



## Solidarity for Ukraine –issue 46- « Flying colours » of Europe

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The Institute for Research and Information on Volunteering (iriv) has been associated since February 24, 2022 with international solidarity in favor of Ukraine attacked by Russia. The Covid pandemic has weakened democratic countries. Conspiracy theories and hate speech have exploded on social networks. This new war in Europe is existential for the EU. This Newsletter is the 12th published in 2025 and the 46th since February 2022. The slogan 'United colors' was necessary to close a contrasted year where Europeans and Ukraine were faced to 'all colors'. A final "friendly" initiative in November 2025 - a "peace" plan proposed by the American envoy for Ukraine, inspired by his Russian counterparts. Diversity is the "red rag" or the "black

beast" of autocracies and reactionary movements. First indicator of a democracy in modern multicultural societies, it is heckled in Russia of Putin and in America of the MAGA (Make America Great Again). The fierce repression of dissident voices is the best demonstration that diversity in all its facets is a strength for democracies and a threat to dictatorships and authoritarian abuses. The European countries show a strong unity behind Ukraine, they have become the first contributors to the war effort. The Ukrainian front has become the external border of the EU directly threatened by Vladimir Putin's regime. The State of the Union speech delivered on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2025 by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, expresses the will of the Europeans to take their destinies into their own hands. The European Union and most of its members must refuse to be invisible. They can and should wear their colors proudly - Europeans, with flying colours!

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\* logo designed by Caritas Canada in February 2022

## « United colors »

This slogan for an advertising campaign for the group Benetton was launched in 1984 by the Italian photographer Oliviero Toscani, rewarded with numerous awards (1). By provocation, and to create a «buzz» before social networks, the campaigns «punches» are repeated – «A Russian boy who embraces a little American girl. Two young people, one Palestinian and the other Arab, who hold together a terrestrial globe. A Native American and a young punk with the same hairstyle. Diversity is used to disturb personal certainties and make people think in a contrasted and globalized world. In 1994, the Fabbrica school is created to become a laboratory for trends and innovation (2) For Luciano Benetton: «It is institutional advertising carried out to communicate the values of the company. (...) We need a single image that can pass in the same way all over the world.”. The aim is to draw public attention "to universal themes such as racial integration, environmental protection, AIDS". «All colors are equal because all men are equal.».

Colors can carry a universal language, understood by all people- a white hand and a black hand entwined, three identical human hearts evoking different ethnicities " white, black, yellow". But in the field of ethical or humanitarian causes, Toscani's photos shocked when they used without nuance, without respecting the photographed people or without showing empathy for intimate tragedies. A person with AIDS photographed at the end of their life is denounced by the French Agency for the Fight against AIDS (1993). The pictures of prisoners sentenced to death in Missouri provoked trials (2000). The Benetton Group has been convincing in many European countries, in the West (Great Britain, Spain, Italy...) as well as in the East (during times of freedom), and in some Middle East countries. It shocked in the United States where the Benetton group lost half of its sales (1997). The beginning of the 2000s marks the end of the collaboration between Oliviero Toscani and the Benetton group.

In the same year, the European Union adopted a powerful legal and regulatory framework to combat discrimination in all its aspects. The EU is expanding with countries from Central and Eastern Europe (CEECs). Two directives (2000) - for equality between men and women and to combat racism and discrimination on the labor market - are adopted. Diversity is a sensitive subject, to be defended and protected, which evokes contrasting personal emotions and feelings.. Ambiguity can be dangerous and create misunderstandings. It must be handled with caution, depending on the context, the audience and the profile of the messenger (legitimate or not) . Strange or ironical concordance of dates – a Russian president is democratically elected in 2000, Vladimir Putin. Traumatized by the collapse of the USSR, his messages are unambiguous since the beginning- a return to traditional caricatural values viscerally hostile to diversity. The Russian president could not have imagined that he could count on an American president who took office in January 2025 to support his reactionary fight and to show his hatred of the European Union and its values..

## Same colors for Putin's Russia of Putin and Trump's America

On the national scene as well as internationally, the signs reinforce the increasingly repressive abuses of a Russian regime that is not in a peaceful state of mind but consistently supported by a new team that arrived in Washington in January 2025.

