Civic awakening: The impact of Euromaidan on Ukraine's politics and society

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›› Acronyms

AA	Association Agreement
CSF	Civil Society Facility
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EED	European Endowment for Democracy
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EU	European Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSA&LA	Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development
RPR	Reanimation Reform Package
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SSF	Single Support Framework
UAH	Ukrainian Hryvnia

Introduction[1]

›› From December 2013 to February 2014, the world was moved by images of peaceful protests by Ukrainians who bravely faced freezing temperatures, intimidation, violence, and sniper fire to demonstrate against an increasingly authoritarian and corrupt state. These protests became known as 'Euromaidan'.

The events in Ukraine seem to follow the global pattern of mass mobilisation and protests, witnessed in countries as diverse as Brazil and Egypt and Thailand and Turkey. These protests tend to be spontaneous and organised from the bottom-up; and they are remarkable in their diversity, degree of organisation and resilience in the face of police violence. Some have argued that they represent a new wave of 'democratisation from below'; others are more sceptical about their ability to bring about real political change.[2]

In Ukraine, despite the memories of orange flags flying above the crowds protesting the electoral fraud in 2004, this new wave of mass mobilisation is very different from other protests the country has experienced in its post-Soviet history. The Euromaidan followed a different pattern of mobilisation, had much larger numbers of protesters, and lasted longer. It also underwent a dramatic transformation from a peaceful demonstration to a fortified protest camp with its own paramilitary defence units. In addition, Euromaidan has profoundly changed Ukrainian society.

With the ousting of President Yanukovich on 21 February 2014, a new post-revolutionary phase began. This was marked by a number of dramatic events, most importantly, Russia's annexation of Crimea and the separatist insurgency in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. In addition to these military challenges, Ukraine's political future is threatened by economic problems; continuing tensions with Russia over gas prices; and resistance to reform by vested interests. The need for constitutional reform and decentralisation is urgent and cannot be postponed until the security situation is resolved. In addition, there is a pressing need to reform the judiciary, the prosecutor's office and the state agencies responsible for security, to strengthen the electoral law and last but not least to begin to combat corruption.

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1. This paper was written before the MH17 air-crash disaster of July 17 2014, which is likely to have a severe impact on the development of the Donbas conflict in Ukraine as well as on EU-Russia relations.
2. D. Della Porta, *Mobilizing for democracy. Comparing 1989 and 2011* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and I. Krastev, *Democracy Disrupted: The Politics of Global Protest*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

The events in Ukraine are of particular significance for the European Union (EU). The protests were sparked by President Yanukovich's decision not to sign the Association Agreement (AA) with the EU at the Eastern partnership (EaP) Summit in Vilnius in late November 2013. For many Ukrainians closer relations with the EU is seen as the best safeguard against existing deficiencies in domestic governance and authoritarianism. Yet, despite the EU's increasing engagement with Ukrainian civil society, mass mobilisation was not dependent upon EU support. Although the EU has done some important work to engage with various political players in Ukraine since the outbreak of the crisis, direct outreach efforts to Ukrainian citizens have been rather limited. There are important lessons to be learned for the EU in assessing the efficacy of its support for democracy in Ukraine.

This paper assesses the impact that the Euromaidan revolution has had to date on Ukrainian society and politics. It argues that although the longevity of the incipient democratic transition is far from assured, the changes to date are unprecedented and profound. The post-revolutionary phase brings with it new opportunities and challenges. First, the paper sets out the political background to the Euromaidan revolution and discusses its uniqueness in the context of Ukraine's post-Soviet history. It briefly describes how Euromaidan developed from pro-European student protests into a fortified resistance camp demanding regime change. The second part of the paper discusses recent important changes within Ukrainian civil society in terms of its composition, modes of mobilisation and reform agenda. Thirdly, the paper discusses the changing relations between civil society and political actors, and assesses the impact that civil society can have on Ukrainian politics. It also stresses that closer relations with the EU is an important element in the strengthening of civil society. Finally, the paper proposes a number of recommendations as to how the EU could maximise its support for Ukrainian civil society.

The legacy of Euromaidan

>> Although by the end of 2013 discontent with the socio-economic and political situation in Ukraine was rife, Euromaidan took many observers by surprise: scholars, policy-makers and even civil activists themselves. President Yanukovich had aggressively sought to centralise power since his election in 2010. He repealed a constitutional amendment, adopted during the Orange Revolution, that curbed the power of the presidency. He effectively gained control over the judiciary, security forces, and regional administrations by appointing political appointees loyal to him. President Yanukovich also engaged in a variety of activities to enhance his personal wealth which at times threatened the economic interests of the oligarchs who had initially supported him.

Corruption and a lack of the rule of law were pervasive during his four years in office but they did not spark any concerted opposition from civil society. However, towards the end of his term, discontent with the worsening socio-economic situation and police

impunity did lead to small-scale, localised protests.[3] The forces that would later galvanise these local protests into a national political mobilisation were not evident at the time. Opposition parties tried to stage a number of demonstrations during the parliamentary election in 2012 but these did not attract a large following.

Despite his poor domestic reform record, President Yanukovich continued to work on EU approximation throughout his presidency, completing the negotiations and initialling the AA in March 2012. Negotiations in 2013, however, proved difficult as the two sides could not agree on the political conditionality that constituted a precondition to the signature of the agreement.[4] A week before the November EU EaP Summit in Vilnius the government of Ukraine announced that it had 'suspended' its work on further integration with the EU, citing security and economic concerns.[5] This decision sparked student protests on Maidan Nezalezhnosti in Kyiv, the site of the Orange Revolution of 2004. The protesters were hoping to convince the government to reverse its decision and to send a signal to the EU that the citizens of Ukraine were not supporting this U-turn. President Yanukovich seemed unimpressed and upon his return from Vilnius ordered the riot police to clear the square. Police violence, captured on video and tweeted in real time, provoked a strong response from Ukrainian society and opened up a new phase in 'Euromaidan'.

