

## Policy Note

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# Why and How Involve the Global Ukrainian Community for the Recovery of Ukraine

Practices, tools and policy recommendations  
for diaspora engagement

Oleksandra Keudel, Kyiv School of Economics

Maria Koinova, University of Warwick

Kateryna Pavlova, CRISP

Nataliya Pryhornytska, Open Platform / Alliance of Ukrainian Organizations



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### **Authors** (alphabetically):

Dr. Oleksandra Keudel, Kyiv School of Economics

Prof. Maria Koinova, University of Warwick

Kateryna Pavlova, CRISP

Nataliya Pryhornytska, Open Platform / Alliance of Ukrainian Organizations

### **Layout:**

Anna Pavlenko

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### **Contact for media inquiries, feedback and ideas:**

Nataliya Pryhornytska, [nataliya.pryhornytska@ukr-alliance.de](mailto:nataliya.pryhornytska@ukr-alliance.de)

Kateryna Pavlova, [pavlova@crisp-berlin.org](mailto:pavlova@crisp-berlin.org)

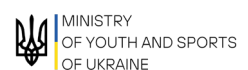
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# Why and How Involve the Global Ukrainian Community for the Recovery of Ukraine

Practices, tools and policy recommendations  
for diaspora engagement



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## Disclaimer:

This policy note was developed in preparation for the 2024 Ukraine Recovery Conference highlighting the contributions of the global Ukrainian community across four thematic dimensions of URC: business, human, local and regional, and EU integration. It emerged from expert consultations, research and thematically developed focus groups held during the official pre-conference “Diaspora and the Global Ukrainian Community – Strong Partners in the Recovery of Ukraine,” 19/20 April 2024, organized by Open Platform e.V. / Alliance of Ukrainian Organizations e.V. and CRISP e.V. with the kind support of the Embassy of Ukraine in the Federal Republic of Germany, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, GIZ-Programme “Shaping development-oriented migration” (MEG) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Bertelsmann Stiftung, German Marshall Fund, and by ISAR Ednannia in consortium with the Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research (UCIPR) and the Center for Democracy and Rule of Law (CEDEM) thanks to the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development.

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Platform



CRISP



Kyiv School  
of Economics



The  
University of  
Warwick



# About the authors



**Oleksandra Keudel** is a political scientist and international consultant on governance, an Associate Professor at the Kyiv School of Economics. She studies democratic transformation and societal resilience in hybrid regimes, specializing in Ukraine's sub-national politics. She combines academic research with policy consulting on open government and public integrity for international organizations, such as the EU, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and IIEP-UNESCO. She holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the Free University of Berlin and has been a visiting researcher at George Washington University, NYU, and Södertörn University.



**Maria Koinova** is Professor in International Relations at the University of Warwick, a Principal Investigator of the Project “Engaging the Ukrainian Diaspora in Reconstruction and Development: Democracy and Human Rights Dimensions,” sponsored by the Research England Policy Support Fund. She is the author of “Diaspora Entrepreneurs and Contested States” (Oxford University Press, 2021) and of over 40 other publications focusing on the roles of migration, refugees and diasporas in conflict and post-conflict processes, stemming from a large European Research Council project “Diasporas and Contested Sovereignty” and other research projects she directed earlier. She is currently a Deputy Editor In Chief of the Oxford-based Migration Studies journal. Koinova received her Ph.D. from the European University Institute, and has held academic positions at Harvard, Cornell, Dartmouth, Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, Centre for Global Cooperation Research in Germany and the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies, among other academic institutions.



**Kateryna Pavlova** is a practitioner in the field of civil conflict transformation and political education, MA in Cultural Diplomacy. She has been working with and in the Eastern Partnership countries on the topics of social cohesion, human rights education, countering disinformation, professionalization of peacebuilders, teachers and youth workers. She is a co-publisher of the book “Ukraine in Focus: Recognizing Propaganda, Understanding Facts” (Berlin, 2023). She was an advisor to the Deputy Minister for Restoration of Ukraine Oleksandra Azarkhina. Pavlova co-coordinates the informal network of over 220 diaspora organizations and activists in Germany and was one of the organizers of the official pre-URC conference “Diaspora and the Global Ukrainian Community – Strong Partners in the Recovery of Ukraine” from the side of CRISP.



**Nataliya Pryhornytska** is a political scientist and co-founder of the Open Platform and the Alliance of Ukrainian Organisations. Her professional and academic work focuses on German-Ukrainian relations, foreign and domestic policy, the EU and NATO rapprochement process and the reconstruction of Ukraine. She is a co-founder and co-moderator of the Diaspora Network and the Ukraine Recovery and Reconstruction Working Group, and has been an active member of the Global Ukrainian Community for twenty years. She also co-organised the official pre-URC conference «Diaspora and the Global Ukrainian Community - Strong Partners in the Recovery of Ukraine» (April 2024) for the Open Platform/Alliance of Ukrainian Organisations. Pryhornytska is co-editor of the book «Ukraine in Focus: Recognising Propaganda, Understanding Facts» (Berlin, 2023) and co-hosts the Institute for European Politics' UkraineMEMO podcast, which provides insightful analysis of Ukrainian politics, economics and society.

# Abstract

Since 2014, Ukraine has been defending against the Russian invasion. In 2022, despite the ongoing full-scale war, the Ukrainian government, with the support of international partners, implements recovery projects as one of the key tasks to react to the immediate needs of the society and lay foundations for future transformation as outlined in the EU's Ukraine Facility and the Ukraine Plan. Immediate support to the civilian population and the economy is crucial for Ukraine's resilience. Security and reconstruction must be considered together. Sustainable security guarantees are the basis for the reconstruction of Ukraine.

The Global Ukrainian Community (GUC), with 20-25 million people in over 60 countries, has great potential to support recovery through, inter alia, advocacy, liaison work, remittances, networks, expertise, youth and culture work, but it has been largely untapped. This paper examines the potential of the GUC based on expert consultations, focus groups from the pre-conference «Diaspora and the Global Ukrainian Community - Strong Partners in the Recovery of Ukraine» (Berlin, April 20-24), and many practical examples.

A systematic engagement of the GUC offers significant benefits: leveraging resources and networks, promoting social cohesion, inspiring voluntary return, acting as a watchdog and strengthening civil society. The paper emphasises the need for the systematic involvement of the GUC and provides recommendations for long-term and structured cooperation.

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# Introduction

As Ukraine has been defending against the Russian invasion since 2014, timely delivery of essential weapons and elaboration of real security guarantees are the foremost priorities. Amidst the ongoing war, the government and partners of Ukraine already outlined recovery as a major task in the civilian domain and spelled out priorities in the EU Ukraine Facility and the Ukraine Plan. At the same time, there is urgency for immediate support of the civilian population and the economy to secure Ukraine's continued endurance.

The **global Ukrainian community (GUC)** has a significant potential for supporting the endurance and recovery of Ukraine, but it remained largely untapped by institutional actors in Ukraine and abroad. With an estimate of 20-25 million people in more than 60 countries<sup>1</sup>, including diaspora members and those who sought temporary protection since 2022, GUC has been a significant force in supporting Ukraine's resistance during the war, promoting its EU integration and providing a bottom-up foundation for societal support in host countries. GUC members not only provide humanitarian and defence support to various Ukrainian beneficiaries<sup>2</sup> but also advocate for political support, speak in media, raise awareness,<sup>3</sup> organize and coordinate protests<sup>4</sup> and counteract disinformation related to Ukraine, Russia and the war<sup>5</sup> in host societies making Ukraine more understandable and relatable. While there is an increasing recognition of this force for recovery, especially in economic terms, there are no sustainable structures in place to ensure inclusive, long-term and systematic cooperation with the GUC on recovery issues.



Official  
pre-URC  
conference

This paper **spotlights the GUC potential for contributing to Ukraine's immediate and long-term recovery. As an illustration, it provides examples of existing engagement practices** of these actors and incorporates their vision of tools to foster their engagement. The paper is based on several inputs. First, it reflects the expert consultations and focus groups held among GUC members and Ukraine-based counterparts during the official Ukraine Recovery pre-Conference "Diaspora and the Global Ukrainian Community – Strong Partners in the Recovery of Ukraine" (Berlin, 19-20 April 2024),<sup>6</sup> attended by 250 GUC participants from 12 countries.

1 Authors' estimation accounting for more than 20 million Ukrainian-born and the descendants from earlier migration waves living abroad in 2021, with 4.9 million persons under temporary protection since 2022 added to the estimate. Source: Adema, J., Giesing, Y., Panchenko, T., & Poutvaara, P. (2023). The Role of the Diaspora for the Recovery of Ukraine (2/23; EconPol Forum). CESifo. <https://www.cesifo.org/en/publications/2023/article-journal/role-diaspora-recovery-ukraine> p.42; Vyshlinsky, H., Samoiluk, M., Myronenko, O., Mykhailishyna, D., Tomilina, M., & Levchenko, Y. (2024, March 29). Ukrainian refugees. Future abroad and plans for return. The third wave of the research—Centre for Economic Strategy. Centre for Economic Strategy. <https://ces.org.ua/en/ukrainian-refugees-third-wave-research/>

2 It is hard to quantify such support. For example, just three well-known US-based foundations Razom for Ukraine, United Help Ukraine and KSE Foundation, taken together, raised ca. USD 300 million for defence and humanitarian needs in Ukraine. Worldwide, there are thousands of large and small, formal and informal initiatives collecting donations and directing it to local beneficiaries, at times, with higher efficiency than international actors.

