

## The editor's-in-chief address

### Dear Reader!

In this introductory part of the new issue of “UIS”, I traditionally highlight the most resonant in the national information space socially significant events over the past six months, at the center of which was journalism as a sphere of social activity and carriers of this profession.

In this way, it is possible to attract first of all the attention of researchers-journalists — students and confessors of various journalism schools and their students from among postgraduate students, masters, applicants for scientific degrees — to potential topics of a theoretical and practical nature that require collection, analysis, generalization of various empirical material and its comprehension in the context of actual, current modern problems of our specialty existence.

The February decision of the National Security and Defense Council (NSDC), which imposed sanctions on several TV channels registered in Ukraine (112, ZIK, News One) for openly playing the pro-Russian card, further highlighted the topic of the sale of part of the journalistic corps of the Ukrainian state, measures of their professionalism, patriotism, and decency. Newspaper and magazine columns, as well as radio and television broadcasts, began to be more actively filled with stories about manipulations, media killers, fake factories, revived temniks, pro-Russian messengers, and propaganda of Russian “fake news”. Public activists organized a series of actions against the boycott and other TV channels that were not included in the decision of the National Security and Defense Council but systematically violate journalistic standards. In particular, it was about the 1 + 1 TV channel. As the Chairman of the National Security and Defense Council Oleksiy Danilov rightly noted, there are many TV channels with an anti-Ukrainian agenda in Ukraine. So it is to be hoped that new sanctions against them would be inevitable.

It is a shame to state, but the journalism of the young Ukrainian state, which, after the completion of the process of denationalization and privatization, almost all ended up in several fists of the oligarchs, instead of becoming a unifying factor of the nation, continues to shake the state-building ship. Even in the fundamental issues of protecting the state from the Russian aggressor, there is no need to talk about adhering to a common denominator. For example, what has been happening in eastern Ukraine for the past eight years is now called differently in different media: the Russian-Ukrainian war and the internal conflict in Ukraine, the Ukrainian authorities and the Kyiv junta, ORDLO and DNR / LNR, ORDLO residents under temporary occupation Russia and the people of Donbas.

The reason?

Some Ukrainian journalists deliberately replace the notion of “freedom of speech” with “information terrorism.” And it is not just that the Kremlin propagandists promote terms and phrases created in the national information space, which in one way or another are designed to “legalize” the annexation of Ukrainian territories in Donbas and Crimea in the minds of millions of Ukrainian citizens. This is what caused the appearance of the “Glossary of names, terms, and phrases that are recommended for use in connection with the temporary occupation of the Russian Federation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Sevastopol and some districts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.”

This original dictionary of five sections, containing 63 terms and concepts (fake versions and their correct equivalents), was developed by the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine in cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine with the involvement of relevant public authorities. The document was published on October 20, 2021. The only question is how responsibly journalists will interpret this document, how actively they will use those recommendations, how honestly they will treat the urgent matter of clearing the Ukrainian information field of the ideological weed generously scattered by the northern neighbor in our territory — from Luhansk to Uzhhorod.

Among the variety of top topics in this review, two more should be singled out: attacks on journalists or obstruction of their professional activities and a public initiative to abolish the title of “Honored Journalist of Ukraine”.

On October 4, there was an attack on journalists of the “Schemes” program of Radio Svoboda Kyril Ovsiany and Oleksandr Mazur while performing their professional duties at the Ukreximbank headquarters. This information on the same day filled the news feeds of a significant number of electronic media with lightning speed. The situation looked savage: for a question that displeased the chairman of the board of this state institution Yevhen Metsher (and it was a loan allocated by the bank for a significant amount of the organization that sponsors separatists in eastern Ukraine) on Metsher’s instructions his deputies and bank security used force, seized equipment and erased the video of the interview.

The journalistic community promptly responded to such brazen audacity. The very next day, the public association Media Movement for Conscious Choice stated the immediate dismissal of the Chairman of the Board of Ukreximbank. An action of journalists in support of their colleagues took place under the bank walls under the motto “Wipe Metsher to zero!”. The posters noted articles of the Criminal Code of Ukraine: 171 — Obstruction of the professional activity of journalists, 345-1 — Threat or violence against a journalist, 146 — Illegal imprisonment, 186 — Robbery.

Although this action was not numerous, it was widely publicized thanks to the journalistic solidarity shown by colleagues from other publications.

The passions surrounding the massacre of journalists in the state bank did not subside, as a similar story was repeated on the territory of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. This time, journalists of the Magnolia-TV channel were prevented from performing their official duties (filming a story about a fire on the territory of the monastery) by the abbot of the monastery, the notorious Metropolitan Pavlo and several monks. The phone was confiscated from the journalists and the recording was erased.

These two recent examples are just one component of a series of high-profile cases involving attacks on journalists at home and interfering with their professional activities. The up-to-date results of a study of criminal offenses against journalists in Ukraine over the past five years by journalists of the information and analytical portal Slovo i Dilo can serve as convincing confirmation of this thesis.

The study was completed in September this year and is dedicated to the 21st anniversary of the unsolved murder of Georgiy Gongadze. We have impressive numbers. Thus, during 2015, 85 criminal offenses against journalists were recorded in the law enforcement system. In the future, this number has been steadily growing every year: in 2016 — 141, in 2017 — 174, in 2018 — 177 offenses. In January-August 2021 alone, investigators from the Prosecutor General's Office opened 182 cases for obstructing journalistic activities. Among the most common types of reported offenses, the first is the obstruction of the lawful professional activity of journalists, the second is the threat or violence against a journalist, and the third is the intentional destruction or damage to a journalist's property.

And the latest top news of this period. From the middle of summer, in the information space of the state, the concept of "Honored Journalist of Ukraine" began to spread more actively in various genre materials. A kind of detonator of such a growing circulation was the initiative of the Council on Freedom of Speech, which operates under the President of Ukraine, to stop the practice of awarding honorary titles to journalists and begin to amend the law "On State Awards".

The issue is relevant and has long been overripe. This is a vestige of the totalitarian system when in this way the distribution of awards (and this is not only the moral consolation of the holder of this title but also a significant increase in pension) the Communist-Bolshevik government tried to tame the journalistic (as well as writers) corps. The same "gingerbread" has been used by the chronically unpatriotic and unprofessional Ukrainian authorities for more than 30 years. There are many examples when dozens of journalists from the capital and different countries received the title of Honored, who did not help with their publications but harmed the formation of Ukrainian independence. So to whom and thanks to whom did such journalists become honored?

The initiative to abolish this title raises questions in a broader sense. It is about the need to reform the entire system of state awards as a rudiment of Sovietism, which you will not find in any other country in the world democracy.

The reader will find additions, clarifications, and expansions of the issues raised in this foreword in several scientific investigations and researches by the authors of the latest issue of the Ukrainian Information Space.

I invite caring fellow journalists and practicing journalists together, arguably and convincingly, professionally and patriotically, to create a real picture of the national information space — with its achievements, problems, prospects, in its close relationship with the media of the democratic West.

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