Three elements in Euromaidan's evolution have been instrumental in the considerable impact it has had. First, unlike the Orange revolution, it grew from being a simple demonstration into a real stand-off between citizens and state authorities. The opposition parties were following the protesters rather than leading them. As many as 92 per cent of the protesters were not affiliated with or mobilised by any political organisation.[6]

Second, protesters' demands evolved from support for further integration with the EU to include domestic grievances, most importantly discontent with corruption and the lack of the rule of law. Their protests were no longer just about integration with the EU, but about putting an end to the abuse of power by the state authorities. Indeed, many activists refer to Euromaidan as the 'revolution of dignity'. Although President Yanukovich's departure became one of the key demands, the overall Maidan agenda was about deep systemic transformation rather than simply a change of leadership. Maidan helped consolidate a genuine domestic agenda for structural reform.

Third, unlike the Orange revolution, Euromaidan was not confined to the capital but spread to become a nation-wide phenomenon. In mid-January 2014, after another round of police violence and the failure of the opposition to pass an amnesty law for those detained during the earlier clashes with the police, the protests spread to the regions. A number of smaller 'Maidans' sprang up. The buildings of regional authorities were occupied

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3. Centre for Society Research Protests, 'Concessions, and Repressions in Ukraine: Monitoring results in 2013', Kyiv, available at http://www.cedos.org.ua/uk/protests

4. European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2012 on the situation in Ukraine, 2012/2889(RSP), Council conclusion on Ukraine 3209th Foreign Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 10 December 2012.

5. 'Ukraine´s Government conclusion to suspend the process of preparation for the conclusion of the Association Agreement with the EU', Kyiv, 21 November 2013, available at http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=246864953&cat_id=244276429

6. Kyiv International Institute of Sociology 'Maidan-2013: Who protests, why and for what?', poll conducted among the Maidan participants on 7-8 December 2013; and N. Shapovalova, 'Ukraine's new prodemocracy movement', FRIDE Commentary, No. 3, February 2014, http://fride.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Commentary-3_Ukraines-new-pro-democracy-movement.pdf

throughout the country.[7] Disillusionment with Yanukovich's rule, his refusal to open a real dialogue with society and the violence against the protesters all contributed to the spread of protests. The scale of violence and intimidation and the number of victims were unprecedented in Ukraine's recent history. The high human cost put an end to any remaining apathy and cynicism on the part of Ukrainian citizens, forging an understanding that things could not go back to 'business as usual'.

Repeated violent crackdowns by riot police and attacks by hired thugs during the Euromaidan inspired the rise of paramilitary 'self-defence' groups. Despite rather biased media coverage that focused on the small radical right-wing organisation 'Right Sector', these were a motley crew that included civilians as well as former war veterans from a wide variety of backgrounds. In the post-revolutionary era, attempts to incorporate these paramilitary groups into the newly created National Guard have had mixed results. Many see themselves as revolutionaries, not soldiers, and do not believe the revolutionary phase is over. More recently, with the proliferation of private militias, both pro- and anti-Kyiv, the state seems to have lost its monopoly over the use of force, although some pro-Kyiv units have started collaborating with the Armed Forces. At some stage in the future, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration will be a considerable challenge for the government and society in general.

The protests also highlighted longstanding tensions and deficiencies in relations between Kyiv and the regions. The fundamental cause of the current crisis in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk in the east of the country, although clearly fomented by Russia, is the failure to implement decentralisation. The governments of post-Soviet Ukraine have paid lip-service to the concept of decentralisation while actually centralising power even more in Kyiv. Local and regional authorities are weak and have no executive or tax-raising power. This leads to a lack of financial autonomy, an ineffective distribution of state funding, a rise in the abuse of power and corruption as well as fewer possibilities for citizen oversight or partnerships between civil society and local authorities.[8] It was no surprise that the poorest and most mismanaged regions, where the income gap between very wealthy oligarchs and poor workers is vast, have proven particularly vulnerable to unrest. Although separatist groups in the so-called Donbas area, i.e. Donetsk and Luhansk regions, are largely composed of marginal figures and Russian nationals, a sense of frustration with the central authorities is widespread among the general populace.[9] This frustration has been stirred up even more by the aggressive anti-Kyiv propaganda broadcast by Russian media that dominate these regions.

To date, the authorities in Kyiv have not managed to reach out to the people in Donbas or to ensure their safety. Indeed, as this paper is being published, the conflict

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7. Although these protests were taking place predominantly in the west and centre, they spilled over into a number of provinces in the east and south, including those that had given considerable support to Yanukovich in 2010 and his Party of Regions in 2012 (for example, Kyrovohrad, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiyv, and Zaporizhzhya).
8. For more details, see Assembly of European Regions, 2013, 'Briefing note on local and regional government in Ukraine', http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Commissions/CultureEducation/EventsAndMeetings/2013/0425-27_DNK/WorkDocs/Briefing_note_on_local_and_regional_government_in_Ukraine.pdf
9. Crimea, for all its specificity, falls into this pattern on many counts. This may not explain its annexation by Russia but it certainly contributed to the ease with which Russia could move in.

between the Ukrainian military and Russian-backed militants is escalating and there is clear evidence of direct Russian military involvement.[10] It is difficult to predict the outcome of the on-going military clashes in Donbas, but it is exacting a heavy toll on those regions. According to the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, between 8 March and 16 July, 200 servicemen died and 655 were wounded. Civilian deaths are more difficult to verify. Some Ukrainian media reports cite figures of close to 500, while the number of internally displaced is over ten thousand people. At the time of writing, the newly elected president, Petro Poroshenko, is trying to reach a peace deal that would halt the inflow of mercenaries and weapons across the border with Russia and re-establish control over those territories by the Ukrainian state. If and when the fighting stops, post-conflict reconstruction should be accompanied by reforms for greater local self-governance.

The annexation of Crimea by Russia and the armed insurgency in Donbas seem to have contributed to the 'rally-around-the-flag' phenomenon throughout the country. Even in the east and south of Ukraine, where support for unification with Russia tends to be higher, almost 54 per cent are against unification with Russia and only around 15 per cent in favour. Almost 65 per cent of those living in Donbas are in favour of a unitary Ukraine.[11]

At the same time, however, the change in the situation in Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk may have also given new life to previously marginal pro-Russian organisations, such as *Oplot, Rosmolodjozh, Sootechestvenniki,* or the Eurasian Youth Movement. Most of these organisations receive direct support from Russia and may have links to similar right-wing organisations in Russia. Although they previously enjoyed a limited following and were rather marginal in city politics, their importance has increased markedly. In Crimea, Aksyonov's Russian Unity Party had as little as 4 per cent of the seats in the region's parliament before Russia's annexation – yet, few would question the influence of the self-proclaimed head of the Republic of Crimea today. In other regions of Ukraine, such as Donetsk, Luhansk, Odessa, and Kharkiv pro-Russian groups continue to operate and will continue to be a source of instability, despite their small numbers.