3 For example: UWC. (2024, May 20). Second year of captivity: Ukrainians in Spain, France, and Poland demand release of Mariupol defenders. Ukrainian World Congress. <https://www.ukrainianworldcongress.org/second-year-of-captivity-ukrainians-in-spain-france-and-poland-demand-release-of-mariupol-defenders/> Common Sense Communications. (2024, May 23). Voice of Ukrainian Civilian Hostages. <https://commonsense.zone/en/projects/disinformeter/>

4 UWC. (2024, February 24). Stand With Ukraine global rally unfolds in over 700 cities, 69 countries. Ukrainian World Congress. <https://www.ukrainianworldcongress.org/second-year-of-captivity-ukrainians-in-spain-france-and-poland-demand-release-of-mariupol-defenders/>

5 For example: Pryhornytska, N., & Pavlova, K. (Eds.). (2023). Ukraine im Fokus. Propaganda erkennen, Fakten verstehen. CRISP. See also: Instagram @ukraineimfokus

6 CRISP. (2024, May 3). The pre-conference of the Ukraine Recovery Conference 2024. CRISP - Crisis Simulation for Peace e.V. <https://crisp-berlin.org/news/new/the-pre-conference-of-the-ukraine-recovery-conference-2024-1>



Second, several rounds of informal discussions in Ukraine and within the virtual GUC working group “Recovery” as well as desk research informed the paper. Many Ukrainians abroad are committed to their homeland and have been reaching out to local, national and international recovery stakeholders, proactively offering partnerships. This potential can and should be directed to fulfil the promise of “building back better.”

**There are pertinent advantages of a sustainable, multi-level and cross-sectoral engagement of Ukrainians abroad, considering their track record to date.** First, GUC can support Ukraine’s endurance and recovery practically, by leveraging their resources, expertise, and (emerging) networks in the host communities. Second, GUC engagement in the recovery effort will facilitate social cohesion inside Ukraine thanks to transnational interpersonal links and can inspire voluntary return of some GUC members as engagement would help them recover or maintain links to the local communities in Ukraine. Third, GUC can facilitate accountability among institutional actors in fulfilling the commitments of the EU Ukraine Facility and the Ukraine Plan by acting as a watchdog. Finally, open, solutions-oriented exchange between Ukrainians in Ukraine and abroad will support the societal foundation of Ukraine’s democracy by solidifying its civil society.

While GUC is heterogeneous in terms of **migration** history, vision of own role, capacities to engage strategically and sectoral preference and expertise, it makes the following **practical contributions** to enhance the effectiveness and reach of the immediate and long-term recovery efforts:

- **1. Bridging between Ukraine and the societies of partner countries** to build interpersonal trust from the bottom up and thus ensure feedback loops for a meaningful, needs-based recovery. GUC members can serve as “interpreters” to reduce obstacles in international cooperation or investment, originating from differences in political or administrative cultures and market conditions.
- **2. Mobilizing global knowledge as well as technical and financial resources** for supporting Ukraine’s immediate and long-term recovery. GUC members can be staff and experts in the development cooperation with Ukraine in the host countries or serve as transparent, trustworthy counterparts for international investors. Located in the EU and Member States institutions, where appropriate, GUC members can also support knowledge and skill transfer for Ukraine’s EU integration.
- **3. Advocating for Ukraine in their host communities** to sustain public support for recovery efforts and beyond by highlighting the advantages of a strong and free Ukraine for the global public.

This paper is **structured** according to the four dimensions of the Ukraine Recovery Conference: Business, Human, Local and Regional, and the EU Integration. Each section begins with a structured presentation of GUC contributions illustrated by practical examples and ends with a list of tools to foster further GUC engagement. The paper concludes with recommendations for the GUC, Ukrainian state and non-state actors and international partners of Ukraine for involving GUC in Ukraine’s recovery. Unless otherwise indicated, all Internet links were last accessed on 10 June 2024.

# Policy Implications

## BUSINESS DIMENSION:

### How the global Ukrainian community can help mobilise private sector for Ukraine's recovery and economic growth

**Ukrainians abroad are well-placed to facilitate access to private investment for recovery** as intermediaries between Ukrainian government and foreign investors, between Ukrainian and foreign companies (“economic diplomacy”) as well as direct investors. In this role, they can make investment process more transparent and understandable for both sides, thus contributing to mutual trust, which is a critical component of sustainable economic cooperation. Besides, they can provide auxiliary but important functioning, such as improving skills and knowledge of Ukrainian entrepreneurs to be competitive in global markets.

Diaspora organisations and the global Ukrainian community can enhance the business dimension of recovery and restoration and contribute to the economic resistance and development of Ukraine through these six **core contributions**:

1. **Bridging business communities and professionals in Ukraine and abroad.** This exchange provides for varied positive outcomes, such as mutual learning about investment, developing an understanding of business cultures and conditions, designing concrete initiatives and advocating for Ukrainian businesses abroad. We have identified several formats of bridging, whose activities GUC members often initiate, lead or support operationally:



Ukrainian  
Chamber of  
Commerce  
and Industry

**Chambers of commerce**, which are institutionalized forms of private sector cooperation, have existed since before the full-scale Russian invasion but gained new importance afterward. For example, through its 56 representative offices, the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UCCI)<sup>7</sup> provides a direct link to the Ukrainian business community and represents their members in consultations with political and business stakeholders and participates in advocacy processes. Typically, Ukrainian diaspora members organise the

<sup>7</sup> <https://ucci.org.ua/en/>

work of the UCCI's representations abroad. Active members of the Ukrainians diaspora also lead or work in international chambers of commerce, such as the Polish-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce<sup>8</sup> or The Norwegian-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce (NUCC)<sup>9</sup>, and can be directly involved in processing information on export opportunities, investments in Ukraine, and the state of the economy.



Ukrainian World Congress & EPIC



The EU Business HUB

**Professional or sectoral networking platforms**, such as Economic Prosperity and Investment Committee (EPIC)<sup>10</sup> of the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) “works to strengthen the position of diaspora Ukrainians as strategic agents of transformation and change for Ukraine.” Similarly, the newly established German-Ukrainian Community of Bridging Managers<sup>11</sup>, aims to “fortify the economic and cultural ties between Ukraine and Germany, focusing on the heart of our economies - the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).” The EU Business HUB<sup>12</sup> connects Ukrainian entrepreneurs with partnership opportunities in the EU and advocates business needs in the EU institutions.

- **2. Attracting and facilitating investment in Ukraine's businesses, such as (social) start-ups and recovery projects.** The global Ukrainian community can draw investment into Ukraine's recovery by disseminating information and knowledge about investment opportunities, thereby boosting investor confidence with detailed insights on the market, risks, and potential rewards. They can also facilitate daily communication as intermediary agents between beneficiaries in Ukraine and foreign investors. The forms include:



Ukrainian Social Venture Fund

**Funds.** For example, the Ukrainian Social Venture Fund<sup>13</sup>, was co-founded by foreign-based Ukrainians who offer their expertise and networks for mobilising investment into Ukrainian social start-ups. Similarly, two Germany-based Ukrainians co-founded a fund CrowdFund<sup>14</sup> Ukraine to attract small investors in reconstruction of housing in Ukraine.

**Informing and matching platforms.** For example, EU Business HUB offers a comprehensive overview of investment opportunities in Ukraine, categorized by sector, volume, and geographic location, on a digital platform.

8 <https://pol-ukr.com/en/information-about-the-room/>

9 <https://nucc.no/>

10 <https://www.ukrainianworldcongress.org/economic-prosperity-and-investment-committee/>

11 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/bridging-managers/about/>

12 <https://eubusinesshub.org/>

13 <https://www.usv.fund/en>

14 Kyrychkov, N., & Chumak, M. (2024). Crowd Ukraine Pitch Deck. <https://pitch.com/v/crowd-ukraine-pitch-deck-ejww47/926ad0ce-b583-4ad5-adcd-4132e691f6da>

Informal cross-pollination from other activities that help build interpersonal trust for investment. For example, an American investment fund closed a cross-border financing facility for the reconstruction of a destroyed shopping mall in Bucha after this fund's primary investor being engaged in supporting a GUC-run humanitarian initiative in his locality.

