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UKRAINIAN DIASPORA IN AUSTRALIA AS A FACTOR OF DEEPENING BILATERAL RELATIONS

Many works have been written about the importance of using the potential of the Ukrainian community abroad to promote Ukraine's national interests.

In 2014, the intention to more actively involve foreign Ukrainians in lobbying for state initiatives even gained a formal status, when the Government of Ukraine and the Ukrainian World Congress signed a Memorandum of Cooperation.

The document provided for strengthening the interaction of the Ukrainian state with foreign Ukrainians in promoting Ukraine's foreign policy priorities; dissemination of truthful information about Ukraine in the world; deepening fruitful and mutually beneficial cooperation of Ukraine with the governments of the host countries of foreign Ukrainians; providing humanitarian assistance to the victims of the Revolution of Dignity and the victims of the aggression of the Russian Federation; promoting the development of civil society in Ukraine and the development of public life of the diaspora.

Drawing on the interim (five-year) results of the government's interaction with the world Ukrainians today, we clearly see the benefits of such an approach. At the same time, the difficulties that arise in the course of implementing the priorities set by the memorandum are indicative of the imperfection of the tools and forms of interaction between the Ukrainian state and Ukrainians abroad. It is often the case that the state is not ready to follow its obligations with regard to supporting and providing the necessary resources to the diaspora to perform certain tasks. On the other hand, not all foreign communities are capable or eager to implement the priorities of the Ukrainian state.

In this respect, **the activities of the Ukrainian community in Australia, which is a key promoter and defender of Ukrainian interests in the state, merits particular attention.** To be completely honest, it is worth to mention that the multiculturalism of Australian society creates somewhat different, more favourable conditions for national communities to operate and develop, but even in the most conducive environment, many diaspora communities fail to preserve their national identity, let alone their ability to protect the interests of Ukraine in the country of residence.

So what is special about Australia?

The Ukrainian diaspora in this state is one of the youngest centres of Ukrainian communities in the world.

The first settlers (several dozens of Ukrainian families) arrived in Australia in 1947 in response to the Government's need for manpower to develop the country's post-war infrastructure. The mass influx of Ukrainian migrants to this country dates back to 1948–49. This was the 'first wave' of emigration, known as 'political' (former 'displaced persons' and their descendants). Many of these migrants moved from Germany, from the so-called camps for displaced persons.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a 'second wave' of ethnic Ukrainians emigrated to Australia from Ukraine, but this time the reasons for migration were mostly economic. During the years of independence, some professionals in the field of IT, agriculture, and STEM sciences also migrated from Ukraine to Australia.

According to the 2016 census, the number of representatives of the Ukrainian community in Australia formally stands at 4,700 people only. At the same time, these figures do not reflect the real situation because at the time of conducting these sociological surveys, the number of Australians of Ukrainian origin included only persons whose place of birth was Ukraine, with Ukrainian as the primary language.

According to the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO), a non-governmental organisation that coordinates the majority of Ukrainian organisations here and represents Australian Ukrainians in their relations with the Australian state; the Ukrainian community in Australia includes 38,000 ethnic Ukrainians and occupies the 35th position (0.18 percent) among ethnic groups living on the 'green continent'.

Despite its 'young age' and small size, the Ukrainian community in Australia is organized and structured, covering various branches, which are united in a powerful superstructure, the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations.

Currently, the AFUO consists of 22 organisations. The main ones are: the Association of Ukrainians in Victoria (Melbourne); the Association of Ukrainian Communities of New South Wales (Sydney); the Association of Ukrainians in South Australia (Adelaide); the Ukrainian Community of Queensland (Brisbane); the Ukrainian Association of Western Australia (Perth); the Ukrainian Community of the Australian Capital Territory (Canberra); the Association of Ukrainians in Tasmania (Hobart); the Ukrainian Youth Association (UYA); the Ukrainian Scout Organisation 'Plast'; the Ukrainian Women's Association of Australia (Sydney); the Scientific Society of Taras Shevchenko (Melbourne); the Ukrainian Free Cossacks (Sydney); the Diocese of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (Canberra); the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saints Peter and Paul (Melbourne).



Ушанування перших українських поселенців в Австралії, які воювали в складі Австралійсько-новозеландського армійського корпусу в роки Першої світової війни. Канберра, 2018 р.