The depth and scale of the changes brought about by the Euromaidan protests are unprecedented. 'Maidan' has become a social and political phenomenon. It is used to denote bottom-up civil activism and new modes of civil political participation that some have even referred to as 'Maidanocracy'. A 'Maidan' agenda is first and foremost an agenda of public oversight over state institutions and pressure for transparency, accountability and reform. This civil awakening has spread throughout the country, reflecting the specificities and grievances of each region. Although the situation in Ukraine remains fragile, state-societal relations have been dramatically shaken up and are likely to be reconfigured.

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10. BBC 'Russia "shot down Ukraine jet"', 17 July 2014, available at http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28345039
11. Two-thirds of those who are for Ukraine's unity support decentralisation. Around 25 per cent support a federal system. 'Opinions and views of residents of east and south of Ukraine: April 2014', poll conducted by Kyiv International Institute of Sociology on 8-16 April 2014.

Transformations within civil society: a civic awakening

» Euromaidan has become a catalyst for strengthening Ukrainian civil society. Not only has it given a new impetus to the existing civil society organisations, it has redrawn the boundaries of civil society as a whole. Civil society in Ukraine – understood here as an arena of un-coerced collective action around shared interests, purpose, and values, including trade unions and professional associations[12] – has become more diverse. It includes an array of actors and institutional forms with varying degrees of formality, autonomy, and power. Euromaidan has brought about a decisive break with the typical 'post-Soviet' model of civil society, whereby formally registered non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with small and sometimes non-existent memberships, operated within a bubble of the donor-created 'aid industry' and enjoyed little support from society.[13] Overall, post-Soviet societies were generally characterised by apathy, low social capital (meaning the quality and density of social networks and interactions beyond one's immediate family and friends) and profound mistrust of all public institutions.

Euromaidan has led to a number of qualitative changes that include the emergence of new actors and new patterns of social organisation, a rise in social capital and a change in attitude of the society towards the state. A large number of grassroots organisations have been established, each with their own goals and ways of working defined by public demand, voluntary action and networked structures; and – crucially – sustained by voluntary contributions.

Euromaidan itself was a powerful and unprecedented volunteer movement that revealed an incredible capacity for organisation on the part of civil society. The so-called 'Civil Sector of Maidan' that emerged after the first round of police violence on 30 November 2013 consisted of some 30 coordinators and almost a hundred activists engaged full-time.[14] Most people at the core represented active civil society organisations (CSOs) and had relevant experience in civil activism, although many stress that they were on Maidan in their individual capacity. Running a big protest camp in the middle of a harsh winter and in the face of a possible police crack-down created very defined daily needs, from setting up tents to providing supplies and medical aid, running a press office and coordinating various initiatives. Thousands of volunteers came to help, so coordinating their activities and managing private donations became a huge task. Bottom-up mobilisation, crowd funding, voluntary support from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and volunteering were Euromaidan's defining features.

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12. For a detailed discussion of different perspectives on civil society, see for example, B. Edwards, M. W. Foley and M. Diani (eds), *Beyond Tocqueville: Civil Society and the Social Capital Debate in Comparative Perspective*, Tufts University (Hanover 2001).
13. K. Pishchikova, *Promoting Democracy in Postcommunist Ukraine: The Contradictory Outcomes of US Aid to Women's NGOs* (Lynne Reinner/FirstForumPress, Boulder, 2010).
14. By comparison, during the 2004 Orange Revolution around 2.000 activists had been trained and were ready to organise a mass protest that was expected in case of a rigged election. The preparations and mobilisation took several months before the actual ballots were cast.

The discipline of Euromaidan participants compared favourably to recent more disorganised protests elsewhere in the world. Despite clashes with the riot police that involved throwing Molotov cocktails and stones and setting fire to tyres to create black smoke, there was a remarkable attention to order. Good relations were maintained with all the businesses around the square that remained open throughout. The participants also mounted patrols to keep out thugs and troublemakers to ensure safety.[15]

The composition of Euromaidan was highly diverse and representative of all regions as well as social and demographic groups, with equal participation of men and women. Compared to the population as a whole, the people on Maidan were younger and better educated than the average. More than half were Ukrainian speaking, as many as 27 per cent spoke Russian and 18 per cent both.[16] The Euromaidan created space and opportunities for a younger generation of civil activists. It also proved to be an important formative experience for the students who were the first to mobilise and have remained active. Such engagement on the part of younger Ukrainians is new. According to sociologists during the previous two decades Ukrainian youth had been rather passive.[17]

Many well-established CSOs have also been transformed as the Euromaidan experience has encouraged them to become more self-critical and goal-oriented. They would like to see clearer benchmarks of effectiveness in their relations with donors.[18] In a break with the past, today most CSOs prioritise the delivery of tangible results over concerns for their survival as organisations. However, a number of longstanding challenges for civil society remain, most notably the need to achieve better cooperation between CSOs. While some organisations have started to work more together, others say there has been no fundamental change in the civil sector. The emergent culture of compromise and cooperation still needs to take root and spread.

Some 'new' civil leaders are sceptical of the established CSOs. They argue that the structural features of these organisations render them less creative, less relevant, and even less reliable. They are also critical of the idea that civil society needs external funding. If an initiative is a relevant one, they argue, citizens themselves should sustain it.[19] Although the distinction between 'old' and 'new' civil activists is not so clear, it illustrates the pressure that more active civil leaders are putting on the civil sector as a whole. Such peer pressure, if constructive, may help renew the whole civil sector and help improve a number of vital links, such as between civil and political society, between different civil organisations, and between CSOs and citizens.