- 3. Investing in recovery projects and associated businesses directly.** Members of the global Ukrainian community can invest directly in local businesses to support economic growth, reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine. These investments can include seed capital for new businesses or expansion capital for existing businesses, and would be especially valuable for local micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. To date, we were unable to identify initiatives specifically targeting Ukrainians living abroad for investing privately in Ukraine's recovery.
- 4. Supporting skills development for Ukrainian entrepreneurs by initiating training offers or acting as dissemination and recruitment partners for foreign initiatives.** An example of a GUC upskilling initiative is the one by United for Ukraine (UFU), an initiative comprising Ukraine-based and foreign-based Ukrainians. It launched a Women Lead program<sup>15</sup> to empower women entrepreneurs and initiatives led by women that contribute to the sustainable recovery of Ukraine. GUC members can also help reach out to target audience of such initiatives, launched by foreign-based organizations. For example, Vitsche, a Ukrainian NGO in Germany, supported recruitment of participants to the incubator and accelerator program by PHINEO Startups, by connecting and supporting Ukrainian founders inside the country with counterparts abroad.
- 5. Nurturing skilled workforce to cover Ukraine's labour market needs in short- and long-term perspectives.** With projects such as UFU's Homecoming initiative, GUC organizations and international partners can provide employment assistance, professional development and upskilling, psychological and legal support with the view to ease the return to Ukraine for those choosing to do so. For large development cooperation projects, such as SkillsAlliance from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)<sup>16</sup>, diaspora networks can both support the awareness inside Ukraine as well as among Ukrainians abroad, about these incentives for voluntary and self-initiated return through business initiatives and job opportunities.



Women Lead



PHINEO  
Startups



SkillsAlliance  
from BMZ

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ufu.global/womenlead>

<sup>16</sup> BMZ. (2024, April 26). Fachkräfte für den Wiederaufbau der Ukraine: Entwicklungsministerin Schulze bereitet internationale Initiative vor. Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung. <https://www.bmz.de/de/aktuelles/aktuelle-meldungen/bmz-initiiert-fachkraefte-initiative-fuer-wiederaufbau-ukraine-207606>

- 6. Facilitating market entry and investment in Ukraine for international businesses who will enter Ukrainian market for the first time.** In order to setup a proper operational model, such actors will need to install representatives with Ukrainian language proficiency and general expertise on Ukrainian context. Such can be recruited among diaspora members or currently displaced Ukrainians.

To strengthen the GUC's capacity to make these contributions in Ukraine's recovery, the following **tools**, existing and potential ones, would be helpful:

**Engaging diaspora organisations in global networks that facilitate investment in Ukraine's recovery.** This can be done by, for example, inviting diaspora organizations as attendees or co-organizers into investment fairs, and conferences, such as ReBuild Ukraine<sup>17</sup>, the U-Nation Conference: Innovations to Rebuild Ukraine in Berlin<sup>18</sup> and the discussion round by the UkraineInvest<sup>19</sup>. This is necessary for circulating information about the investment opportunities in Ukraine and networking, as well as for strengthening the sense of belonging to the reconstruction process of Ukraine. The IV Forum "The Role of Diaspora Institutions in Attracting Investments for the Rebuilding of Ukraine"<sup>20</sup> organized by the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, exemplifies how exchange and cooperation between government and business can be achieved with the involvement of the diaspora.

**Connecting global Ukrainian community members to knowledge sources and upskilling opportunities to operate in financial markets.** For example, transparent digital databases and platforms, such as Investment map of Ukraine<sup>21</sup>, can ease access to investment projects. This interactive platform presents a diverse array of investment-ready projects across multiple sectors, thereby facilitating investment in Ukraine. Similarly, to make the connection with Ukraine more sustainable and facilitate cooperation, diaspora organizations could be integrated as partners in the initiatives for supporting small and medium enterprises, including social ones, in the existing governmental platform for business support Diia.Business<sup>22</sup>. Further, diaspora organisations could benefit from cooperating with organisations such as the BDO Ukraine<sup>23</sup> and the Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law<sup>24</sup> who provide information about the legal conditions, potential risks and pitfalls and instruments to avoid them, when it comes to investment.



UkraineInvest



Investment map of Ukraine



Diia.Business

17 <https://rebuildukraine.in.ua/en>

18 <https://www.linkedin.com/events/u-nationconference-innovationst7193479325872992256/about/>

19 UkraineInvest. (n.d.). The diaspora can be an effective way of attracting investment to Ukraine. Retrieved June 6, 2024, from <https://ukraineinvest.gov.ua/en/news/the-diaspora-can-be-an-effective-way-of-attracting-investment-to-ukraine/>

20 UCCI. (2024). Четвертий Форум діаспори (Київ) [The Fourth Diaspora Forum]. <https://ucci.org.ua/events/forums-and-conferences/chetvertii-forum-diaspori-kiyiv>

21 <https://investmentmap.com.ua/>

22 <https://business.diia.gov.ua/en>

23 <https://www.bdo.ua/en-gb/about-1>

24 <https://cedem.org.ua/>





WIDU

**Establishing special diaspora-investment funds for recovery.** Diaspora funds are special investment funds set up by or for the diaspora to invest in the development and recovery of their homeland. Such funds could potentially reduce information asymmetry between individual diaspora investors and investment projects, which can inspire individual investors. It is possible that especially diaspora investors would be keen to use a simple tool to support recovery in their hometown. The Diaspora Investment Fund in Nigeria<sup>25</sup> demonstrates how this mechanism can be established. A similar tool is the one targeting remittances for financial investments, driven by the GIZ. An online platform WIDU.africa project<sup>26</sup> aims to redirect remittances away from consumption only to investment for local entrepreneurs, who are friends or relatives, and offers additional subsidies and coaching. After thorough contextualization, such projects can be adapted to the needs of the recovery of Ukraine.

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<sup>25</sup> <https://nigeriadiasporafund.gov.ng>

<sup>26</sup> WIDU.africa subsidises existing cash flows from private individuals in the African countries' diaspora in Germany, France, Austria, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and Sweden. The project redirects these cash flows into long-term investments for related or friendly entrepreneurs. <https://widu.africa/learn-how-widu-works>

# HUMAN DIMENSION:

## How the global Ukrainian community can contribute to social recovery and human potential of Ukraine

This dimension deals with creating conditions for people to live to their fullest potential, participate in recovery and development, and contribute to a cohesive and inclusive society. Therefore, this dimension is about more than just “human capital” or economic value of citizens but looks at how human potential can be supported.

Humanitarian response alongside defence-related support has been primary focus of many diaspora organizations, where they proved their ability to act in a crisis situation quickly, flexibly and need-oriented<sup>27</sup>. Being trusted by the citizens of host countries and having connections in Ukraine, they continue collecting and delivering humanitarian aid<sup>28</sup>. Yet, their engagement to support human potential in and for Ukraine can go beyond immediate humanitarian response, and covers the following five core contributions:



ODIHR report

- 1. Circulating knowledge about and mobilising public support for Ukraine and its recovery needs in the host communities.** Using different communication channels, GUC members, depending on their own professional focus, can link to different audiences and transmit information about Ukrainian needs bottom-up. For example, diaspora helps to attract attention to the burning issues as Russia’s ecocide in Ukraine and recovery needs of the environment<sup>29</sup> or to the issue of preserving memory, including historical artefacts, such as the ‘Museums. Responsibilities. Futures’<sup>30</sup> conference, co-organised by members of the global Ukrainian community.



Ukraine-Hilfe Berlin

Importantly, GUC often do this in connection to raising host societies’ understanding of Ukraine by means of cultural diplomacy, e.g. the Global Ukrainians Network<sup>31</sup>, which is critical to maintain public support for the recovery investment among Ukraine’s democratic partners. By creating cultural centres, such as the Ukraine House in Denmark<sup>32</sup> or the



Ukrainian Institute London

27 Report from expert discussions organized by ODIHR in the period of 9 February – 3 July 2023 Engaging the Ukrainian Diaspora in Reconstruction and Development”, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/4/561475.pdf>

28 <https://ukraine-hilfe-berlin.de/>

29 Ukrainian Institute London. (2023). Russia’s Ecocide in Ukraine. <https://ukrainianinstitute.org.uk/events/russias-ecocide-in-ukraine/>

30 Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz. (2024). Museen und Wiederaufbau: OBMIN-Konferenz zu Kultur in der Ukraine. [https://www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/news-detail/artikel/2024/05/28/was-museen-zum-wiederaufbau-der-ukraine-beitragen-koennen.html?sword\\_list%5B0%5D=museen&sword\\_list%5B1%5D=und&sword\\_list%5B2%5D=wiederaufbau&no\\_cache=1](https://www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/news-detail/artikel/2024/05/28/was-museen-zum-wiederaufbau-der-ukraine-beitragen-koennen.html?sword_list%5B0%5D=museen&sword_list%5B1%5D=und&sword_list%5B2%5D=wiederaufbau&no_cache=1)

31 Global Ukraine. (2024, May 20). Якою повинна бути культурна дипломатія під час війни? [What should cultural diplomacy during the war be like?]. <https://global-ukraine.gbhs.fr/news/yakoju-povynna-butu-kulturna-dyplomatiia-pid-chas-viiny>

32 <https://www.ukrainehouse.dk/>

Ukrainian House in Dresden<sup>33</sup>, diaspora organizations put Ukraine on the mental map of the host societies, deconstructing myths and contributing to the perception of Ukraine as a subject, an independent and sovereign state. They are also important physical spaces for encounters, where recovery needs can be made tangible to host societies and Ukrainians living there.