Since September 2025, the repression has intensified in Russia against any dissidence or reference to the long list of banned topics- war in Ukraine, defense of LGBTQA+ rights; Navalny.... Censorship is restored. Russians no longer have access to their WhatsApp accounts. In the documentary "Politzek"(3), the floor is given to voices that challenge the Kremlin. More than 20,000 Russians were arrested at the beginning of the war in Ukraine because they were demonstrating for peace. Hundreds of trials and thousands of political prisoners are listed, more than under the times of Leonid Brezhnev during the Cold War. From now on, in Russia, "everyone can fall under the law." Since September 1st, 2025 there are more than 750 freedom-killing laws that have passed.' The FSB intelligence services (heirs of the KGB) run the prison system and pressure judges to apply excessively violent sanctions to terrorize the population. The profile of political prisoners is very surprising; they do not raise any threat to the Russian power. The youngest, from a modest background, was 14 years old when he was thrown into prison. The founder of the reference NGO, Memorial, who documented the crimes of Stalinism and the Soviet era and continues to defend human rights in contemporary Russia, was incarcerated at more than 70 years old; he owes his survival in Berlin to an exchange of prisoners. The widow of Alexei Navalny confirmed that her husband was poisoned in February 2024 in the penal colony .

In September 2025, President Vladimir Putin appeared alongside Chinese President Xi Jinping, and the leaders of Iran and North Korea on the Eternal Peace Avenue in Beijing (4). Alongside them, about thirty leaders denounced the world order that would favor the United States and their allies. The ceremonies celebrating the end of the Second World War presented China and the USSR as the great victors. This forced unpacking, with military parades displaying "state-of-the-art weapons, modernized nuclear force, stealth drones capable of operating in coordination with fighter jets, supersonic anti-ship missiles intended to block the access of American aircraft carriers..." are addressed to the rest of the world. The war of images delivered to the West is a maneuver, a decoy, a Potemkin village...

Russia can count on convinced and enthusiastic spectators - President Donald Trump and his special envoy for Ukraine, Steve Witkoff, architect of a "peace plan" in November 2025 that takes up all Russian claims. Private exchanges with his Russian counterpart, revealed by the Wall Street journal, supporter of the Republican party, caused sharp reactions in the Republican Party, without moving President Trump..

## All colors for Ukraine and Ukrainians

The Ukrainian president and Ukraine are not in a position of strength in December 2025 to negotiate the American 'peace plan'. It is not by chance that this proposal is made while several signals have obscured the Ukrainian sky.

On the military field, the systematic shelling of Ukraine and the civilian population by the Russian army has not stopped since the summer of 2025 causing considerable losses to Russia (30,000 casualties, wounded and killed, per month). They are intended to undermine the morale of Ukrainian society, which is still mobilized behind its president. The rear is the first force of an army, the moral support of the combatants at the front. (5)

On the national political scene, Volodymyr Zelenski is weakened by the energy corruption scandal that led to the search of his home and the dismissal, on Friday, November 28, 2025 of his right-hand man, Andriy Yermak, a trusted man, head of the presidential administration, with whom he worked since 2010 who had named all the people who embezzled public funds (6). This personal destabilization is an important element in negotiation at stake. His American counterparts intend to use it. They have already put president Zelenski through its paces since February 2025, with President Trump and his Vice-President Vance humiliating Ukraine and its president, "who doesn't have the cards," in front of cameras around the world. American negotiators will not refrain from questioning the 'seriousness' of Ukraine and the trust that can be given to it. Paradoxically, the anti-corruption investigation is proof that democratic institutions, with the control of independent counter-powers, are functioning in Ukraine. The fight for a rule of law was the commitment of President Zelensky when he was elected in 2019. He is not personally involved in the scandal but will have to put order in his surroundings, which the opposition was asking for- the choice of his advisors must depend on their technical skills and not on absolute political loyalty (6)

On the international stage, the Ukrainian president can count on the unconditional support of his European allies. After the summit in Anchorage (Alaska) in August 2025, the Europeans had invited themselves to Washington to discuss directly with President Trump. In September 2025, the coalition of volunteers (Germany, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom), met in Paris after the revisionist festivities in Beijing to exchange by videoconference with Donald Trump. Upon receipt of the «peace plan» suggested by the American special envoy, the Europeans immediately worked on a counterproposal, withdrawing all points that would have constituted a capitulation for Ukraine. The Europeans want to obtain security guarantees to avoid a new Russian aggression, in case of cessation of hostilities (7). The first guarantee is to strengthen the Ukrainian army, not to reduce it. A second pillar is to multiply mutual assistance agreements on the model of Article 5 of NATO, and not to isolate Ukraine. The third component concerns the sending of troops to Ukrainian territory, in addition to the deployment in the Black Sea and support for air defense and combating cyber attacks ; the Europeans are working on it.