Euromaidan has also seen an impressive mobilisation of actors that had previously tended to remain passive politically, such as SMEs. With the exception of the so-called 'Tax Maidan' in 2010 when SMEs protested – unsuccessfully – against a new tax code, small-scale entrepreneurs did not tend to mobilise politically before the Maidan. Their protests were small-scale and focused on narrow sectoral interests. Although little discussed, a clear rift between SMEs

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15. I. Verstyuk 'No Looting or Anarchy in this Euromaidan Revolution', *KyivPost*, 20 January 2014, http://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/op-ed/no-looting-or-anarchy-in-this-euromaidan-revolution-335296.html

16. Kyiv International Institute of Sociology 'Maidan-2013: Who protests, why and for what?', poll conducted among the Maidan participants on 7-8 December 2013.

17. FRIDE interview with Iryna Bekeshkina, Director of the 'Democratic Initiatives' Foundation, Kyiv, 13 May 2014

18. FRIDE interview with Maria Holub, activist of the RPR, Kyiv, 15 May 2014.

19. FRIDE interviews with Serhiy Loboyko, Head of the Centre for Innovations and Development, Kyiv, 7 May 2014 and with Yegor Sobolev, Head of the Lustration Committee, Kyiv, 12 May 2014.

and larger businesses in Ukraine has become more apparent since then. While Ukraine's millionaire businessmen may have an interest in retaining a version of the status quo, SMEs have suffered from growing corruption and lawlessness over the past few years and represent a clear constituency for reform. For now, however, different associations and initiatives that represent their interests remain dispersed, and current attempts at building up a nation-wide SME platform are very promising but need time to develop.[20]

A lot of initiatives that have emerged over the past few months were a direct response to the emergency prompted by Russia's actions. Indeed, the violence fomented by Russia's support for pro-Russian groups in Donetsk and Luhansk was a strong mobilising factor for Ukrainian civil society. One activist even believes that the external threat from Russia acts as a kind of a social glue.[21] Some of these initiatives may ultimately become institutionalised over the longer term, while others will most probably dissolve as the emergency situation subsides. Overall, their value is in the remarkable rise in solidarity and social capital throughout the country that may constitute the end of post-Soviet apathy.

The *EuromaidanSOS* is one example of an organisation whose focus was and continues to be on people who have been unlawfully detained, the disappeared, and victims of human rights abuses. As the situation in Kyiv calmed down and violence broke out in Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk, the organisation extended its work to those regions, monitoring human rights abuses, investigating disappearances and helping the unlawfully detained and the internally displaced. The post-Yanukovich interim government has made little progress to date with either investigating the crimes committed during the Euromaidan or with clarifying the legal status of the criminal cases opened during that period.

Another emergency response organisation *Automaidan* has been active in Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk working with local activists and helping internally displaced persons. Its primary functions are anti-corruption initiatives and monitoring law enforcement agencies, especially the traffic police. *Automaidan* also provided emergency assistance.[22] Another initiative, *Rodyna Maidan* provides support to victims and their families. Having started as a spontaneous good-will initiative by a few legal entities and private citizens, *Rodyna Maidan* has evolved into a registered charitable foundation and receives support both from individuals and Ukrainian charities.

With armed conflict potentially escalating in Donetsk and Luhansk, a wave of new grass-roots initiatives emerged to provide support to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, including the provision of bulletproof vests, medical supplies and food for combat zones. Currently, several civil networks, including the *Automaidan*, coordinate these efforts, thereby compensating for the underfunded and inefficient state bureaucracy that has proven incapable of delivering timely adequate support in an emergency. There are many other local examples of such initiatives. Many local communities provide basic support to the military and border guards stationed in their neighbourhoods. Ukrainians have shown extraordinary solidarity with their Armed Forces. From 21 May to 16 June 2014 the State Savings Bank of Ukraine sold treasury

20. UNIAN, 'Business associations in Ukraine initiate a joint platform to represent their interests', 10 April, 2014, available at http://press.unian. net/ukr/pressnews-113745.html

21. FRIDE interview with Oleksandr Solontay, civic activist, Institute for Political Education, Kyiv, 13 May 2013.

22. FRIDE interview with Oleksiy Grytsenko, Automaidan activist, 1 June 2014.

'War Bonds' worth more than UAH 16.8 million (Ukrainian Hryvnia) (approximately €1 million) to fund the urgent needs of the Ukrainian army.[23] As of the 2 June the Ministry of Defence received more than UAH 128 million (approximately €8 million) in donations to the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The effects of Maidan have extended beyond Kyiv. Mobilisation and volunteer efforts in the regions have increased; but to be sustained they have to be supported by and linked to the Kyiv-led reform process. Given the situation in Donetsk and Luhansk as well as tensions in other cities, such as Odessa and Kharkiv, direct east-west links between civil activists are particularly important. Some Kyiv-based civil activists are trying to forge links with the regions. For example, experts from a new civil initiative, the Reanimation Reform Package (RPR),[24] have conducted several tours[25] to present their ideas for reform nationwide, inviting local government officials, local politicians, human rights activists and journalists. As a result around 500 activists have joined the network of RPR supporters. RPR activists stress that the reform process cannot continue without all the regions being fully involved. Similarly the envisaged 'Lustration Committee', which will focus on investigating and removing officials found guilty of corruption, will draw on numerous local initiatives in its work to enhance public scrutiny and achieve greater transparency and accountability of public institutions.

Although the media is not always seen as part of civil society, Maidan has helped to expand the Ukrainian media landscape and launched many independent initiatives. Euromaidan fostered the emerging phenomenon of 'citizen journalism' and helped to create a number of new independent news outlets, such as the Internet TV channel *Hromadske TV*, media platforms such as *Spilno TV*, and social media initiatives, such as *EuromaidanPR*. Some of these channels will probably evolve into commercial organisations while others may continue to depend on voluntary contributions. Channels such as *Spilno TV*, on the other hand, aim to become a civil initiative to bring together different cultural and civil education projects. All of these arose as a response to citizen demands for an open and pluralistic public media sphere.

