Scientific Data about Society in Ukraine

Ukraine in European Research Infrastructures in the Social Sciences and Humanities

Webinar, May 22, 2023

The webinar was co-organised by the ESFRI Strategy Working Group Social and Cultural Innovation (SWG SCI) and the European Alliance of Social Sciences and Humanities (EASSH). The main aim of the webinar was on the one hand a mutual learning exercise for involvement of Ukraine and its researchers in the social sciences and humanities (SSH) European research infrastructures (RIs) and on the other hand an opportunity to demonstrate existing and potential funding opportunities and gaps, all under the umbrella of supporting the Ukrainian research system and its researchers.

The webinar had more than 60 participants, approximately a third being Ukrainian researchers both in their home country and in exile. Most participants were researchers involved in research infrastructures, also there were representatives from EU-Member States, delegates from ESFRI and ERICs, as well as funders from national, private and international organisations and the *European Commission* (EC).

By showcasing current SSH-research infrastructures activities in and with Ukraine, the idea was to collect lessons learnt, challenges encountered and to identify future opportunities for cooperation among the RIs and other types of participants.

The three thematic areas were: 1) data collection and 2) data archiving in the social sciences as well as 3) data and digitisation in the Humanities and Cultural Heritage. All three areas had an overarching aspect: how to provide profound scientific data for research in SSH-disciplines in Ukraine and how Ukraine can cooperate with European research infrastructures.

Welcome

After the introduction by the Director of EASSH, Gabi Lombardo, the ESFRI-Chair Jana Kolar explained the function and role of the *European Strategy Forum of Research Infrastructures* (ESFRI) in the context of the *European Research Area* (ERA) and the European Research Framework Programme *Horizon Europe.* ESFRIs task is policy coordination in the field of RIs. It consists of national delegates and the EC. Ukraine is a full member of ESFRI. At the onset of the Russian invasion, ESFRI issued a statement about the Russian aggression towards Ukraine, calling for research infrastructures and their funders to aid the Ukrainian research community and to suspend any engagement with Russia and Belarus. ESFRI also formed a drafting group to look into energy and supply challenges of RIs. ESFRI underlined that Ukraine needs particular support from the Member States and the EC, also through dedicated funding. The research system and infrastructure in Ukraine was severely disrupted due to the Russian aggression and several RIs were destroyed. ESFRI recommended therefore that RIs set up

specific measures in support of the Ukrainian research community, such as access provision, training, provision of scientific equipment, etc. The Ukrainian representative, Andrii Kuznetsov, First Deputy Executive Director of the *National Research Foundation of Ukraine* (NRFU) welcomed the initiative of this webinar and thanked the organisers for showing support to Ukraine and the Ukrainian research community. Dejan Dvorsek, Deputy Head of Unit, DG Research and Innovation of the *European Commission* expressed his admiration to the Ukrainian research community for its resilience. The EC demonstrated its support through the Ukrainian association to *Horizon Europe* (HE) and Euratom. In 2022, the Ukrainian participation in HE was at its highest. Currently, we should be mindful of immediate needs and preserve intellectual assets. The brain drain in Ukraine that is happening now is concerning.

Experiences and examples of involving Ukraine in SSH-research infrastructures

Importance of involving Ukraine in SSH-research infrastructures

Denisa Fedáková, Vice-Chair of the ESFRI SWG SCI explained the work of the group. It works on landscape analysis of research infrastructures in the social sciences and humanities and supports the monitoring of SSH-research infrastructures that are on the ESFRI-Roadmap. 19 European countries are represented in the ESFRI SWG SCI. She stated that it is an important aim for research infrastructures in the social sciences and humanities to collect scientific data about all European countries. Therefore, it is particularly important to collect scientific data about Ukraine being a country with a large population. This data about society and culture is important for Europe and for Ukraine itself. She underlined that Ukraine has already been involved in research infrastructures in the social sciences and humanities – and it is important to maintain the Ukrainian participating in ESFRI research infrastructures. The main motivation for the webinar is to learn from each other and to keep initiatives alive. What is currently important is to put together researchers even when there might be no specific funding, to show support, and to keep Ukraine involved and keep momentum for the years to come. Some research infrastructures already collaborate with Ukrainian researchers and/or Ukrainian organisations and this webinar creates a space to exchange ideas and knowledge and for sharing the thoughts. The moment for this webinar is timely because some activities have already started and can be shared. The *Horizon Europe* Work Programme for Research Infrastructures for the final years of HE (2025-2027) is in its drafting stage at the moment.