## United colors of Europe- united in diversity

The fight of Ukraine is that of the Europeans. The war against Russia has already begun in EU countries, victims of political interference and campaigns to destabilize public opinion. France is a privileged target of this information war with the relay of influencers and pro-Russian opinion media (8). The countries bordering Russia are suffering from sabotage and incursions in the Baltic Sea, in Poland or in the Baltic States.

The Europeans have become the main funders of the Ukrainian army (9). In addition to their direct aid (shipments of weapons and equipment, training of soldiers...), the European allies have placed significant orders for American weapons as part of an agreement concluded with the NATO secretary general. They were sent for free under the Democratic presidency of Biden, unwavering support from Ukraine. The new formula proposed by the American administration, in terms of trade relations, is a financial windfall for the American arms industries and a way to counter the most extreme criticisms from the Republican camp that have come, its MAGA wing (Make America great again) hostile to a direct involvement of the United States abroad. The transactional approach makes it possible to be less dependent on political hazards, and on the reservations of public opinion.

On Wednesday, September 10, 2025, in her speech on the State of the Union, the president's message was combative (10) "Europe is fighting. It fights for the integrity of a continent at peace. For a free and independent Europe. For our values and democracies. It fights for our freedom and for our ability to decide our own destiny.". Ursula von der Leyen's speech made a new move on the international scene - strengthening our old alliances and creating new ones. "The front lines of a new world order based on force are emerging at this very moment." The president of the European Commission insisted on the necessity for the Europeans to assert their model with complete independence in order not to be engulfed by a double war - commercial (total global competition) and hybrid (ideological led by autocracies refractory to European values deemed outdated or "decadent"). " Europe must take its independence. (...). It must take charge of its own defense and security. It must master the technologies and energies that will nourish our economies.". President von der Leyen mainly spoke of 'unity between the Member States. Between the EU institutions. And between the pro-European democratic forces of this assembly (European Parliament). » She alludes to disunity, the first breeding ground for Russian influence.

The process of "Invisibilization" is a formidable psychological weapon used without nuance by Vladimir Putin's Russia and Donald Trump's United States. The negotiation of a genuine peace plan that provides security guarantees for the Ukrainians, with the involvement of the European Union, the European countries and Ukraine, is a challenge for the EU. The Europeans have the intellectual and physical resources to 'make themselves visible' alongside the Ukrainians. United and visible in the same fight for democracy, our common future. *Slava Ukraini* !-

- (1) Website of Benetton - [https://fr.benetton.com/inside/article\\_all-the-colors-of-the-world.html](https://fr.benetton.com/inside/article_all-the-colors-of-the-world.html) downloaded on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2025
- (2) History of advertising – French Museum of Decorative Arts website - <https://madparis.fr/histoire-de-la-publicite-1884> downloaded on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2025
- (3) Manon Loizeau et Ekaterina Mamontova « Politzek, ces voix qui défient le Kremlin » diffusé le dimanche 21 septembre 2025 sur France 5- Maison de production : Babel DOC / Clin d'oeil Films / France Télévisions- <https://www.france.tv/documentaires/documentaires-societe/7500086-politzek-les-voix-qui-defient-le-kremlin.html#about-section>
- (4) Editorial « Le président chinois au centre de son monde », Le Monde, Jeudi 4 septembre 2025
- (5) Général Dominique Trincand « Le monde en face », France 5, dimanche 30 novembre 2025
- (6) Thomas d'Istria « La démission du bras droit de Zelenski », Le Monde dimanche 30 novembre /lundi 1<sup>er</sup> décembre 2025
- (7) Claire Gatinois et Philippe Ricard « La coalition des volontaires suspendue au choix de Trump », Le Monde samedi 6 septembre 2025
- (8) Bolloré Group, influencers favorable to far-right networks in Europe; case of the 'red hands' on the Shoah Memorial, crosses of David painted on the Parisian walls, to maintain anti-Semitic acts that have multiplied in France since October 7, 2023
- (9) According to the German Institute in Kiel , Emmanuel Grynspar « Ukraine : les Européens, principaux bailleurs de fonds de l'armée », Le Monde samedi 6 septembre 2025
- (10) Speech on the State of the Union, Ursula von der Leyen, mercredi 10 septembre 2025- [https://france.representation.ec.europa.eu/informations/discours-sur-letat-de-lunion-2025-de-la-presidente-von-der-leyen-2025-09-10\\_fr](https://france.representation.ec.europa.eu/informations/discours-sur-letat-de-lunion-2025-de-la-presidente-von-der-leyen-2025-09-10_fr)