The recent election of one of the opposition leaders, Vitaliy Klychko, as the mayor of Kyiv reopened the question of the future of the square and the city hall that was occupied by the protesters. At the moment, Maidan is a peculiar combination of a rather nomadic-looking camp, a shrine to the victims, and the headquarters of a number of civil initiatives that emerged during the Euromaidan. The new 'heavy-weight' mayor should engage in an inclusive dialogue with all interested parties to agree on a plan for Maidan square that will be acceptable to all. Civil activists have put forward a variety of proposals, which include: the transformation of the burnt-out trade union building into a public space for civil initiatives; redesigning the square itself to reflect its significance in the fight for democracy; a range of creative methods to involve experts and stakeholders

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23. The 'War Bonds' are on sale since 21 May 2014, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine from 1 April, 2014 No. 101 'On the issue of Treasury bonds "War Bonds"', http://www.minfin.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=400136&cat_id=352487
24. The RPR is probably the most prominent Maidan initiative uniting around 200 active citizens representing various civil society organisations. Their main goal is to outline the most crucial reforms the country needs in a dire economic and political crisis. Their slogan is 'from protests to political demands'.
25. So far RPR presentations were held in Odesa, Mykolayiv, Kherson, Ivano-Frankivsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Lviv, Truskawetz, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhya and Chernigiv.

in the decision-making process about the future of Maidan square; and ideas to fund this initiative in ways that will be bottom-up and transparent.[26]

Overall, as in many other places around the world, Ukraine saw an expansion of the public sphere via the internet, a rise in independent journalism, and emergence of new mobilisation tools as well as types of volunteer activism. Taken together, these recent civil initiatives and protests helped to expose governance deficiencies and raised awareness about the need to change the system as a whole as opposed to merely acting at a more local level. They became important formative experiences for the activists involved (mobilisation, organisational skills, crowd funding, legal support etc.) as well as for the public in general (an increase in awareness and in individual financial contributions). Euromaidan has become a catalyst and a unifying factor for all these disparate tendencies and it has changed the nature and reconfigured the boundaries of Ukrainian civil society.

A qualitative change in Ukrainian politics?

>> Arguably, Euromaidan's most important contribution has been to create huge pressure for more accountability on the part of the Ukrainian government (regardless of its composition) and state bureaucracy. Ensuring 'input legitimacy', through widespread consultations with different sectors of society and free and fair elections, has become a growing priority for politicians. It remains to be seen if this pressure will be sustained and whether it will suffice to achieve systemic changes in Ukrainian politics (which forms part of what is sometimes known as 'output legitimacy' in academic jargon). What is clear is that society has much higher expectations of the state. Unlike the Orange revolution in 2004-2005, these expectations also go hand in hand with a generalised mistrust of political elites and a proactive attitude towards change.

The interim government of Arseniy Yatsenuk tried to involve a number of Euromaidan leaders by offering them positions in his cabinet. One activist, Olga Bogomolets, declined an offer to hold the post of the Deputy Prime Minister for Humanitarian Affairs in the new government but ran for president in the elections that took place on 25 May (winning only 1.91 per cent of the vote). Yet, 'Maidan mandate' ministers and top officials are few and do not hold important portfolios. [27] Most are newcomers to politics and do not seem to have gained much influence

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26. FRIDE interview with Bogdana Babych, Founder of Spilno TV, 15 May 2014.

27. Sergiy Kvit, Minister of Education and Science; Oleg Musiy, Minister for Healthcare; Dmytro Bulatov, Minister for Youth and Sport; Yevgen Nyshuk, Minister of Culture. In addition, the creation of two new agencies was promised in response to the Maidan demands, although neither has been established at the time of writing: the Lustration Committee (to be headed by Yegor Sobolyev, a prominent civil activist); and the Anti-corruption Bureau (to be headed by Tetyana Chornovol, a well-known investigative journalist who was particularly outspoken against the Yanukovich regime).

to date. Under the pressure of Euromaidan, two new bodies will be created: the Lustration Committee and the Anti-corruption Bureau although their status, composition and mandate remain unclear and progress has been limited so far.

The Lustration Committee has yet to be officially created. A loose network of advocates are pushing for its establishment, but they do not necessarily agree on what the Lustration Committee should focus on. Some argue that the Lustration Committee should prevent those responsible for crimes during Yanukovich's term from holding public office. Others want to extend the ban to those found guilty of abuse of office and corruption[28]. The majority of advocates simply want greater transparency and accountability in public institutions. For now the network pushing for the establishment of the Lustration Committee consists of around one hundred activists and many more occasional volunteers. According to its head Yegor Sobolyev, the initiative continues to grow throughout the country. Although it was the interim government that proposed the establishment of such a committee, it has done little to pursue this initiative or to formalise its position.[29]

A similar fate befell the proposed Anti-Corruption Bureau. Unlike the Lustration Committee, a dedicated anti-corruption institution has been on the agenda for a long time and is part of the reform package envisioned by the AA with the EU. Political journalist and civic activist Tetyana Chornovol was appointed to lead this Bureau. She assembled a team of activists to staff the Bureau but little progress towards institutionalising the initiative has been achieved to date. Two conflicting bills have been submitted to Parliament, yet neither of them has made it onto the parliamentary agenda so far. This is partly due to disagreements over the mandate and the organisational structure of the Bureau among civil activists themselves. The group led by Chornovol does not share the same approach or vision as a number of other well-established anti-corruption NGOs, in particular the Anti-Corruption Action Centre.

It is too early to say whether Euromaidan has had a significant impact on the political party system as a whole. It has certainly provoked a realignment of political forces and opened the door to new political groupings and leaders. Many civil activists argue that the party system as a whole has to become more transparent and open. If the parties fail to embrace meaningful reform, all that will happen is a reshuffle of traditional politicians. Civil society continues to press established political leaders and their parties to reform. During the presidential campaign, under pressure from the Chesno movement, a number of candidates from across the political spectrum[30] partially disclosed information about their campaign financing. In addition to reform of the electoral code, closer public scrutiny and levelling of the playing field between different parties, new and old, are needed for the next parliamentary elections (which may be held as soon as Autumn 2014). Local elections on 25 May were an important test case. A number of smaller parties, such as *Samopomich*, the Democratic Alliance, and *Nove Zhyttia* made it to the Kyiv city council (following re-counts of votes in some districts). New political groupings will most likely be launched and succeed at the local level. They, like established political parties, should be closely scrutinised.

