



Solidarité pour l'Ukraine –numéro 54 - Number 8– KC8

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The Institute of Research and Information on Volunteering (iriv) joins the international solidarity in favor of Ukraine attacked by Russia on February 24, 2022. The COVID pandemic has weakened democratic countries. Conspiracy theories and hate speech have exploded. This war in Europe is existential for the European Union. This newsletter is the 8th published in 2026 and the 54th since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine. August 8th month of the year under the sign of a necessary change of mindset and real cooperation in the European camp. Russia remains under article 8 of the Rome Statute for war crimes, an arrest warrant issued in March 2023 against President Vladimir Putin, who is

increasingly being challenged by domestic and international public opinion, a man of the past. Ukraine continues to score points, without arrogance or provocation, slowly but surely. Fallen from a height in 2022, it deserves the title of doctor honoris causa. The episode of the Maidan Revolution was a first warning. Since then, it has foiled pessimistic forecasts (about its capitulation), resuming the initiative in 2026. Europeans must implement the standards they produce. The 8th key competence of the European framework (1) corresponds to cultural and artistic sensitivity. The EU must show empathy, a quality that authoritarian governments regard as a weakness. Europe is literally and figuratively burning. Megafires are multiplying in France and Spain this summer 2026, and in the Scandinavian countries (Norway). This time, Europeans must not look elsewhere. The future remains uncertain in 2026 half-time. It holds promise if Europeans agree to break out of their strategic ambiguity and industrial nationalism. The challenge of genuine cooperation between member countries, and with Ukraine.

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* the logo was designed by Caritas Canada in February 2022

Number eight, a new cycle

In the Bible, the number 8 refers to the beginning of a new cycle associated with the resurrection. Circumcision, the sign of a covenant in the flesh of every male believer with God, is performed on the eighth day (Genesis 17:12-21 & Leviticus 12:3). Eight is the number for the restoration of God's righteousness (Psalms of David, eighth son of Isaiah). Eight steps lead to the Temple of Ezechiel (Matthew 5:3-10). Eight is the figure of the resurrection, of the prince of peace (Isaiah 9:5); it symbolizes perseverance to live the transfiguration on the mountain of God (Luke 9:28). In the Koran, Paradise (Al-Jannah) has 8 main gates, 4 of which are mentioned in the texts: Bab as-Salat, door of prayer; Bab ar-Rayyân, door of fasting; Bab as-Sadaqah, door of charity; Bab al-Jihad, door of effort and struggle on the path of God. The others are part of tradition: Bab al-Hajj, door dedicated to those who completed the pilgrimage; Bab al-Kazimin al-Ghayz wal-Aafina Anin Naas, door for those who restrain their anger and forgive others; Bab al-Tawba, door of repentance; Bab al-Ayman or the gate of Dhikr / science.

In the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), article 8 states that the law must establish only those penalties which are strictly and obviously necessary, and no one may be punished except by virtue of a law established and promulgated prior to the offence and legally applied." These principles of proportionality and non-retroactivity protect from arbitrariness; justice must be fair and proportionate. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 8 provides that "Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted to him by the constitution or by law." , a right to a defense worthy of the name for every human being. Article 8 of the Constitution of the Fifth French Republic determines the powers of the President of the Republic regarding the Government and its Prime Minister since the transition to the Fifth Republic on 5 October 1958; a personality who can become a countervailing power.

In music, an octave is composed of eight notes (C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C). It was also the crescendo of Russian aggression against Ukraine (2014-2022) that began after the Maidan Revolution, which led to the annexation of Crimea and the occupation of Ukrainian territories. Eight years to turn it into a full-blown war, which Russia initially called "special military operations." This duration corresponds to a rise in power, a maturity in a mature project of long date, it implies a deliberate will to achieve a goal. For President Vladimir Putin, the desire to erase the years of humiliation, according to him, experienced by Russia since the implosion of the USSR in 1991. A return to previous borders, a reintegration of all the Republics that were able to free themselves from the Soviet yoke after 1991, to their vassalization by Moscow, which repressed in blood any initiative of emancipation (Budapest in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, Poland in 1981...)