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**Plan International**, en Pologne, Roumanie et Moldavie, pour apporter aide matérielle et psychosociale aux jeunes ukrainiens et à leur famille, et [sollicite des dons](https://formulaire.plan-international.fr/urgence-ukraine/~mon-don) pour ce faire.- <https://formulaire.plan-international.fr/urgence-ukraine/~mon-don>

**L'Aide médicale et caritative France-Ukraine** - envoi de convois d'aide humanitaire, des soins aux blessés, des échanges de savoir-faire médical, une aide psychologique et organise des colonies de vacances pour les enfants orphelins - HelloAsso - <https://www.helloasso.com/associations/aide%20medicale%20caritative%20france%20ukraine/collectes/aider-ukraine-amurgence-help-ukraine/don>

**Le Comité d'aide médicale Ukraine** - réfugiés en transit dans l'ouest du pays, et collecte fonds, médicaments et équipements pour l'hébergement et les soins via ses partenaires français, l'association SAFE et l'organisation FONDEMOS. - <http://www.cam-z.org/en/news/121/>

**JeVeuxAider.gouv.fr** est la plateforme publique du bénévolat, - une page dédiée Mobilisons-nous pour l'Ukraine .- <https://www.jeveuxaider.gouv.fr/engagement/benevolat-ukraine/>

**Les Banques alimentaires** - une aide d'urgence à apporter aux frontières de l'Ukraine, dans les pays frontaliers accueillant des réfugiés - <https://www.banquealimentaire.org/urgence-ukraine>

**La Protection Civile et l'Association des maires de France** ont établi une [liste](#) (lits de camps, sacs de couchage, lingettes, conserves, pansements hémostatiques, solutions antiseptiques ...).

**L'Association des maires de France** a dressé les [lieux de collecte](#) à travers toute la France. Les Maires de France appellent à la [solidarité avec l'Ukraine](#) . De nombreuses villes de France organisent des collectes de produits de première nécessité - <https://www.amf.asso.fr/documents-les-maires-france-appellent-la-solidarite-avec-lukraine/41122>

**La plateforme officielle** « *Je m'engage pour l'Ukraine* » lancée le 8 mars 2022 par le gouvernement pour accompagner les Français souhaitant héberger chez eux des Ukrainiens réfugiés et accueillis en France.- <https://parrainage.refugies.info/>

Les associations, fondations, entreprises et collectivités territoriales peuvent utiliser ce [formulaire en ligne](#) pour renseigner leur capacité d'hébergement.- <https://www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/commencer/hebergement-personne-morale-ukraine>

**Bibliothèque sans frontière (BSF)** - Depuis le début de l'offensive russe en Ukraine, BSF se mobilise et déploie, partout en Europe, des solutions d'urgence pour l'accueil et l'intégration des populations réfugiées. « Bonjour France » est une application pour smartphone innovante et totalement gratuite, qui propose un apprentissage accéléré du français depuis l'ukrainien, disponible depuis le 19 octobre 2022.

<https://www.bibliosansfrontieres.org/2022/10/14/bsf-lance-bonjour-france-une-application-innovante-dapprentissage-du-francais-pour-les-refugies-ukrainiens/>

La mission catholique de l'Eglise polonaise en France suggère également le lien suivant : <https://mission-catholique-polonaise.pl/polska-we-francji/pere-brzys-la-mcp-lance-une-initiative-nationale-pour-aider-lukraine/> - **Source** : conférence des évêques de France