Honoring the first Ukrainian emigrants to Australia who fought in the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps during the World War I. Canberra, 2018

School named after Lesia Ukrainka in Noble Park (Melbourne); Ukrainian School (Geelong); Ukrainian School named after T. Shevchenko and I. Franko (Geelong); Ukrainian School named after T. Shevchenko (Perth). The coordination of the activities of local Ukrainian schools is carried out by the Ukrainian Central School Council of Australia, which in turn is a part of the AFUO.

Moreover, there are the Centre for Ukrainian Studies named after M. Zerov at Monash University (Melbourne) and the Ukrainian Democratic Initiative Center at the University of Sydney.

The Ukrainian community of Australia has two professional dance groups 'Verkhovyna' and 'Lehenda', which are regular participants and winners of numerous multicultural festivals in the country.

Two printed bilingual publications are published in Australia: Free Thought (the first Ukrainian newspaper in Australia; it has been published since 1949) and Church and Life (it has been published since 1960).

Furthermore, there are three regional Ukrainian radio stations: Radio 2000 Sydney, Three ZZZ (Melbourne), and Ukrainian Radio Brisbane. There is a Ukrainian newsroom on the federal multicultural radio station SBS, and UATV programmes are broadcast by the Australian state media corporation SBS.

All of these assets belong to the community and are nourished by volunteers' efforts. That is why even minimal support or attention from the Ukrainian state (especially the embassy) is highly important for the community.

With this in mind, and taking into account the precedent of concluding a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Ukrainian World Congress, the Ukrainian Embassy to Australia signed a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Embassy of Ukraine to Australia and the AFUO in 2016, which is a part of the UWC.

The document was concluded according to key provisions of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Ukrainian World Congress. It is aimed at promoting cooperation between the Ukrainian Embassy and the Ukrainian community in Australia to strengthen and develop the diaspora as well as involve the potential and capabilities of Australian Ukrainians to support foreign policy initiatives of Ukraine, its positive image, and ongoing reforms.

Though not formally binding, the Memorandum formalised the existing cooperation between our embassy and the AFUO. In addition to the Memorandum, a detailed plan of joint action was approved for the near future, which is constantly updated. The programme allows the parties to effectively plan key activities and allocate resources.

A coordinated algorithm of actions ensures that the Ukrainian community of Australia is the main partner of the diplomatic mission in organizing activities aimed at protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, providing support for Ukraine by the Australian Government and enhancing Ukraine's positive image in this country.

The Ukrainian community in Australia is an active participant and co-organizer of actions in support of measures to counter Russian aggression, the occupation of Crimea, to punish the perpetrators of the MH17 tragedy, the release of political prisoners, the recognition of the Holodomor, and most national holidays.

Ukrainians in Australia are extremely active in countering Russian propaganda and misinformation in the state as well as holding cultural and image-making events and building interpersonal and intercultural contacts between the countries.

The embassy constantly involves AFUO member organisations in the implementation of measures under the government budget program 1401110 'Financial support to promote the positive international image of Ukraine, ensuring the activities of the Ukrainian Institute, and measures to maintain relations with Ukrainians living abroad'. The AFUO, in turn, acts as a co-organiser and financial sponsor of a number of image-making events of the diplomatic mission.

For example, the interaction of our embassy with the Ukrainian community in Australia has contributed to the emergence of the annual Vyshyvanka Day, the Ukrainian Film Festival, and large-scale events dedicated to Independence Day or honouring Holodomor victims.

To better understand the intricacies and subtleties of such events, it is worth giving an example of the annual Festival of Ukrainian Ethnic Design in Australia, known as Vyshyvanka Day and celebrated since 2018.

The concept to demonstrate the beauty of Ukrainian embroideries from different regions of our country has long matured at the Embassy of Ukraine in Australia. After all, every holiday the Ukrainian Embassy held in cooper-



Проект «Народжені у вишиванці». Посол України вручає вишиванку маленькій дівчинці, яка народилася в Австралії, але отримує громадянство України

Project *Born in an Embroidered Shirt*. The Ambassador of Ukraine presents an embroidered shirt to a little girl who was born in Australia and acquires Ukrainian citizenship

ation with the community always included the use of elements of national costumes, but the fashion show of Ukrainian vyshyvankas as a separate event was not held due to a number of reasons: incredible collections of authentic Ukrainian clothes owned by Ukrainians in Australia belong mostly to private owners in different parts of the continent; some national costumes are extremely beautiful but already very fragile and vulnerable, with some of them too personal and valuable for individual families, etc. This is not to mention the fact that even after gather-

ing all these embroidered treasures together, their presentation at the appropriate level required significant financial and organisational resources, including directing and design work.