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28. The draft presented to President Poroshenko on 13 June lists a whole range of criteria for lustration, from the tainted Soviet past to holding high-ranking positions during President Yanukovich and having 'interfered with Ukraine's territorial integrity'. Text available at http://lku.org.ua/uploads/file/31/law12.06.14.pdf

29. FRIDE interview with Yegor Sobolev, Head of the Lustration Committee, Kyiv, 12 May 2014.

30. Olga Bogomolets, Anatoliy Gritsenko, Petro Poroshenko, Seriy Tigipko and Yulia Tymoshenko.

Maidan fostered the establishment of new forms of interaction between civil society and the state, such as the Reform Platform in the Parliament that consists of 24 legislators (from *Svoboda, Batkyvshchyna, Udar,* and several independent members) and the Centre of Support for Reform that consists of RPR members and representatives of the relevant ministries. These bodies meet weekly with representatives of civil society (mostly the RPR initiative) and collaborate closely over the preparation and presentation of legislation for new reforms. Some civil activists, who tried unsuccessfully to collaborate with the authorities during President Yanukovich's term, are gratified that a dialogue is finally taking place and that concrete steps are being taken in the parliament and in the cabinet.[31] Others, however, remain sceptical; with Ukraine's parliament, the *Rada*, as yet unreformed and the newly-elected president deeply rooted in the old political elite, they argue for stricter oversight and more forceful involvement on the part of civil society.

Maidan helped consolidate a nation-wide consensus over a set of core reforms to fight corruption and uphold the rule of law, transparency and accountability. During President Yanukovich's administration a number of civil society organisations campaigned on these issues. These included initiatives such as *Chesno*, New Citizen, and Stop Censorship, all of which aimed to increase public oversight over state institutions. Now many civil activists who were engaged in these initiatives and remained active on the Maidan have formed a number of 'reform platforms' – networks of experts and activists who develop reform initiatives. The core group from the Civil Sector of Maidan and other activists have launched a number of new initiatives, for example, RPR and *Nova Krayna* which aim to foster a dialogue between the expert community and policy-makers and ensure that important reforms remain firmly on the political agenda.

Since the ousting of President Yanukovich, there has been some progress in a few reform areas, although for the most part it required considerable pressure from the CSOs to approve the legislation.[32] A lot remains to be done to complete the package of reforms and to harmonise the existing legislative framework. To date, a law on access to public information and several laws outlined under the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan with the EU have been adopted. This prompted the European Commission to move to Phase Two of the Plan.[33] Unsurprisingly, however, the most politically sensitive reforms remain blocked: at the time of writing these include the creation of the public prosecutor's office, electoral reform, public access to the land registry, higher education reform, and judicial reform.

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31. FRIDE interview with Svitlana Zalishchuk, Executive Director of the NGO Centre UA, Kyiv, 9 May 2014.

32. Numerous legislation has been adopted under the pressure of civil activists, namely: 'On amendments to some legislative acts of Ukraine in connection with the adoption of the Law of Ukraine'; On Information'; and 'On Access to Public Information' 0947, available at http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=45130; On public procurement, available at http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1197-18; On restoring confidence in the judicial system of Ukraine (lustration of judges) 4378-1, available at http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=50133; On public broadcasting, available at http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1227-18; On administrative services, available at http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/5203-17; On the standardization 4585, available at http://rada.gov.ua/news/Novyny/Povidomlennya/93004.html; On metrology and metrological activities 4583, available at http://rada.gov.ua/news/Novyny/Povidomlennya/93003.html; On open access to information about the use of public funds' 2012a; Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers 'On the list of administrative services provided by the centers of administrative services', available at http://platforma-reform.org/?p=308

33. There are: amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Prevention and Combating Discrimination, available at http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1263-vii; amendments to some legislative acts of Ukraine in the sphere of public anti-corruption policy in connection with the Visa Liberalization Action Plan with the EU, available at http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/224-18; amendments to the Law of Ukraine on refugees and persons in need of additional or temporary protection, available at http://rada.gov.ua/news/Novyny/Povidomlennya/92527.html

Even though reforms might be passed into law, they are not always implemented in part because of a lack of clear guidelines on implementation. Sometimes a lack of clarity over which government body is responsible for implementation can also impede the application of new laws. Under pressure from a group of parliamentarians opposed to judicial reform, the 'Law on reinstating the trust in the judicial system' is now being reviewed by the Constitutional Court.[34]

Civil society has a special role to play in monitoring EU-Ukraine bilateral relations. At the end of May, Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk announced that in each ministry there would be a new post of Deputy Minister for European Integration. Consultations with relevant civil society groups should become part of the new ministers' mandates; this process can be easily supported by the EU Delegation that maintains extensive links with Ukrainian civil society.

The AA also envisions a Civil Society Platform that brings together representatives of Ukrainian civil society and those from the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC – an EU consultative body of employers, employees and various other socio-economic interest groups). The Platform is modelled on the Joint Consulting Committees that have been created with the accession candidate countries, but have never been used in the context of an AA. It is meant to monitor the implementation of the Agreement and produce recommendations and joint declarations on a bi-annual basis. At the time of writing, no agreement has been reached between the EESC and representatives of Ukrainian civil society over the format for the Platform. The model proposed by the EESC, namely a tri-partite structure with equal representation for employers, trade unions, and civil society, is not considered to be effective by Ukrainian civil society. Recent events have shown that, despite their large membership, trade unions and big employer associations in Ukraine tend to be more in tune with the state authorities and big oligarchic interests than workers or SMEs. SMEs, on the other hand, are only starting to establish a national platform. In addition, in a tri-partite structure civil activists would probably be under-represented, thereby denying a voice to key proponents of reform.

Furthermore, the role of the existing National Platform of the EaP Civil Society Forum remains unclear. Many activists believe it should become the EESC's counterpart for the Civil Society Platform. Its structure reflects that of the AA and its members are among the most active in civil society.[35] Its added value is its specific areas of expertise and its links to civil society platforms in other EaP countries. Consultations are now under way in Ukraine as to the format and structure of the Ukrainian part of the Civil Society Platform envisaged by the Association Agreement. Regardless of how these consultations proceed, they will have to clarify whether and how the existing EaP Civil Society Forum could be involved in Ukraine's association process more directly. The goal should be to exploit the synergies between different mechanisms and empower civil society in its role as watchdog. What is needed is not necessarily a 'super-platform' that would speak for all but an effective

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34. RBC News 'The Constitutional Court of Ukraine received a request on the constitutionality of the law On restoring the confidence in the judicial system of Ukraine', 19 May 2012, available at http://www.rbc.ua/ukr/news/politics/ksu-poluchil-deputatskoe-predstavlenie-o-konstitutsionnosti-19052014180500

35. FRIDE interview with Rostyslav Dzhundza, Head of the Social Dialogue working group, Ukraine´s National EaP Civil Society Platform, 15 May 2014.

coordination mechanism that would make the most of each EU-sponsored mechanism, without creating unnecessary tensions and competition.