- 2. Bridging Ukrainians abroad, their host communities and Ukrainians in Ukraine during recovery planning and implementation, accounting for interests of diverse groups such as women<sup>34</sup>, youth, and minorities, and specialised needs like those of Ukrainian soldiers and veterans.** GUC members already support the whole-of-society approach to the recovery of Ukraine by giving voice to such groups and supporting their self-organizing and empowerment bottom-up<sup>35</sup>. For example, women's associations such as the World Federation of Ukrainian Women Organizations<sup>36</sup> or the Ukrainian Women's Democratic Network<sup>37</sup> connect female leaders and activists in nearly every social sphere in Ukraine and abroad. The Ukrainian LGBTIQ+ community also reaches out abroad thanks to the efforts of GUC counterparts, such as Kwitne Queer<sup>38</sup>. Besides, GUC members often assist the soldiers undergoing rehabilitation and medical treatment in partner countries<sup>39</sup> or can support other rehabilitation and (mental) health needs, such as in a partnership between Sweden-based Ukraine Nordic Forum<sup>40</sup> and a Ukraine-rooted Repower<sup>41</sup> organizing mental rehabilitation trips for Ukrainian combat medics to Sweden<sup>42</sup>. GUC members also have high potential in facilitating the establishment and implementation of youth exchange programmes, such as the "MeeUp! German-Ukrainian Youth Exchange". Besides sectoral engagement, umbrella institutions such as the Ukrainian World Congress<sup>43</sup> bridge global Ukrainian community to Ukraine, while their networks can drive impactful initiatives in different sectors.
- 3. Providing recovery-related expertise, skills training and research-based knowledge for Ukraine.** For example, the GIZ-run clinic partnerships programme<sup>44</sup> has recognized the potential of Ukrainian

33 <https://plattform-dresden.de/en/ukrainisches-haus-ein-zuhause-in-dresden-2-2/>

34 Lomonosova, N.Provan, A. (2024). Build Back Better for Everyone. A Feminist Perspective on Reconstruction and Recovery of Ukraine. Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy (CFFP).

35 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I\\_LxEg14NsY&amp;t=2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_LxEg14NsY&amp;t=2s)

36 <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100069513141112>

37 <https://www.facebook.com/wdnukraine/>

38 Instagram @kwitnequeer

39 BMI. (2024, March 12). Europäische Solidarität: 1.022 schwerverletzte und schwerkranke Ukrainerinnen und Ukrainer in Deutschland medizinisch behandelt. Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat. <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2024/03/kleeblatt-evakuierungen.html;jsessionid=8F9501C4FA109EAE2DE941A1D8836F4B.live871?nn=9390260>

40 <https://nuforum.se/>

41 <https://www.repower.ngo/eng>

42 Nordic Ukraine Forum. (2024). 2023 Annual Report. <https://nuforum.se/Annual%20Report%202023.pdf>, p.6-7

43 <https://www.ukrainianworldcongress.org>

44 <https://klinikpartnerschaften.de/fokus/solomiya-gesundheitsversorgung-ukraine>



Ukraine  
Recovery  
Youth Global  
Initiative

medical personnel living in Germany for a longer time or who fled since the full-scale invasion and involves in its activities to support to the Ukrainian medical system. Similarly, diaspora organizations are becoming reliable partners for Ukrainian NGOs involved in recording, preserving, and planning the future restoration of architectural and cultural heritage affected by destruction, such as the Ukrainian Heritage Monitoring Lab<sup>45</sup>. In terms of upskilling, Ukraine Recovery Youth Global Initiative<sup>46</sup> by GUC and host community members offer students blended learning on topics relevant for recovery. Similarly, Youth Debates<sup>47</sup> programme “Discovering, Preserving, Building the Future Together”<sup>48</sup>, which hosted Ukrainian debaters to exchange with peers in Germany, is a good example of not only developing young people’s critical thinking skills, but also their sense of responsibility for preserving cultural and historical heritage, building Ukraine’s future and making their own contribution to the country’s restoration.

GUC members can also facilitate application of **Ukraine’s international research and innovation cooperation** to the recovery needs. They can do so through established organizations, such as the German-Ukrainian Academic Society<sup>49</sup> or recently displaced Ukrainian scholars, such as in case of a new partnersh between the Universities of Kiel and Kherson<sup>50</sup>.

- 4. Preserving Ukrainian identity and a sense of belonging among the global Ukrainian community, thus nurturing the supportive environment for engagement of next generations as well as self-initiated, voluntary return to Ukraine thanks to keeping cultural ties to it.** Educational events at Saturday/Sunday schools<sup>51</sup> or Plast<sup>52</sup> communities worldwide play a crucial role in promoting education and cultural identity among Ukrainian children and adolescents abroad. These institutions provide supplementary educational programmes that go beyond the regular school curriculum, particularly supporting the teaching of language, cultural knowledge, literature, history, and geography of Ukraine. These educational offers provide not only learning opportunities but also occasions for social interaction and community strengthening. GUC members often initiate broader education opportunities for youth abroad, including bilingual education

45 <https://www.heritage.in.ua/en>. The global Ukrainian community members provide informational support on existing formats of cultural heritage protection abroad, such as the experiences of local UNESCO clubs. They also analyze existing models of historical memory, and assist in developing the networking of NGOs in this area.

46 <https://www.urygi.com/>

47 <https://ukraineyouthdebates.de/>

48 Ukraine Youth Debates. (2023, December 6). «Пізнаємо, зберігаємо, будуємо майбутнє разом»: Підбиття підсумків проекту у Німеччині [“Knowing, preserving, building the future together”: summary of the project in Germany]. <http://ukraineyouthdebates.de/2023/12/piznayemo-zberigayemo-buduyemo-majbutnye-razom-shkolyari-prezentuvaly-rezultaty-roboty-ukrainechyni/>

49 <https://ukrainet.eu/>

50 CAU. (2023, April 3). Uni Kiel festigt Zusammenarbeit mit Hochschule in Kherson/Ukraine. Christian-Albrechts-Universität Zu Kiel. <https://www.uni-kiel.de/de/detailansicht/news/084-kooperation-kherson>

51 <https://www.ukrainianworldcongress.org/ua/ukrainian-schools/>

52 <https://en.plast.org.ua/>

as a German-Ukrainian International School in Berlin<sup>53</sup> (Deutsch-Ukrainische Begegnungsschule<sup>54</sup>). At this school, pupils are taught in German and Ukrainian. It also offers school-leaving qualifications from both countries.

- 5. Mobilizing resources for immediate humanitarian needs and deeper transformations in Ukraine's social services.** For example, GUC members' initiated Razom for Ukraine<sup>55</sup> program to support hospitals with medicine and equipment.

The following tools and approaches can help harness further the GUC capacity to support the humanitarian dimension of Ukraine's recovery:

**Targeting relevant social groups, such as youth, of Ukrainians abroad and in Ukraine with human potential development programs simultaneously, where reasonable.** Peer exchange could help increase social cohesion by building interpersonal trust. For example, existing programs for youth engagement in Ukraine's recovery, such as Vidnova:UA<sup>56</sup>, the national programme for engaging young people in the restoration of Ukraine", or Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors<sup>57</sup>, an initiative by the European Youth Parliament on elaborating youth perspectives on recovery<sup>58</sup> could specifically target young people from among the 2 million externally displaced Ukrainian youth<sup>59</sup> in addition to those from Ukraine. Ukraine Recovery Youth Global Initiative is a good example of combining these two target groups.

To further sustainably enhance youth involvement, it is crucial to establish more bilateral interstate exchange programmes or formats similar to the existing Polish-Ukrainian<sup>60</sup> and Lithuanian-Ukrainian<sup>61</sup>. Creation of **youth councils** in the ministries and local authorities may largely contribute to youth involvement and **should also have an option of remote participation** to support connection and recognition of displaced youth.

**Recognizing the diaspora organizations' potential to act as providers of knowledge or facilitators in the development of human potential in and for Ukraine.** For example, education promoting

53 Deutscher Städtetag. (2022, October 21). Deutsch-Ukrainische Begegnungsschule eröffnet: Deutscher Städtetag <https://www.staedtetag.de/themen/ukraine-hilfe-der-staedte/deutsch-ukrainische-begegnungsschule-eroeffnet>

54 <https://www.staedtetag.de/themen/ukraine-hilfe-der-staedte/deutsch-ukrainische-begegnungsschule-eroeffnet>

55 <https://www.razomforukraine.org/razom-health/>

56 <https://eidos.org.ua/vidnovaua/>

57 <https://eyp.org/news/news/rebuild-ukraine-policy-paper/>

58 European Youth Parliament. (2023). Towards a sustainable reconstruction of Ukraine: Youth perspectives from Europe. Vision paper. <https://eyp.org/content/uploads/2023/07/online-version-towards-a-sustainable-reconstruction-of-ukraine-youth-perspectives-from-europe.pdf>

59 Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-polytics/3675842-marina-popatenko-zastupnica-ministra-molodi-ta-sportu.html>

60 <https://wymianymlodziezy.frse.org.pl/>

61 [https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/440\\_090#Text](https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/440_090#Text)





EU4Skills

initiatives such as SavED<sup>62</sup> and Teach for Ukraine<sup>63</sup> or upskilling programs such as EU4Skills-program<sup>64</sup> or SkillsAlliance<sup>65</sup> by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)<sup>66</sup>, can better target the needs of their beneficiaries in case of sustainable cooperation with diaspora organizations. Potentially, the global Ukrainian community can serve as mentors, facilitators or managers in these initiatives, find partners in their host countries or reach out to displaced Ukrainians from these initiatives' target groups. Besides, Ukrainians who have had experience abroad can be trainers or at least asked to share experience peers in Ukraine when it comes to implementation of reforms in the social sphere. For example, teachers who have taught abroad can use their experience to support the successful reform of the New Ukrainian School (NUS) and the harmonisation of the Ukrainian education system with EU standards.