The Ukrainian Women's Union of Australia, jointly with the Embassy of Ukraine in Australia, has been implementing this project for several years in the National Gallery of Australia thanks to effective planning and attention to sensitive moments for the community. In the future, such festivals are planned to be held in different states of Australia.

Given the fact that Australia is a multicultural country, the events with the participation or support of Australian Ukrainians traditionally have a much greater effect and publicity.

One of the most notorious events that shook 'Ukrainian Australia' in 2018 was the participation of the Ukrainian team and the official delegation of Ukraine in the Invictus Games in Sydney. The international competition in Sydney became the second Invictus Games in which a team from Ukraine took part. In addition to the national team of veterans, their families, friends, and coaches, a powerful official delegation led by Ivanna Klympush-Tsyntsadze, Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, defence and interior affairs ministers, and other officials arrived in Australia.

In order to ensure Ukraine's representation in the Invictus Games on the 'green continent', the Ukrainian state, on behalf of its Embassy in Canberra, appealed to Australian Ukrainians for support. And respond they did, just like during the 2000 Olympics in Sydney and many times before when Ukraine's interests were at stake.

The Ukrainian community of Australia has set up the AFUO Public Coordination Committee for the Support of the Ukrainian Team at the Invictus Games, which has become a liaison between Ukrainian athletes and Australian organ-



Зустріч української команди «Нескорених» в аеропорту Сіднея Meeting of the Invictus Ukrainian team at Sydney Airport

isers; more than a dozen of diaspora members joined the emergency support team, which provided logistics and the implementation of official programmes of officials. Numerous volunteers covered the events, prepared national presentations and speeches, cheered for the team, donated their time, health, and finance to form a positive image of Ukraine during the event.

As a result, all this contributed to an extremely successful performance of our team, which had the highest ratio in terms of the number of participants and awards and took fifth place in the team standings.

The Invictus Games in Sydney have become the embodiment of a truly large-scale international social project of the foreign Ukrainian community and the Ukrainian state.

The main positive of the interaction of Australian Ukrainians with representatives of the Ukrainian team and officials was the realisation that Ukraine is changing, that people who sacrifice their lives for it are returning from the frontline as patriots, that preserving Ukrainians abroad, even in faraway Australia, is of utmost necessity for the ‘strengthening of Ukraine in Ukraine’.

The project Invictus Games has continued after the completion of official events. The Ukrainians of Australia established the Ukraine Crisis Appeal Charitable Foundation under the auspices of the AFUO. In 2019–20, in cooperation with the charitable organisation Caritas Ukraine and the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine, 18 humanitarian projects in support of Ukrainian veterans affected by the ongoing armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine were implemented thanks to the funds provided by the foundation with a total amount of AUD 125,000.

This year, in support of the programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine ‘Protection’, the AFUO established a special group on the COVID-19 pandemic (AFUO COVID-19 Corona Virus National Community Task Force),



Афіша проекту «Мистецтво карантину» («The Art of Lockdown») Poster of the project *The Art of Lockdown*

presented their creative works (embroidery, paintings, design, photos), which they made during the isolation period.

Since Ukrainians in Australia are Australian citizens and voters, they are always closely involved in cooperation and promotion of Ukraine's interests through members of the Australia-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Federal Parliament of Australia.

We must not forget about economic diplomacy. It is under the auspices of the AFUO that the Ukrainian-Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is currently operating on a voluntary basis, which is expected to eventually grow into a full-fledged Business Council.

All these numerous projects are the result of the constant interaction of the Ukrainian state represented by the Embassy of Ukraine to Australia with the local Ukrainian community.

To conclude, honest, well-thought-out, well-planned, and even a little bit formalised (without interfering in each other's responsibilities) interaction between the embassy and the community can be the key to numerous successful projects. The example of Australia is the best illustration thereof.

which contributed to both returning Ukrainian citizens who remained in Australia and functioning of Ukrainian communities in the restrictive conditions caused by the pandemic.

In addition, under the auspices of the wife of the Ambassador of Ukraine to Australia and with a view to maintain the unity and national spirit of the Ukrainians of the Green Continent, who, due to quarantine restrictions, were deprived not only of the opportunity to jointly celebrate Ukraine's Independence Day, but also, in some places (Victoria), to leave their homes, the project *The Art of Lockdown. A Visual Virtual Exhibition Event* was launched and successfully implemented. As part of this project, more than 500 participants