Ukraine has had a 'protracted' association process. It took more than five years to negotiate the agreement and two years elapsed between the initialling and the signature of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) that was signed on 27 June 2014. Although some progress has been made, a lot remains to be done to implement deep and sustainable reform. The technical and analytical capacity of some government institutions has to be strengthened to ensure successful implementation. At the same time, some institutions have to be seen for what they are – 'fig leaves' created by the previous administration to simulate its commitment to approximation with the EU. These institutions should be abolished.

Lessons for EU support to democracy in Ukraine

>> It is widely recognised that the EU is slow and often weak in responding at times of crisis, and that its strength lies in offering a long-term vision for countries and supporting gradual reform. The crisis in Ukraine has exposed both the potential and limits of such an approach. Many observers called the Euromaidan the largest pro-EU demonstration in history. Although the EU's normative appeal remained high throughout the crisis, its diplomacy was often behind the curve. High profile visits by the EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, European Commissioner for the neighbourhood, Štefan Füle, and a number of national foreign ministers, including notably those from Germany and Poland, were welcomed, but the lack of concrete action on their part led to a degree of disillusionment with the EU. As one Maidan placard put it in January: 'EU: thank you for your deep concern, now do something!'.

In the face of this criticism and in recognition of the scale and importance of the crisis in Ukraine, the EU has since put together a substantial package of support. Over the next six years, Ukraine will receive more than €11 billion in bilateral development assistance and macro financial assistance via the European financial institutions.[36] It is not much more than the EU was promising Ukraine before the crisis, but thanks to the political change in the country and a number of new instruments that the EU is deploying, the assistance could be more effective in securing real change. Although the EU may have appeared undecided and weak at the start of the crisis, it is now well placed to deliver what post-revolutionary Ukraine needs most – concrete financial support and a solid

36. European Commission, 'European Commission's Support for Ukraine', MEMO/14/159, Brussels, 5 March 2014, available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-159_en.htm

framework for deep and sustainable reform. Ukrainian civil society, strengthened and emboldened by the Maidan experience, is a crucial partner in this endeavour.

A new 'State Building Contract', worth €355 million, has been signed. It is aimed specifically at addressing Ukraine's short-term stabilisation needs and implementing urgent governance reforms. The contract includes concrete steps towards building transparency and fighting corruption and aims to enhance the government's ability to respond to citizens' demands and needs. Crucially, the aid package is made conditional upon progress with political reform.[37] Under the Civil Society Facility (CSF) that is now fully integrated into the bilateral aid package under the new EU Financial Framework 2014-2020, €10 million is ear-marked specifically for civil society support.[38] The Facility is meant to go beyond simply providing financial support to non-state actors by enhancing engagement with civil society and increasing civil society involvement in the policy dialogue with the EU.[39] Moreover, a greater role is envisioned for civil society in the new bilateral programming instrument, i.e. the Single Support Framework (SSF). In addition, a number of new initiatives have been launched to help maintain the reform momentum and support Ukraine's approximation with the EU, such as a dedicated Support Group for Ukraine created by the European Commission and an ad hoc international donor coordination platform.

The EU's engagement with civil society has been growing steadily in importance and funding since the late 1990s. The EU has also enhanced its direct support to civil society organisations under the renewed European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)[40] that enables the EU to deal directly with NGOs and human rights activists. Its other thematic programme, Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development (NSA&LA) launched in 2007, has been expanded and is aimed at strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations working on poverty reduction and sustainable development. Since the peer review communication in 2011 and the subsequent communication on working with civil society in external relations, the focus on civil society has become better embedded in the overall architecture of EU assistance since 2012.[41]

One clear sign of increased European support for civil society is the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) that was established in May 2013 as a joint effort between the EU institutions and EU national governments, and is intended to function as a private non-profit organisation. The EED is expected to fill the gap left vacant by bigger EU grant-making agencies by offering timely and flexible support to those civil society actors who are not eligible for support from other donors or are in dire need of emergency funding, such

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37. European Commission, 'European Commission's support for Ukraine – update', MEMO/14/279, Brussels, 13 May 2014, available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-279_en.htm

38. €2 million per year was allocated for 2011, 2012 and 2013. For more detailed analysis of the CSF see N. Shapovalova and R. Youngs '*EU Democracy Promotion in the Eastern Neighbourhood: A Turn to Civil Society?*', *FRIDE Working Paper,* No. 115, December 2012, http://www.fride.org/download/WP_115_EU_democracy_promotion_in_the_Eastern_neighbourhood.pdf

39. European Commission, Action Fiche for Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility 2011 (Brussels, 2011).

40. Development and Cooperation – Europeaid, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, available at http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/eidhr_en.htm

41. The European Commission and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood*. *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions*, Brussels, 25 May 2011, available at http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/documents/communication_conjointe_mai_2011_en.pdf and *The Roots of Democracy and Sustainable Development: Europe's Engagement with Civil Society in External Relations*, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 12 September 2012, available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0492:FIN:EN:PDF

as journalists, bloggers, non-registered NGOs, or political movements.[42] The Ukrainian crisis has been an important test ground throughout the EED's first year of operation. The Endowment responded by offering varied and rapid assistance to different actors, from independent media outlets to the victims of police violence in February.

The new Financial Framework 2014-2020 has a stronger emphasis on support to civil society as a specific objective. Importantly, with the CSF now being fully incorporated into the bilateral SSF, the EU Delegation has acquired more say in defining the objectives of civil society engagement, and freedom to allocate the disbursements for each financial year on the basis of the priorities in any given country. This new approach will take the form of a 'civil society roadmap' prepared by the EU delegation in consultation with local civil society. This document is also meant to assist donor coordination. Most notably, for some of the budget support operations, civil society is represented on the steering committees that assess progress in implementing programmes.