**Supporting bottom-up organization of displaced Ukrainians** who want to engage in Ukraine's recovery, with relevant training and financing. For example, supporting young Ukrainians abroad and enabling them to set up own organizations and projects has potential to increase support for Ukraine among the young voters in the partner countries, as they can offer creative and appealing formats like raves in Edinburg<sup>67</sup> or information campaigns on TikTok<sup>68</sup> about recovery and related topics.

**Better connecting Ukrainian children to their homeland through the Ukrainian language.** Due to a lack of connection to their homeland, the integration of people into new societies often leads to assimilation. Particularly for people who have left Ukraine due to the full-scale war, opportunities should be created to officially teach and learn the Ukrainian language in schools as a heritage language and a second foreign language. One example of this is the German federal state of Hessen, where Ukrainian will be taught as a foreign language<sup>69</sup> in schools from the school year 2024/2025. The diaspora should actively advocate for the introduction of Ukrainian language education. Ultimately, this political decision is made at the state level, but participation and targeted advocacy can play a crucial role. Additionally, initiatives to establish bilingual classes and foster partnerships and projects between schools in the countries of destination and Ukraine should be promoted. These measures will enable Ukrainian children and youths to preserve their identity, maintain their connection to Ukraine, and facilitate a voluntary return to Ukraine.

62 <https://saved.foundation/programs>

63 <https://teachforukraine.org/>

64 <https://eu4skills.info/en/>

65 BMZ. (2024, April 26). Fachkräfte für den Wiederaufbau der Ukraine: Entwicklungsministerin Schulze bereitet internationale Initiative vor. Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung. <https://www.bmz.de/de/aktuelles/aktuelle-meldungen/bmz-initiiert-fachkraefte-initiative-fuer-wiederaufbau-ukraine-207606>

66 <https://www.bmz.de/de/aktuelles/aktuelle-meldungen/bmz-initiiert-fachkraefte-initiative-fuer-wiederaufbau-ukraine-207606>

67 <https://www.instagram.com/raveforukraine/>

68 [https://www.tiktok.com/@vitsche\\_berlin/video/7346147187589451041](https://www.tiktok.com/@vitsche_berlin/video/7346147187589451041)

69 Ashelm, M. (2024, May 24). Hessen führt als erstes Land Ukrainisch als Fremdsprache in Schulen ein. [kultus.hessen.de/presse/hessen-fuehrt-als-erstes-land-ukrainisch-als-fremdsprache-in-schulen-ein](https://kultus.hessen.de/presse/hessen-fuehrt-als-erstes-land-ukrainisch-als-fremdsprache-in-schulen-ein)

# LOCAL AND REGIONAL DIMENSION:

## How the global Ukrainian community can support community-led recovery of Ukraine

The global Ukrainian community (GUC) is – first and foremost – people who have roots or affinity to a particular locality within Ukraine, such as a city, village, or town. The recovery process should allow people to put their sense of belonging to a locality in Ukraine into concrete action, which would strengthen hromadas to lead their recovery. Besides, notwithstanding their origin, GUC can be a partner and a potential for Ukrainian municipalities and their self-government authorities who actively seek transnational cooperation and EU integration. GUC's support for community-led recovery covers the following **five key contributions**:<sup>70</sup>

1. **Building bridges of trust through facilitating municipal cooperation between Ukraine and the host countries.** GUC members promote a **win-win** approach thanks to their understanding of the strong points of partners on both sides, framing and articulating their mutual interest for a long-term partnership. It might mean establishing first contact or participating in the existing town twinnings as a representative of a partner municipality or a civil society counterpart, while strategically broadening the circle of participating entities to include universities and businesses (who remain generally excluded).<sup>71</sup> Both diaspora members and those who moved abroad in search of protection from war have been initiating or supporting municipal cooperation:

For example, a diaspora organisation supported a twinning between Chernihiv and Aachen, which resulted in the involvement of RWTH UNESCO-Chair for Cultural Heritage and City Planning to design a reconstruction plan for the central street of Chernihiv, a UNESCO cultural site. It was a win-win opportunity that the NGO Ukrainians in Aachen helped to create as RWTH students got a chance to work with a real-life case.<sup>72</sup> In Berlin, two diaspora members working in the district administrations, facilitated twinning of their districts with Rivne and Kharkiv, respectively. A recently displaced municipal official from

<sup>70</sup> The authors thank Afina Albrecht, Mariya Levanchuk, Iryna Slavova and Mariya Zdrila for their helpful comments to the first draft of this section.

<sup>71</sup> Smętkowski, M., Kniazevych, A., Olechnicka, A., Orchowska, J., & Przekop-Wiszniewska, E. (2023). Research for REGI Committee – Cooperation between EU cities and regions with their Ukrainian partners. European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/733117/IPOL\\_STU\(2023\)733117\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/733117/IPOL_STU(2023)733117_EN.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.ukrainer-in-aachen.de/about-1>

Melitopol coordinated, through a German civic initiative, a partnership between her municipality and Aalen and Heidenheim (an der Brenz) from Germany.<sup>73</sup>

■ **2. Supporting international representation and advocacy by the Ukrainian municipalities.** GUC members already support municipalities' capacities to participate in the transnational political dialogue through their representation outside Ukraine as **staff in liaison offices** at the EU institutions and Member States for the municipal associations or individual municipalities. For example, a Liaison Officer<sup>74</sup> of the City of Vinnytsia in Brussels is a Brussels-based Ukrainian. Language knowledge and previous experience in the "Brussels bubble" and presence on the ground allow more flexible and faster communication flow between the Committee of Regions and other EU stakeholders and this municipality in Ukraine.

■ **3. Providing Ukrainian partner countries with expertise on Ukrainian context and, specifically, its municipal and regional dimensions.** Investors interested in local opportunities and development actors need expertise in political, social and economic aspects of operating in Ukraine, (local) cultural norms and institutional set-up. This is especially relevant to new actors, who will enter Ukrainian local markets or cooperate with Ukrainian municipalities for the first time.

In order to setup a proper operational model, such actors will need to install representatives with Ukrainian language proficiency and general expertise in the Ukrainian context. Such can be recruited among diaspora members or currently displaced Ukrainians. Besides, expertise can be mobilised from dedicated networks, such as the Nordic-Baltic Knowledge-Based Input Network to the Rebuilding of Ukraine (HROMADA). It features, among other researchers, the members of GUC. HROMADA network emphasizes local development and provides relevant research-based advice to development cooperation actors in the Nordic and Baltic states.<sup>75</sup>

■ **4. Mobilization of knowledge, technical, and financial resources by promoting specific local recovery projects, sectors, or localities in a win-win character.** Having counterparts in any host country with a solid ability to navigate in Ukraine, allows the promotion of specific geographical areas or sectors for any kind of investments or aid. For example, a German-Ukrainian Bureau<sup>76</sup> strives to mobilise recovery

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73 Note: while Melitopol is under temporary Russian occupation, its authorities relocated to Zaporizhzhya and support there their displaced community.

74 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/vinnytsia-city-representation-in-eu/>

75 <https://hromada.network/>

76 <https://www.du-bureau.org/>



Mykolaiv  
Water Hub

funding to municipalities in the Chernihiv region, thus maintaining **geographic focus**. Mykolaiv Water Hub<sup>77</sup>, set up by GUC members, facilitates investment opportunities into the recovery of water provision in the city of Mykolaiv and modernisation of water provision in several municipalities in other regions, thus exemplifying a sectoral focus.

- **5. Sustaining and developing human potential inside the Ukrainian municipalities beyond the self-government authorities.** The sectoral activities as described in sections on business and human dimensions in this paper, can be thought of locally, with GUC as facilitators for diverse opportunities. For example, to strengthen institutional and technical infrastructure for education in Ukraine, a Mazepa project targets local libraries. It turns these libraries into upskilling spaces for youth, which became possible thanks to fundraising activities of two friends from the same town, one of whom uses his position in the IT industry in the US to fundraise for this cause, while the other manages the project in Ukraine.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, at least two projects of the Vidnova Fellowship<sup>79</sup> dedicated to the language of recovery and community-based learning, are collaborative projects between Ukrainians residing in Ukraine and living between Kyiv and other European capitals. Such collaborations help address targeted needs, while also supporting cohesion between Ukrainians with different migration histories (or without it).

