ON THE STATUS OF THE UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE IN UKRAINE

Following the launch of an advocacy campaign in 2018, over 63 airports worldwide as well major media organizations such as the BBC, The Washington Post, and The New York Times adopted the use of the Ukrainian transliteration of Kyiv for the capital of Ukraine. In 2019, the Embassy of Ukraine in the United States announced that the United States Board on Geographic Names had also adopted the Ukrainian language-based spelling of Kyiv at the request of the embassy, the United States Department of State, the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus and the largest representation of Ukrainians in America, the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America.

Just last month, the McDonald's Corporation announced a company-wide shift in policy in Ukraine to conduct “all official documentation, advertising communication, communication on social networks, information on the website… in the state (Ukrainian) language,” adding that the Ukrainian language is also a priority in communicating with customers.

In contrast to these positive developments, Ukraine's enemies have renewed their assault on Ukraine’s native language in the land of its birth. Rather than...
in Ukraine’s government today seek to diminish the status of Ukrainian identity. The native language of the Ukrainian nation survived centuries of repression during Soviet and Russian tsarist rule in Ukraine, when the Russian language was decreed by force into areas of state and social activity.

The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA) considers the recent actions of 51 lawmakers, mainly from the pro-Russia Opposition Bloc, as well as those of Vladimir Putin’s closest personal ally in Ukraine, opposition leader Viktor Medvedchuk, to be a significant breach of constitutional protections in Ukraine, and a threat to Ukrainian as the sole state language in Ukraine. Along with other member organizations of the Ukrainian World Congress, UCCA has consistently emphasized the importance of the Ukrainian language as the language that unites the Ukrainian world and fosters the upbringing of new generations of conscious Ukrainians, both in Ukraine and in the diaspora.

Following on UCCA’s letter of welcome to President Zelenskyy on the occasion of his inauguration, in which UCCA explicitly stated their commitment to advocate for the adoption of the Ukrainian language as the official state language of Ukraine, UCCA’s President, Andriy Futey has forwarded a letter to the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Dmytro Razumkov, expressing the urgent concerns of the Ukrainian American community about these developments. UCCA resolutely condemns any attempt to weaken the position of Ukrainian as the only state language and opposes the politicization of the language issue, and requests that the Chairman meet with representatives of the worldwide diaspora at the earliest opportunity to further extend our work for the well-being of our common homeland.
UCCA Honor 30 Years of Ukraine’s Declaration of Sovereignty

On July 16, 1990, parliamentarians in Soviet-occupied Ukraine, inspired by the democratic movement Rukh, adopted by an overwhelming vote of 355 for and four against, a far-reaching Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine, a critical and demonstrative step towards the rebirth of Ukraine’s independence.

This year, the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the largest representation of over 1.5 million Americans of Ukrainian descent, celebrates the 30th anniversary of this historic and long-awaited declaration. In defining the "supremacy, independence, fullness and indivisibility of the republic's authority within the boundaries of its territory, and its independence and equality in external relations," Ukrainians for the first time since 1941 declared the political and economic autonomy of an entire nation. With this decision, Ukrainians took the necessary steps towards the creation and recognition of an independent Ukrainian citizenship, an independent army, national bank and currency, which would all eventually be enshrined in an independent Ukrainian constitution.

The Ukrainian Press Agency reported at the time that up to 10,000 residents of Kyiv celebrated in the streets on the evening of July 16, 1990, gathering in what is today referred to as Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square – the same location that would be later occupied by the Orange Revolution and the Revolution of Dignity). The large crowd then marched towards the building where in 1917-1918 the Ukrainian Central Council had held its meetings where several people gave speeches in memory of the first president of the Ukrainian National Republic, Mykhailo Hrushevsky. There, the journalist and former political prisoner Oles Shevchenko, proclaimed that "from today our children
While it would take more work and even more activism to bring Ukrainian independence to full realization, the Declaration of Sovereignty of July 16, 1990, would remain an important touchstone in history, as UCCA referred to it specifically the following year in its statement following the establishment of the ill-fated “Commonwealth of Independent States,” stating:

“While it is still too early to fully comprehend the impact of the December 8 joint Byelorussian-Russian-Ukrainian declaration of the Establishment of a ‘Commonwealth of Independent States,’ it appears to contravene Ukraine’s Declaration of Sovereignty of July 16, 1990, its Declaration of Independence of August 24, 1991, the recently concluded referendum and recent legislation.”

For Ukrainians around the world, the restoration of Ukraine’s Independence was a goal many could only dream of, but which became a reality at the end of the 20th century. UCCA honors the centuries of hard work and determination that led to Ukraine declaring its sovereignty and the sacrifice that it has taken to maintain its freedom since that time.

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**UCCA Marks the Sixth Anniversary of the Downing of MH17**

Six years ago, Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, a scheduled passenger flight from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, was shot down while flying over eastern Ukraine. All 283 passengers and 15 crew were killed by a Russian-made Buk surface-to-air missile launched from Russian occupied territory in Ukraine. Today, the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the representative organization of the over 1.5 million Americans of Ukrainian descent, joins the
Since the horrific crash, the Joint Investigation Team, led by the Netherlands, Australia, Belgium, Malaysia and Ukraine, have concluded that the missile system involved in shooting down MH17 came from a Russian military brigade. The Boeing 777 was hit by a Russian-manufactured Buk 9M38, surface-to-air missile fired from the territory controlled by Russia’s terrorists in Ukraine, using a mobile launcher trucked in from Russia and hastily returned there. A similar conclusion is widely accepted by Western intelligence.

“The downing of MH17 is an egregious example of the Kremlin’s disregard for innocent life”, stated UCCA President Andriy Futey. “Righteousness must be delivered for the victims of this horrible tragedy and UCCA applauds the Dutch government’s decision to bring Russia before the European Court of Human Rights for its role in the downing of Flight MH17,” he added.

On this solemn sixth anniversary, UCCA’s thoughts and prayers go out to the victim’s families, including one American citizen, and we ask God to remember all those who perished and grant them eternal peace.
National Office
203 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10003
+1 (212) 228-6840

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