Article 8 – war crimes for Russia

Russia is still subject to the Article 8 of the Rome Statute (2). This international treaty consists of a preamble and 13 chapters. Adopted at the Rome Conference on 17 July 1998, it entered into force on 1st of July 2002, giving rise to the symbolic International Criminal Court (ICC). It was born after the last conflict that took place on European territory - the war in the Balkans (former Yugoslavia) . A nationalist Serbia determined to impose its totalitarian ideology on its former allies in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had persecuted Bosnia and the Muslim community scattered throughout the other Yugoslav states that were victims of ethnic cleansing, with the climax being the Srebrenica genocide perpetrated in July 1995 (3). The jurisdiction of the ICC covers crimes of genocide against humanity, crimes of war and, in accordance with an amendment made in 2010, crimes of aggression. In addition to the competences of the ICC, the Rome Statute regulates the admissibility and applicable law, the composition and administration of the Court, investigations and prosecutions, trials, appeal and review, international cooperation and judicial assistance, as well as the enforcement of sentences.

International justice is not perfect (4), with shortcomings and behaviors of its prosecutors or magistrates who may have lacked objectivity and impartiality (5). However, it has the great merit of existing. The main criticism leveled at the ICC is to impose himself on national courts (sovereign jurisdiction), and thus to infringe upon national sovereignty. In totalitarian countries, dictators in power have invariably invoked this infringement of sovereignty. In democratic countries, it has been called into question by countries like the United States, which accuses it of harming American interests (once more in July 2026 with Marco Rubio). Yet the ICC has made it possible to create a permanent, operational institution with a deterrent effect. It "remains the safeguard, often insufficient and sometimes failing, against a return to impunity whose weakest are always the main victims". For Russia, the action of the ICC was symbolically important when prosecutor Karim Khan issued an international arrest warrant against President Vladimir Putin in March 2023 for war crimes for the deportation of more than 16,000 Ukrainian children to Russia. It was the first time that a sitting head of state, member of the UN Security Council, Russia, had been indicted. A public humiliation for the Russian president, whose mobility has been more limited, even if states that recognize the ICC have welcomed him, ignoring the international arrest warrant, a reproach made against the ICC, which can only function with full and complete cooperation by the signatory States of the Rome Statute. Vladimir Putin has played another criticism against the ICC – being a justice of the countries of the North (the West) against the countries of the South (Africa, Cambodia...), a global South whose interests he claims to defend, by multiplying the exactions in Syria, DRC and other African countries where the Wagners become Afrika Corps, that Milosevic's Serbia would not have denounced. Same spirit and will to humiliate and even eradicate a human community.

Bac + 8 in Ukraine – a country and a president « Doctor honoris causa »

The Bologna process unified degrees and qualifications in Europe, higher education was clarified. The doctorate (PhD) corresponds to a Bac + 8, eight years after the baccalaureate in France (an equivalent of the diploma exists in all EU countries). This internationally recognized degree allows to apply for teaching and research positions at the University; in Germany, it is also the best business card for a future professional career. In all cases, a doctorate corresponds to identified skills - critical analysis of information and data, conducting complex projects, managing uncertainty and risks, scientific communication with various audiences and in various formats in an international context, expertise and methods at the best international level on the subject of the thesis, with a solid foundation of knowledge in the broader field in which the subject is situated and at its interfaces, personal and relational qualities, such as creativity, integrity, commitment, critical thinking, ability to change, and other more personal ones developed by each doctoral student or doctoral student (6).

The honorary doctorate is one of the most prestigious distinctions awarded by universities in the world. In France, this title honors since 1918 and without examination, "personalities of foreign nationality by reason of eminent services rendered to the sciences, literature, or the arts, or to France at university" (article D612-37 – Education code) (7). Ukraine as a whole, and its president, should be made *doctor honoris causa* of the European Union for the example they have set for Europeans and the World for their courage, perseverance, resilience, inventiveness and creativity. Their critical analysis of the situation and their reaction to a much more powerful Russian army allowed them to hold since 2022, with the reinforcement of Americans and Europeans impressed by their fortitude, not to bend. War is obviously a complex project that requires maximum risk management, a matter of life and death. The military and civilian casualties are considerable (dead, wounded, displaced...). Their expertise and the original methods implemented and constantly adapted and improved were the most impressive, forcing the admiration of their allies. Their know-how in the drone war, which has enabled Ukraine to no longer be considered a "loser" by an American president who is so sure and confident of his actions (Donald Trump upon his arrival at the White House in January 2025, and all year with the "moment" Anchorage rolling out a red carpet to President Putin in August). As for personal and interpersonal qualities, Ukrainians' creativity, ability to change, and commitment (on the military front and at home) are recognized by their allies as well as their adversaries, the first to be surprised by such resistance in a hybrid war that may discourage the most powerful armies. But the decisive element for Ukraine and the Ukrainians remains their state of mind- not to let themselves be impressed, to take the blows and bad news, to keep hope and faith in victory "Keep calm and carry on", the English motto faced to adversity. A template and an example to be followed.