The following tools and approaches can help harness further the GUC capacity to contribute to the recovery in municipalities and regions:

1. **Creating platforms for structured dialogue between the Ukrainian municipalities and the GUC organisations.** The needs of municipal authorities that GUC can cover are multifaceted, from advising on presenting the municipality in international political and investment forums to searching partners and investors to projects or intermediating between them and potential cooperation partners (municipalities, businesses, international financial institutions).



Cities4Cities

Ideally, local and regional authorities (LRA) associations and diaspora organizations could co-establish such a platform in partnership with existing matching initiatives, such as Cities4Cities<sup>80</sup> and Bridges of Trust.<sup>81</sup> The cooperation could start with a conference (e.g. ‘GUC for Municipalities and Regions’) or a discussion round during meetings of municipal and regional actors, such as during the annual German-Ukrainian Municipal Partnerships conference.<sup>82</sup> It can be advanced

77 Inshe TV. (2024, February 21). Mykolajiw, Mykolaiv Water Hub und Ost-Ausschuss der Deutschen Wirtschaft unterzeichnen in Berlin ein Memorandum zur Lösung des Wasserversorgungsproblems (ukr.). Ost-Ausschuss Der Deutschen Wirtschaft. <https://www.ost-ausschuss.de/de/mykolajiw-mykolaiv-water-hub-und-ost-ausschuss-der-deutschen-wirtschaft-unterzeichnen-berlin-ein>. See also: Facebook @mykolaivwaterhub

78 The author thanks Ihor Chava, one of the project designers, for sharing the relevant information with her.

79 Maziarz, A., Fendrych, M., Tranchych, M., & Yeromenko, N. (2024). Vidnova Storyline 2022–2024. Commit by MitOst gGmbH / Active Citizens Institute. <https://vidnova.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Vidnova-Storyline-2022-2024.pdf>, p. 161, 163

80 <https://cities4cities.eu/>

81 CEMR. (2024, May 30). Bridges of Trust. Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). <https://ccre.org/en/actualites/view/4545>

toward an online matching platform for communities and GUC organisations in host countries and Ukraine.

2. Supporting global community networks and community ‘ambassadors’ that involve Ukrainians abroad. Several dedicated people from the same municipality who are currently abroad could form the backbone of a municipality’s global network supporting that community in all GUC tasks, depending on their expertise and capacity. Such a virtual community can create necessary links to the home municipality, increasing chances for a voluntary return, while also linking it to global opportunities.
3. **Recognizing the potential of GUC members with local and regional government experience to provide peer mentorship and training for Ukrainian counterparts.** Such GUC members can serve as trainers and peers for sharing knowledge on representation and the Europeanization process in relevant programs for municipalities and regions, such as Committee of Regions Support Package for Ukraine.<sup>83</sup> This includes activities inside municipalities, online and offline, like training in language and diplomatic communication, project design and grant writing to EU institutions, as well as in host countries, such as job shadowing and internships. While these programs should by no means be limited to GUC peers, having them in the training groups or as mentors can help ease the language barrier and, thus, make learning opportunities accessible to more Ukrainian municipal officials.
4. Designing international development cooperation programmes and projects for community-led recovery that explicitly encourage partnerships between Ukrainian domestic and diaspora organisations over addressing challenges at the municipal and regional level. While we did not find a specific example, a model is offered by the pairing principle of the Vidnova Fellowship.
5. Systematically upskilling GUC members for service in Ukrainian municipalities in light of the European integration. Return fellowships, such as Migration entwicklungspolitisch gestalten (MEG)<sup>84</sup> by GIZ could specifically cooperate with Ukrainian LRAs for secondments in local and regional authorities. At the same time, municipal officials who continue performing their duties while seeking temporary protection abroad, could be offered job shadowing or internships in the counterpart public organisations in the host communities. Both approaches will be helpful in forming a pool of skilled municipal and regional officials Ukraine will need for a community-led recovery.



Report of the  
Committee of  
Regions Support  
Package for  
Ukraine

82 SKEW. (2023). Deutsch-ukrainische kommunale Partnerschaftskonferenz 2023. SKEW Engagement Global. <https://skew.engagement-global.de/deutsch-ukrainische-kommunale-partnerschaftskonferenz.html>

83 CoR. (2024). Committee of Regions 10-point support package for Ukraine. COR-2024-00359-16-01-NB-TRA (EN) 1/14. <https://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Documents/13%20-%20FINAL%20CoR%2010-point%20support%20package%20to%20UA.pdf>

84 GIZ. (2023). Migration entwicklungspolitisch gestalten. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. <https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2023-de-Shaping-Development-Oriented-Migration.pdf>



# EU DIMENSION:

## How the global Ukrainian community can foster Ukraine's EU integration and related reforms

There is an under-explored potential to include the global Ukrainian community (GUC) in Ukraine's EU accession and recovery processes, given that the externally displaced Ukrainian community in Europe has grown to more than 7 million people since 2022.<sup>85</sup> GUC can be a partner to Ukraine's government, its institutions, civil society and international partners in the following ways:

### ■ 1. Building bridges, trust, and advocacy within host-societies

Although the EU accession is based on negotiations between EU institutions and the Ukrainian government, i.e. a matter of inter-governmental processes, members of the GUC are well placed to build bridges and trust in host societies to support Ukraine's path to EU integration. This is necessary also because EU member states can exercise vetoes on the opening and closing of different negotiation chapters, hence political and public support for Ukraine's EU accession in host societies is key. GUC's involvement can be fostered through the following pathways:<sup>86</sup>

- Gain and maintain access to representatives from host-state parliaments and governments where policies towards Ukraine are formulated, discussed, and negotiated. Mechanisms of engagement could be citizens' discussions, initiatives, and assemblies involving MPs and (local) governmental representatives; becoming part of host-state political parties whose programmes are sympathetic to Ukraine's EU integration, thereby shaping policy towards Ukraine from within the political party system.
- Professionalise Ukrainian community institutions in host countries, as many of these are currently engaging only volunteers.<sup>87</sup> Thereby create capacity and link GUC to civil society, professional organisations (medical, engineering, IT, academic, agricultural, etc), and trade

<sup>85</sup> By the end of 2021, 1.5 million Ukrainians held a residence permit in the EU Member States. In May 2024, almost 6 million received temporary protection. Eurostat. (2022, November). Ukrainian citizens in the EU. Eurostat Statistics Explained. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Ukrainian\\_citizens\\_in\\_the\\_EU](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Ukrainian_citizens_in_the_EU); UNHCR. (2024, May 16). Situation Ukraine: Refugee Situation. Operational Data Portal. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

<sup>86</sup> These recommendations are derived from Koinova M. (2021) *Diaspora Entrepreneurs and Contested States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>87</sup> Warwick/OSCE-ODIHR Workshop on "Engaging the Ukrainian Diaspora in Reconstruction and Development," 3 July, 2023.

unions in host-countries that can engage peer-to-peer connections towards Ukraine's EU integration.

Engage mainstream and social media to shape public opinion in host countries. Mechanisms could be the promotion of specific messages about Ukraine's EU integration, countering disinformation and shedding light on an ongoing negotiation process. This can take place through developing individual visibility of specific community members and engaging many others through media campaigns to discuss Ukraine-EU matters in the mainstream and social media, through blog posts and podcasts, among others. For example, the government of Ukraine launched a successful campaign to support the EU bid, and many diaspora organisations multiplied it.<sup>88</sup>

## ■ 2. Engaging with EU institutions in Brussels

Since Brussels is a key site for EU accession negotiations, and a home to the European Parliament, European Commission, European External Action Service, European Council, and numerous think tanks shaping EU policy, providing permanent presence of GUC in Brussels is key to having visibility and voice. For example, a PromoteUkraine<sup>89</sup> NGO has already established such a presence, and has been active in bringing Ukraine-related matters in Brussels. As there is a dual embeddedness of Promote Ukraine in Brussels, as a de facto "capital" of Europe and a de jure capital of Belgium, the NGO seeks to shape Belgium's foreign policy towards Ukraine as well. For example, it has recently launched protests to pressure the Belgium government to stop gas network contracts with providers in Russia.

The following entry points for such and other diaspora organisations can be identified:

- European Parliament: Since the European Parliament is the most permeable of all EU institutions, where MEPs can receive input from citizens, building connections with MEPs and working groups formulating policies towards Ukraine is key. Advising MEPs on Ukraine-related matters already exists. The European Parliament has an EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee, responsible for developing relations with Ukraine's parliament (Verkhovna Rada), and a Committee on Foreign Affairs, among other Ukraine-related forums. MEPs could be approached for conversations after representatives from diaspora organisations register with EU's transparency register.
- European Committee of the Regions has a multi-faceted initiative

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88 Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. (2022, May 29). Ukraine is Europe: A large-scale Embrace Ukraine campaign has been launched in support of Ukraine's EU bid. <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/ukrayina-ce-yevropa-startuvala-masshtabna-kampaniya-embrace-ukraine-na-pidtrimku-kandidatstva-ukrayini-v-chleni-yes>

89 <https://www.promoteukraine.org/>

in support of Ukraine, “ranging from political advocacy, exchange of know-how and facilitating representation in Brussels of Ukrainian cities, regions and their associations.”<sup>90</sup>

- The newly established EU Ukraine Facility has the goal to enhance investments for the reconstruction of Ukraine. GUC involvement can be cross-cutting within the Facility, such as hiring its members as officers within the EU to support its operations, engaging GUC organisations in advisory role for sectoral priorities and partnering with it for public dissemination campaigns in the EU.