Ukraine seems to be a perfect test case for further improvement and effective implementation of this updated approach. At the same time, a number of lessons drawn from the first five years of the EaP – especially the association processes it offered to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia – should be taken into account in the EU's overall strategic thinking. It has become clear that signing an AA with these countries cannot be an end in itself. What matters more is how effectively the AA is implemented, how sustainable the reform is and whether or not the engagement between the EU and local societies is maintained. The actual signature, despite its political significance, will not bring about changes by itself. Moreover, domestic support for further approximation with the EU cannot be taken for granted. The EU should commit assistance to forge greater consensus around the 'European path' for Ukraine, especially in regions that have close links with Russia owing to business, family or labour migration. Finally, the association process cannot be limited to technical government-to-government negotiations; it has to involve more constituencies and engage the public.

This updated approach can be translated into a number of concrete recommendations on how the EU could increasingly make a difference in Ukraine by working with its civil society. These are:

Invest in the upcoming parliamentary election. Explore the scope for boosting EU support for elections and political parties. Technical assistance to support the reform of Ukraine's electoral law and election monitoring is crucial for the upcoming parliamentary election. Work in partnership with civil society to render the party system more transparent and accountable (such as through scrutiny of party funding, equal access to media and so on). Combine technical assistance to political parties with initiatives that help strengthen the link between parties and citizens.

Focus on the political impact. The debate continues among EU officials and democracy support practitioners as to how to make EU democracy support less technical and more

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42. European Commission, 'The European Endowment for Democracy – Support for the Unsupported', Press release, 12 November 2012, IP/12/1199, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1199_en.htm

responsive to the prevailing political dynamics in the country. It is unlikely to be resolved with a few quick fixes. However, with respect to support for civil society there are some issues that should receive more attention and funding. It is vital to find ways to foster stronger linkages between civil and political society that are based on collaborative partnership principles and that ensure a greater influence of civil society on policy-making. The civil society roadmaps that are currently being prepared by the EU Delegations could provide the necessary country-specific and politically sensitive basis to this.

Extend the reach of EU democracy support into the regions. This is a long-standing challenge for EU democracy support. While civil initiatives in Kyiv seem to be taking the lead on a number of highly political issues, civil activism in the regions remains weak and unstructured. Initiatives in the regions should be receiving more support. The growing number of grassroots community initiatives constitute a new and vital way to build up a vibrant civil society in Ukraine. More emphasis should also be placed on linking local activism with civil initiatives in Kyiv so that the incipient reform process is not limited to a small expert community in the capital. Under the current circumstances, this would add substance to local governance in the nascent decentralisation process, and help forge greater ownership over political change and greater unity for the country.

Prepare a post-conflict reconstruction package for Donetsk and Luhansk. As armed conflict in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk continues, the toll on the civilian population and local economies is devastating. Whenever a lasting cease-fire is achieved, the EU should collaborate with local civil initiatives and organisations to support the rebuilding of these communities. While the priorities and methods have to be locally defined, direct funding and sectoral assistance from the EU would be needed.

Reinforce the focus on independent media. Maidan helped pluralise the media landscape. The EED has been at the forefront by giving prompt support to a number of media outlets. Support to the independent media has to continue and be reinforced. It has particular relevance for the regions that are more exposed to Russian media which engages in a full-scale disinformation and propaganda campaign. Small community-based news agencies are particularly well-placed to improve the dissemination of information in their cities.

Help foster the emerging culture of small-scale philanthropy and volunteering. The range and effectiveness of small-scale community initiatives, volunteering, and fundraising by direct private donations are truly remarkable and illustrate the deep societal change in Ukraine. These have to receive more attention and support. Western organisations with experience in these areas should be encouraged to become engaged in Ukraine. Where useful, the EU Delegation could help facilitate and coordinate such collaborations.

Avoid a compartmentalised approach to engaging civil society in the EU association process. There is a substantial convergence between reform requirements in the AA and the reform agenda driven by civil society. Empowered by Euromaidan, civil society wants to play a central role in the reform process and have an impact that goes beyond consultations and monitoring. The Civil Society Platform envisioned in the AA does not have to be the only mechanism. It is recommended that the EU looks for ways to create synergies and foster real partnerships between different civil society forums and platforms, including the National Platform of the EaP Civil Society Forum and the newly founded civil initiatives, such as the Reanimation Reform Package.

Conclusion

>> Although the political situation in Ukraine remains highly unstable, the three months of Euromaidan protests have been a moment of major civil awakening. Indeed, one of the important differences between the Euromaidan and the Orange Revolution of 2004 is the richness and autonomy of multiple civil initiatives that grew around it. As the concerns over the territorial integrity of Ukraine loom large, this paper argues that the quality and nature of its civil society will be one of the key elements in its incipient political transition.

Recent events sparked important transformations throughout the society, such as the rise of 'social capital', organisation, and increase in voluntary financial contributions for civil initiatives. These trends compare favourably to the previous two decades, during which most analysts described Ukraine, just as most of the former Soviet territory, as a land of apathy and low civil participation.

Not everything is so positive: the violence, the proliferation of para-military groups, and the rise of radical organisations which enjoy marginal public support but have gained disproportionate leverage are all sources of grave concern. The on-going conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk sponsored by Russia poses tremendous challenges to the Kyiv government. Civil activists are concerned that the protracted nature of the conflict may cripple the relations between these regions and Kyiv irrevocably. They also say it may be exploited by vested interests to sabotage reform.

A number of important transformations are under way in Ukrainian civil society. Several new mechanisms for interaction between civil society and state authorities are being introduced. There is increased pressure for more transparency and accountability, and experts and activists are working hard to create and implement a solid reform agenda for the country. Although a number of interesting initiatives have begun, it is still too early to say whether the overall cooperation and coalition-building between civil organisations and initiatives will take root, especially with respect to links between Kyiv and the regions. There remains a gap between bottom-up mobilisation and established CSOs. In addition the linkages between CSOs and Ukrainian society at large have yet to mature.

Euromaidan helped consolidate an all-Ukrainian unifying narrative against corruption, establishing the rule of law, and promoting socio-economic development. More local reform initiatives should spread throughout different regions so that the reform process driven by a group of activists and experts in Kyiv does not remain something distant and abstract. Concrete initiatives aimed at addressing local grievances should be nurtured, and the nascent culture of volunteer activities should become the backbone of the new relations between CSOs and the society at large. This would be the best safeguard against any abuse of power and the most effective mechanism to ensure accountability and development.

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