured, among other factors, by:

- the operation of the public broadcaster Suspilne movlennia
- the diversity of online media outlets and their independent financing
- the many uncontrolled Telegram channels
- political information spread via various other social media
- the presence of investigative research teams in several media outlets
- the presence of non-governmental organisations that monitor state organs, and
- largely unrestricted public debate on contentious issues.

Nonetheless, the state of Ukraine's mass media landscape is neither satisfactory nor stable. It requires further attention from both national and international actors.

Policy Recommendations

Against this backdrop, the Ukrainian government should, in cooperation with Ukrainian civil society:

- restructure or replace the Telemarathon in a way that makes this channel or a substitute more acceptable to Ukrainian viewers, media monitoring organisations and the European Union;
- provide other civil society-vetted Ukrainian television and radio stations with licences to enable their full access to all communication networks;
- support, as far as possible, regional and local media outlets with licences, logistics and cooperation;
- intensify ongoing campaigns to warn Ukrainian social media consumers about the various problems and risks related to such popular networks as Telegram and TikTok.

Western governmental and non-governmental organisations should:

- communicate through political and diplomatic channels the need for Ukraine to maintain a pluralistic landscape of respected media outlets, whether electronic or traditional;
- restore as far as possible, or compensate for, the cut in USAID funding for Ukrainian media companies and for NGOs engaged in researching and improving journalism;
- continue and expand, together with Ukrainian partners, the monitoring of recent developments in Ukraine's electronic, social and traditional media landscape;
- strengthen and/or expand currently operating anti-disinformation projects and networks, and facilitate stronger cross-border cooperation between anti-disinformation initiatives in the Eastern Partnership countries, the European Union and beyond.

**Diana Dutsyk**

Senior Lecturer in Journalism at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, and a member of Ukraine's non-governmental Commission on Journalistic Ethics and the presidential Council for Freedom of Speech and the Protection of Journalists.

**Andreas Umland**

Analyst, SCEEUS

About SCEEUS

The Stockholm Centre for Eastern European Studies (SCEEUS) at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI) is an independent Centre, funded by the Swedish Government, established in 2021. The Centre conducts policy relevant analysis on Russia and Eastern Europe and serves as a platform and meeting place for national and international discussions and exchanges on Russia and Eastern Europe. Guest Commentaries are written based on the views of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of SCEEUS.

Photo: AP/ Evgeniy Maloletka

© 2025 Stockholm Centre for Eastern European Studies

Previous SCEEUS Publications

Armenia's European hopes amid Georgia's crisis: The EU's opportunity in the South Caucasus by Hugo von Essen & Jakob Hedenskog

SCEEUS Report No. 8, 2025

The prospects of Moldova's EU accession with or without a defined status of the Transnistrian region by Eugen Cara

SCEEUS Guest Report No. 2, 2025