### ■ 3. Knowledge production, exchange, and providing expertise

Advocacy for Ukraine’s EU accession needs to be based on sound information, data analysis, and expertise. This could be pursued in several ways by the GUC, the Ukrainian government and by the collaboration of both:

- Mapping resources. There have been multiple attempts to map the Ukrainian diaspora, through a variety of studies and NGO initiatives. Yet, a targeted mapping of expertise existing in GUC will be useful to enlist for upcoming EU negotiations. Such mapping can include international legal and a wider professional expertise relevant to specific negotiation chapters (for example: transport, education, IT, agriculture, environment, etc).
- Providing expertise. The Ukrainian government can engage GUC members in negotiation teams, to provide information, background content, legal and subject-related expertise.
- Convey best practices. There is a need to learn from existing best practices of countries that have undergone EU accession in Eastern and Southeastern Europe especially when such have experienced violent conflicts, as in the Western Balkans. Best practices would need to be adapted to the unique situation of Ukraine, undergoing both recovery and EU accession simultaneously.

### ■ 4. Empowering the Diaspora and Creating an Advisory Body

There is a widespread need for the diaspora and GUC to feel empowered by the Ukrainian government, including that the government spells out concretely how they see the GUC in the EU integration process. The Ukrainian government could do so through several measures:

- Engaging the GUC through Ukrainian embassies and consulates abroad on specific matters related to Ukraine’s EU accession.

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<sup>90</sup> CoR. (n.d.). CoR Stands in Solidarity with Ukraine. European Committee of the Regions. Retrieved June 6, 2024, from <https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/Pages/cor-stands-in-solidarity-with-Ukraine.aspx>

- Connecting existing civil society infrastructure (hubs, houses, and centres) in different European locations, and a hub in the European Parliament to local government authorities (hromadas), and governing structures of IDPs. This is where the GUC can initiate, integrate, and advocate their knowledge and expertise on EU-related matters, while connecting to local communities, local authorities, and humanitarian organizations.
- Developing an advisory body to the Ukrainian government, where the GUC can provide advice, feedback, and suggestions for public outreach on the negotiation of different chapters to government institutions within Ukraine (for example: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of the Economy, etc).

## ■ 5. Participating in Institutional Reforms

The GUC can be an actor in deepening institutional reforms required to demonstrate Ukraine's progress on matters of EU integration. Such participation can be:

- Bilateral, by engaging directly with Ukrainian institutions and civil society.
- EU-related and sponsored programmes for recovery and institutional reforms (for example: Life Programme on climate and environment, EU4Health, Digital Europe and others).
- Public-private partnerships with EU stakeholders that aid specific institutional reforms by dealing with multi-faceted challenges specific to recovery (such as related to trauma and psychological health, seeking justice, migration, gender, minority rights, etc).
- Monitoring of Ukraine's advancement on negotiations of different chapters, the speed and direction of these, on national and local levels, and monitoring the actual reforms and **the financial integrity of new trusts and endowments created for the recovery process.**

In conclusion, the global Ukrainian community can seek to establish its contribution to the EU integration and recovery of Ukraine by considering different partners on an equal footing and for the mutual benefit of all stakeholders involved.

# Recommendations

Despite many impressive grass-roots initiatives, the contribution of the global Ukrainian community to Ukraine's recovery remains largely untapped by institutional actors in Ukraine and abroad. Therefore, the recommendations addressing the global Ukrainian community (GUC), the Ukrainian state and non-state actors and international partners will aim at creating conditions and mechanisms for systematic cooperation between GUC and recovery stakeholders in Ukraine and abroad.

## FOR THE GLOBAL UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY:

**For exercising its agency in Ukraine's recovery, GUC should develop formats, channels and mechanisms for self-organization, i.e. institutionalizing, communication and visibility to other actors.** GUC is heterogeneous and no one organisation represents all of the groups. So institutional actors (e.g. governments, international financial institutions, investors) should identify well-networked and professional organisations, with which to develop sustainable collaboration. Especially after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the arrival of people seeking protection, many new initiatives and organisations have emerged, often connected at the local level through non-formal networks.<sup>91</sup> In order to make the links in the GUC sustainable, it is necessary to reconfigure the field by reforming the existing organisations and creating new organisations, alliances and horizontal links between them to create focal points for all other actors. One example is the Alliance of Ukrainian Organisations in Germany, where the forces are bound in an institutionalised form or Union of Ukrainians of France, where an organisation established in 1949 has joined forces with new member organisations. Establishing GUC institutions and linking them together horizontally with strategically established communication channels and tools can upscale the involvement of the GUC in recovery of Ukraine.

Further recommendations concerns GUC's activities in the four dimensions of recovery:

### ■ Business dimension:

- **Create and promote funds and platforms** that attract and facilitate investments in Ukrainian businesses, especially in social start-ups and recovery projects.
- Enhance the activities of chambers of commerce, **professional networking platforms**, and sector-specific committees within the GUC. Organize regular business forums with a focus on recovery, matchmaking events, and roundtables to facilitate direct communication between Ukrainian businesses and foreign investors.

<sup>91</sup> Examples include the community group "Network (Мережа)" and working group "Reconstruction and Recovery of Ukraine (Відновлення та Відбудова України)", managed by members of Open Platform e.V.(member of Alliance of Ukrainian organisations and Crisp e.V. As channels, regular online and offline community meetings are essential for developing sustainable structures, empowerment, and cooperation.



- Collaborate with international organizations to offer **training and mentorship programs** for Ukrainian entrepreneurs abroad to contribute to recovery. Facilitate the dissemination and recruitment for these programs through diaspora networks.
- **Develop investment schemes that target diaspora** members, providing them with opportunities to invest in their hometowns or sectors of interest. Establish support systems that provide information, legal assistance, and risk mitigation strategies for diaspora investors.
- **Assist international businesses in entering the Ukrainian market** by providing local expertise and language proficiency.

#### ■ Human dimension:

- **Foster cross-sectoral collaboration** by linking various fields and stakeholders, as recovery requires a **holistic approach**.
- Enhance **advocacy and cultural diplomacy** initiatives to raise awareness about Ukraine's recovery needs and keep emphasizing that recovery goes only together with security guarantees.
- **Design flexible, inclusive, bottom-up opportunities for individuals** to contribute to the work of diaspora organizations and enhance cooperation between different waves of migration.
- **Improve own organisational capacity, consider sectoral profile and strategically build links** to civil society, professional organisations (medical, engineering, IT, academic, agricultural, etc), and trade unions in host-countries to serve as sectoral or otherwise specialized GUC partners for institutional actors abroad.
- Initiate programs that **unite externally displaced youth with youth in Ukraine** keeping in mind conflict sensitivity regarding different experiences of the war and the do-no-harm approach.

#### ■ Local and Regional dimension:

- **Seek structured dialogue with the Ukrainian local and regional authorities as well as local state administrations** in a form of, for example, regular consultation platforms with all-Ukrainian LRA Associations,<sup>92</sup> participating in public councils at the LRAs and local state administrations, attending or organizing (joint) conferences, participating in international municipal cooperation via local authorities in your host country.

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<sup>92</sup> These are: the Association of Ukrainian Cities (<https://auc.org.ua/>), the All-Ukrainian Association of Amalgamated Territorial Communities (<https://www.en.hromady.org/about/>), the All-Ukrainian Association of Communities (<https://communities.org.ua/>) and the Ukrainian Association of District and Regional Councils (<https://www.uaror.org.ua/>)

- **Design and implement projects to support LRA capacities** for international communication and representation, such as language tutoring, information sessions on sectoral peculiarities of public service provision in host countries.
- Reach out to LRAs in your community and region of origin in Ukraine to investigate opportunities for cooperation or intermediation in such tasks as **transnational municipal cooperation, seeking investors, accompanying at international events.**
- **Consider establishing virtual community networks** with others from your Ukrainian community of origin or choice (“**zemlyatstva**”), which can amplify that community’s opportunities internationally.

#### ■ **EU dimension:**

- **Advocate for all necessary support for Ukraine**, because Ukraine defends the security and cohesion of the whole of Europe. **Recovery and security should be thought of as one.**
- **Inform about the reform and recovery process**, use best practices to substantiate claims and show Ukraine’s progress on its way to the EU. **Stimulate interest and debate in society**, especially at the local level. Demonstrate that **Ukraine’s recovery and future EU membership have significant potential**, highlighting the substantial contributions Ukraine can make as a state.
- **Create sustainable formats, structures and mechanisms** (scientific publications, podcasts, regular exchange meetings) to **counteract propaganda and disinformation** in the long term.
- **Establish sustainable cooperation with representatives of parliaments and governments of host countries**, representatives of **EU institutions** such as the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Council, as well as numerous **think tanks** formulating policy towards Ukraine.
- Assist Ukrainian NGOs in **developing partnerships with EU-based organizations** to share best practices, secure funding, and implement joint projects aimed at supporting democratic governance and EU-integration.
- Build an EU-wide **network of the Global Ukrainian Community** to enable a fast and professional exchange on Ukraine’s EU integration reforms and progress. Create a space for professionalisation and empowerment.