Supporting social science data collection in Ukraine

European Social Survey (ESS)

Rory Fitzgerald, Director of the *European Social Survey* (ESS) ERIC and Professor at *City University*, London, where the ESS has its headquarters introduced the ESS. Ukraine took part in earlier rounds of ESS between 2004-2012, but then slipped away for a time. ESS focuses on European attitudes and data about values. To highlight the importance of ESS data for evidence-informed policy making, Rory explained how ESS data was used for monitoring different societal aspects of EU candidate countries, for instance in the Western Balkans accession talks. The ESS has over 2,000 registered users. Currently it focuses on its increasing number of members, as it currently has 28 countries as members, up from 13 when ESS was established in the legal form of an ERIC. Once the Russian invasion was underway, ESS issued a statement of support to Ukraine and established a dedicated support team.

Ukraine has been granted to join ESS as a guest member without a membership fee. The environment is very supportive, for instance *City University* has joined the *Ukrainian Global University* through a MoU and has invited Ukrainian students to study in London. The UK funder UKRI/ESRC has agreed to cover local fieldwork costs for conducting interviews for ESS data collection wave 11 in Ukraine. Currently, the survey is being prepared. There are a number of questions that come up when planning a face-to-face survey in times of war. For instance, what is the sampling universe, what about addresses? There are occupied territories, there are destroyed buildings, there is a problem with up-to-date census data as well as the question of refugees that have left the country.

Andrii Gorbachyk, Professor of the Department of Methodology and Methods of Sociological Research at *Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv* and National Coordinator of the ESS in Ukraine highlighted the need for Europe to have transparent, unbiased information about Ukraine. This is important for Ukraine's integration in Europe. This need for quality data goes beyond the national census: it is important to have information about people's attitudes, vision of the future, etc. That is why Ukraine has resumed its cooperation with ESS, after initial cooperation started in 2004. There was a gap in participation due to funding shortages and legal issues. However, the importance of the ESS has increased as Ukraine is turning more towards Europe. It is very important that the ESS works completely transparent, as it is an academic project with high quality standards. The data will be publicly available. Challenges are the availability of funding, the lack of up-to-date demographic statistics (last census was in 2001), legal issues (need to have harmonised legislation on, e.g., IP, data protection, but also on joining an ERIC). Now his team is actively involved in the 11th wave of ESS.

Generations and Gender Programme (GGP)

Brienna Perelli-Harris, Professor of Demography at the *University of Southampton* and a member of the Consortium Board of the *Generations and Gender Programme* (GGP) set off with an introduction of the GGP. There have been links to Ukraine for many years, but the country has not been on board so far. One of the main research question is whether Ukrainians will have children in the future and how many. The current challenges with the sampling framework are similar to ESS. GGP is also moving towards push-to-web. She suggested that the research community works together on innovative ways of modelling and on different modes of data collection. Her recommendation was to find a coordinated approach across social sciences research infrastructures that work with data collection and to form a task force. Finally, she closed with highlighting the need for a strong, large, representative household survey in Ukraine as well as the need to support survey agencies in Ukraine.

Natalia Kharchenko, Executive Director at the *Kyiv International Institute for Sociology* (KIIS): introduced KIIS, a private research organisation. There is a close collaboration with *National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy*. She has some staff and interviewers all across Ukraine. They work in large, complex, multi-year projects and do surveys in different industries and sectors, for instance education. After the beginning of the war, international cooperation projects were frozen. She thanked European and American universities that were the first to help. Now they resumed work in Ukraine. There is also a cooperation with the *Czech Social Science Data Archive* (ČSDA). They helped to copy and transfer social science data from *Kiyv Archive* to their servers in order to protect and store it. There are two major challenges: general infrastructure challenges and methodological challenges. The former are security threats,

problems with infrastructure, electricity and heating, as well as less economic activity. There is also a decreasing willingness to participate in surveys, as people face mental problems, stay inside and do not want to communicate with researchers. The main methodological challenge is to define the general population, the universe of people for a survey. However, despite all these challenges it is necessary to continue long-term studies. The main mode currently is telephone interviews. The current focus is on humanitarian issues. But for the future, the plan is to restore what is destroyed, to renovate and to rebuild the state and its institutions. The changes in Ukrainian society are currently very dynamic.

Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)

Axel Börsch-Supan, Director of the *Munich Research Institute for the Economics of Aging and SHARE Analyses* (MEA) in Munich, Research Associate at the *National Bureau of Economic Research* in Cambridge, Mass., USA, and Managing Director, *Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe* started with seeing many parallel challenges across social sciences infrastructures. The webinar is very helpful to learn from each other. SHARE is having very concrete plans about their collaboration with Ukraine. First, he highlighted that SHARE caters mainly to basic research, however that many results are also targeted at evidence based policy making, for instance for the *European Commission*. SHARE's aim is to study the life-course of people. In that sense, SHARE is not only about the social sciences and humanities, but also about health research (measurements on blood, cognitive measures). SHARE tried to integrate Ukraine 10 years ago, but failed to raise funds. At the moment, the plans are very concrete and a pre-testing of the questionnaire is about to happen. A section on trauma will be added, building on experience from the survey in Israel. The biggest challenge currently is the testing of the electronic infrastructure for the survey. Another, more complicated, but fascinating idea is to interview Ukrainian refugees in Poland and Germany. SHARE explores the possibility of oversampling refugees in these countries, however, access to administrative data is a pre-requisite and challenge. A country team for Ukraine with a lot of experience has been found. As there are surveys happening in Ukraine, it is not unchartered water. SHARE has approached a private foundation in UK for support for pre-test funding. There is also the question whether the *European Commission* will organise calls for socio-economic data collections in *Horizon Europe*.

Supporting social science data archiving in Ukraine

Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA)

Yana Leontiyeva, researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the *Czech Academy of Sciences* and Head of *Czech Social Science Data Archive* (ČSDA), a member of the
Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA) ERIC started with an overview about CESSDA and specifically the CESSDA data catalogue, which consists of more than 40,000 social science datasets. CESSDA issued a statement of support for Ukraine. CESSDA also stopped its cooperation with a Russia partner institution. CESSDA has a partner archive in Ukraine, *Kyiv archive*. The *Ukraine National Data Bank of Sociological Data "Kyiv archive"* was created in 2015 by the *Kyiv International Institute of Sociology* (KIIS) and the Center for "Social indicators", together with the *National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy*. Financing was provided by the *International Renaissance Foundation*. She highlighted needs for joint support.

Olga Zhmurko, researcher at the *Czech Social Science Data Archive* (ČSDA) at the Institute of Sociology of the *Czech Academy of Sciences* spoke on the *Ukrainian National Data Bank of sociological data 'Kyiv Archive"* and its services and users. Currently the collection includes more than 200 surveys on a wide range of issues, including electoral, socio-political, socio-economic surveys, surveys on values, health, corruption, exit polls and others. Collected studies cover the period from the 1990s to the present day. User numbers have been continuously increasing. Primary users in the past were students, but recently, after the 2022 Russian invasion, requests from researchers from different countries have increased, showing the value of sociological research data for understanding the situation in Ukraine. In April 2022 *Kyiv Archive* launched a cooperation with the *Czech Social Data Archive* (ČSDA) on transferring, backup and storage of the current data sets as well as mentorship support on the institutional capacity development. She provided examples of data collection, e.g. on the attitude of the Ukrainian population towards Russia and Ukrainian-Russian relations, as well as a list of topics expected to be stored at ČSDA. The mid-term aim is to integrate research data from Ukraine in the CESSDA data catalogue. Data on Ukrainian refugees is currently not available in the data catalogue, however there is the wish to have it in the future.

Yulia Sakhno, manager of the *Ukrainian National Data Bank of Sociological data at "Kyiv Archive"* and a researcher at the *Kyiv International Institute of Sociology* (KIIS) was unable to join the webinar.

Initiatives supporting Ukrainian researchers and language resource & technology Development

Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure (CLARIN)

Jurgita Vaičenonienė, Department of Lithuanian Studies and Institute of Digital Resources and Interdisciplinary Research at *Vytautas Magnus University*, Kaunas, is the National Coordinator of CLARIN Lithuania. Initial support for Ukraine came through a continuous flow of information through the website of CLARIN. Specific initiatives were initiated by national CLARIN-consortia, for instance the development of a translator tool for Czech and Ukrainian. The tool raised interest of governmental agencies for using it for investigating Russian war crimes in Ukraine. A machine translation tool for Finnish and Ukrainian was developed. The *Steven Krauwer Achievement Award* was given to the developers of these tools. The Lithuanian consortium initiated an online course on Ukrainian History, the Italian consortium the "Voices from Ravensbrück" project with the involvement of Ukrainian researchers.