Key Competence 8 in Europe- a challenge for a cooperation without ambiguity

The European Framework of Key Competences (KC) was launched by the European Commission with the European Parliament in 2006, and revised in 2018. It is part of the European Union's flagship programme for lifelong learning (Erasmus+), a soft power weapon in the Knowledge society. Key competency 8 (KC8) refers to "cultural awareness and expression skills". They "entail understanding and respecting the way ideas and meaning are expressed and communicated creatively in different cultures and across a range of arts and other forms of culture." They "require a commitment to understand, develop and express one's own ideas and sense of belonging or role in society in different ways and contexts." (1) The Europeans will have to implement it to actively support Ukraine.

They are still hesitant to break out of their strategic and industrial ambiguity (8). At the NATO summit held in Ankara (Turkey) on July 7 and 8, 2026, many allies showed their hesitation between support for the Ukrainian war effort and strategic ambiguity about their industrial defense cooperation (central to any strategy), and fear of being overtaken by a new continental competitor in military matters (Ukraine) whose technologies are "combat proven" for the past four years. Except for the external operations in which European armies fought, most EU countries have not had a "hot" war on their soil since 1945, apart from Croatia with the Balkan Wars (1991-1995). Hybrid, information-based war has never ceased with the USSR and the member countries of the Warsaw Pact. The "European ambivalences remain strong" when European countries are themselves in competition to attract industrial projects funded by several European programs such as the SAFE loan, with a total amount of 150 billion euros. Kiev was thus put in competition with Romania by the German company Rheinmetall. This was the installation of an assembly site for Lynx vehicles. In June 2026, the German company finally chose the Romanian site for reasons of competitiveness. If Rheinmetall has a center in Ukraine for the repair of Leopard tanks and Marder, Guepard, and Fuchs-type armored vehicles, other projects are slipping away, such as factories producing weapons for the assembly of armored vehicles, air defense systems, gunpowder and artillery ammunition. For researcher Hélène Masson of the Foundation for Strategic Research, bureaucratic obstacles, funding difficulties or security requirements are all obstacles for Ukraine, which remains a country at war.

Empathy is a cross-cutting quality in all EU Key Competences (KC). If many European countries still see Ukraine as a potential competitor, Ukrainian hopes for defense will soar. Understanding each person's strengths and uniqueness, without denying the persistent obstacles to genuine cooperation – a challenge for Europeans to address. *Slava Ukraini* !-

- (1) Recommandation du Conseil du 22 mai 2018 relative aux compétences clés pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie (2018/C 189/01- <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/>)
- (2) International Criminal Court (ICC°- <https://www.icc-cpi.int/fr/publications/textes-juridiques-fondamentaux/statut-de-rome-de-la-cour-penale-internationale>)
- (3) Foundation in memory of the genocide committed at Srebrenica in July 1995, when more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were murdered by Serb nationalists - <https://srebrenica.org.uk/about-us>
- (4) Editorial du Monde, « La CPI, garde-fou imparfait mais nécessaire », vendredi 17 juillet 2026
- (5) Johan Soufi, « Justice pénale internationale : quel bilan », Vie publique, 3 juin 2024- <https://www.vie-publique.fr/parole-dexpert/294485-justice-penale-internationale-quel-bilan-par-johann-soufi>
- (6) Education nationale- <https://doctorat.gouv.fr/apr%C3%AAs-le-doctorat/competences-des-docteurs/> téléchargé le 28 juillet 2026
- (7) Université de Paris VIII- <https://www.univ-paris8.fr/Docteurs-honoris-causa>
- (8) Elise Vincent « L'Ukraine se rêve en leader de la défense, ses alliés restent prudents », Le Monde, 9 juillet 2026

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