## FOR UKRAINIAN STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS

Ukrainian state and non-state actors can foster **conducive conditions for systematic GUC involvement: there must be no legal obstacles for organisations advocating for Ukraine abroad**. Besides, legal and administrative framework should be reviewed to allow municipalities and regions to have adequately remunerated representatives abroad.

**Cooperation of state institutions and GUC should be founded on principles of co-design**. GUC members should be invited to co-create the strategy and action plan for its involvement in Ukraine's recovery, because it's co-ownership will ensure long-term commitment, resource allocation and, thus, actual implementation of the elaborated strategy. This can be done through a series of deliberative online events and limited number of carefully planned offline workshops.

**Cooperation mechanisms should allow cross-sectoral involvement of the global Ukrainian community organizations as equal partners for conceptualizing and implementing projects in/with the countries of residence**. In this regard, the establishment of the position of Representative of the Global Ukrainian Community at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine is a welcome step. This could be further bolstered by the inclusion of prominent experts from the global Ukrainian community in working groups established by Ukrainian ministries and the government, as well as in advisory roles accompanying the recovery process.

Further recommendations specify ways and forms of GUC involvement with the Ukrainian state and non-state actors in the four dimensions of recovery:

### ■ Business dimension:

- Institutionalize the **role of the GUC in Ukraine's economic diplomacy** efforts by creating formal mechanisms for collaboration between the government, diaspora organizations, and international business communities.
- Encourage the **creation of diaspora investment funds** specifically aimed at supporting Ukraine's recovery and economic growth.
- Create a one-stop-shop for diaspora investors that provides **legal, financial, and administrative assistance**. Offer tax incentives and financial guarantees to diaspora investors. Establish an online platform to provide real-time information on investment opportunities, regulatory updates, and success stories.
- Develop policies and programs to support international businesses in entering the Ukrainian market, leveraging the expertise and language skills of the GUC.
- Foster public-private partnerships that **involve diaspora organizations in key sectors such as infrastructure, technology, and social services**. Provide a clear framework for PPPs, including guidelines for collaboration, funding mechanisms, and accountability measures.

### ■ Human dimension:

- **Co-create a strategy and an action plan** together with active GUC organizations to increase the involvement of the global Ukrainian community in the recovery of Ukraine and recognize their valuable contributions.
- Institutionalize the **inclusion of diverse externally displaced groups** (women, youth, minorities, veterans) in the recovery planning and implementation processes, e.g., through online events and partnerships with GUC organizations.
- Support the establishment of **Ukrainian language programs** in schools abroad, advocate for Ukrainian as a heritage language, and promote bilingual education initiatives. Establish a low-barrier system for foreign **diploma recognition**.
- Launch comprehensive **information campaigns** to raise awareness among GUC members about ongoing recovery needs, opportunities for involvement, and the impact of their contributions. Utilize multiple communication channels, including social media, diaspora networks, and international media. Focus on the recognition of individuals and their needs rather than viewing them solely as human capital.

### ■ Local and Regional dimension:

- **Maintain systematic productive contact** of local self-government authorities to residents from communities who were forced to flee because of the war or have been abroad longer. This means collect information about their whereabouts and expertise, developing relationship management channels and recognizing their potential.
- Considering capacity constraints, such a task can be “outsourced” to GUC organisations who can serve as an intermediary between the authorities and the dispersed community members.
- **Engage GUC systematically in coordination platforms on recovery**, such as those established at the Regional State (Military) Administrations who are tasked with coordination of foreign aid.<sup>93</sup>
- **Involve sectoral GUC expertise at all governance levels**, which should start by stakeholder mapping in related fields of competence of an initiating institution in Ukraine.
- **Recognize the potential of GUC members to provide (peer) mentorship and training for Ukrainian local and regional officials**. This includes activities inside municipalities, online and offline, like training in language and diplomatic communication, project design and

<sup>93</sup> Regional Offices for International Cooperation, <https://www.congress.gov.ua/en/regional-office-for-international-cooperation/>

grant writing to EU institutions, as well as in host countries, such as job shadowing and internships.

### ■ **EU-dimension:**

- Foster conducive **legal and institutional environment** within Ukraine for GUC and diaspora organisations to engage in multiple levels and cross-nationally for Ukraine's recovery.
- **Involve GUC into local and regional reconstruction efforts** by linking civil society hubs, houses and centers in EU countries, as well as a center in the European Parliament, with local self-governing bodies in hromadas and administrative structures in Ukraine. This will **enable the GUC to share EU-related expertise** and work effectively with local communities, authorities and humanitarian organisations.
- **Set up easy and transparent communication channels** to inform the global Ukrainian community about ways to support the recovery and EU-rapprochement, targeted at different professional and age groups. Active GUC members could support in identifying or even running such channels in cooperation with the authorities.
- **Systematically involve the GUC in the development of the cooperation strategy**, particularly in relation to the reconstruction of Ukraine. Note that the GUC cannot be represented by one organisation, but is very heterogeneous.
- Ensure that **GUC representatives are present in working groups for consultations** of EU and national institutions and think tanks.

## FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS OF UKRAINE

International partners of Ukraine, such as governments, their development agencies, international financial institutions, international development agencies and civil society organisations, can benefit from systemic **involvement of diaspora organizations as equal partners** for conceptualizing and implementing projects that target Ukrainians in the host countries and in Ukraine. For engagement in host countries, it means involving GUC members in committees at local, state and federal level and establishing **regular dialogue at eye level**. For engagement in Ukraine, it means involving experts from the global Ukrainian community in the work processes, consulting them and involving them directly in the recovery projects, as they can fulfill an excellent **bridging function**.

International partners can immensely support global Ukrainian community organizations in networking and professionalisation. Further, international partners can promote GUC engagement in the four dimensions of recovery:

### ■ Business dimension:

- Encourage the establishment of diaspora investment funds dedicated to Ukraine's recovery and economic growth.
- Expand educational and professional exchange programs between Ukraine and host countries to build skills and foster innovation for the recovery of Ukraine.
- Support programs that enhance the skills and knowledge of Ukrainian founders, enabling them to compete globally and contribute to Ukraine's recovery.
- Assist international businesses in entering the Ukrainian market by leveraging the expertise of GUC members.

### ■ Human dimension:

- Design international development cooperation programmes and projects that explicitly **encourage partnerships** between Ukrainian domestic and diaspora organisations as a tool for **fostering societal cohesion**, allowing circulation of knowledge and creating opportunities for a voluntary return.
- Promote educational and professional exchange programs between host countries and Ukraine to foster skills development and knowledge transfer for recovery.
- Provide **socio-psychological support** tailored to the needs of displaced Ukrainians to ensure their well-being and ability to contribute to recovery efforts.



### ■ Local and Regional dimension;

- **Design international development cooperation programmes and projects for community-led recovery that explicitly encourage partnerships between Ukrainian domestic and diaspora organisations** over addressing challenges at the municipal and regional level. Transnational municipal cooperation support programs could also include special component for facilitating communities' access to GUC.
- **Recognize the potential of GUC members to provide peer mentorship and training for Ukrainian local and regional officials.** GUC with relevant work experience can serve as trainers and peers for sharing knowledge on representation and Europeanization process.
- **Develop upskilling programs for GUC members for service in Ukrainian municipalities in light of the European integration.** Return fellowships could specifically cooperate with Ukrainian LRAs for secondments in local and regional authorities. At the same time, municipal officials who continue performing their duties while seeking temporary protection abroad, could be offered job shadowing or internships in the counterpart public organisations in the host communities.

### ■ EU-dimension:

- **Regularly include the expertise of the GUC and diaspora organisations in the subject-specific consultations.** They can act as a bridge between the EU institutions, member states and the Ukrainian civil society, facilitating inclusion of the externally displaced Ukrainians in Ukraine's EU integration and recovery.
- Support **targeted mapping of diaspora expertise** to identify and mobilise professionals with relevant skills for specific chapters of EU integration and reconstruction.
- **Develop programmes to promote the exchange of knowledge and expertise** between the GUC and Ukrainian institutions in relation to the reconstruction process. This may include fellowships, advisory roles and temporary positions for diaspora experts in Ukrainian state and local government agencies.
- **Support diaspora organisations in building their capacity** for political engagement by providing training on how to participate effectively in political processes in EU institutions and member states.
- Together with partners from Ukraine and actors from the GUC, **demonstrate and promote best practices of the recovery process.**
- Societies are strengthened by the knowledge that **Ukraine is defending our pan-European freedom and security.** Clear and focused communication is essential.