Anna Kryvenko, Associate Researcher, *Institute of Contemporary History Ljubljana* and Chief Consultant at the *National Institute for Strategic Studies*, Kyiv talked about the project "ParlaMint-UA", the first full-text corpus of proceedings from the Ukrainian parliament. One of the impacts is to build a team of Ukrainian parliamentary corpus researchers, who are currently scattered across Europe, and help them to stay professionally. As possible future steps in building Ukraine's research infrastructures she mentioned the need to further engager Ukraine's institutions, also through affiliated researchers who have already worked with European research infrastructures.
In the following discussion, a question was raised about what is needed that Ukrainian datasets can be integrated in the CESSDA data catalogue. It was answered that metadata is

being prepared, and in fact, data should be available in a matter of weeks. Immediate problems due to electricity issues are now resolved. Another question was about the use of such social science studies and its data and findings by the Ukrainian government. One researcher said, that unfortunately there was no direct contact to the government recently. Another researcher stated that in fact Ministries have initiated studies in different fields, like culture, education, civil society cooperation as well as public opinion on a number of subjects. The importance and current lack of researchers' access to financial, economic and demographic data was raised by some, as well as the missing software access and availability for researchers in Ukraine.

Support for the R&I System in Ukraine and the perspective of research infrastructures

Dejan Dvorsek, Deputy Head of Unit, DG Research and Innovation, *European Commission* highlighted the impacts of the war on Ukraine's R&I ecosystem, welcomed ongoing activities in Ukraine, the EU and beyond and named some challenges ahead. As regards Ukraine's association to HE and Euratom, the Ukrainian government does not have to contribute financially to the programmes and Ukrainian entities can participate on equal terms with entities from EU Member States. Evolution of participation shows in 2022 participation levels that are similar and even higher than in 2020. Funding from HE for research infrastructures has a pan-European logic and ensures that existing scientific instruments are accessible to all scientists in the EU and supports the coordination to create new pan-European instruments to avoid duplication, create critical mass, improve quality. Finally, the EC representative ended with a positive note, underlining that the EC will listen to the community's needs and try to adapt HE to make collaboration with Ukraine possible at every step of the way.

Discussion: Challenges, Opportunities and Needs ahead of the road

The final discussion focused on the issues of data needs and relevance of these data generated by social sciences and humanities research infrastructures in Ukraine and in EU Member States, as well as for the large Ukrainian refugee diaspora. Funding gaps and availability at different levels for a variety of activities were discussed as well as opportunities for cooperation and the future roles of ESFRI, the ESFRI SWG SCI and the EC. In order to find innovative solutions, an example from the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) was discussed. EHRI has recently drafted statutes and included an article on *countries in crisis* and the possibility for the General Assembly to reduce or waive their membership fee. Also in ESS, Ukraine is a guest country without paying membership fee. CLARIN has further developed its observership status.

Attention was called to the need for unbiased data about Ukraine in the context of its accession to the EU and further European integration. The question of data about Ukrainian refugees was discussed again. Since February 2022, several teams of European researchers have been conducting studies on Ukrainian refugees. These surveys should be deposited in the data archives in a coordinated manner.

The main difficulty for Ukraine is that national participation cannot be supported through *Horizon Europe*. Funding from Member States for Ukrainian participation in RI, for instance host countries of RIs, is a useful first step. However, Horizon Europe and the next European research framework programme will be needed to sustain this into the future. It could ideally

be opened up to help other countries like Georgia and Moldova to take part in RIs. ESS for example used research framework programme funding to widen the survey in Western Balkan countries. The absence of a tool or funding mechanism to support quick pre-tests was raised. ESFRI could demand support from the *European Commission* and support from the Member States, but ESFRI is not a funder itself. More innovative and flexible mechanism to fund the participation of Ukraine to SSH RI are needed in the future.

Some conclusions

Many different mechanisms exist to support Ukraine's research system and its researchers and some can be used to support research infrastructures. Some examples of ongoing activities are funding opportunities on individual researcher's level, of which many exist through Member States, institutions and European funders. Also, there are a number of funding initiatives from the EC through *Horizon Europe* like fast track access to research infrastructures for Ukrainian researchers, the hop-on-facility to join ongoing *Horizon Europe*-projects, MSCA4Ukraine, EIC4Ukraine and ERC4Ukraine. Some activities have already been supported by individual RIs either from their central budget or from additional host country funding. It is also thinkable that activities are funded from national members of RIs to finance activities, either in-kind/in-cash, either in Ukraine or in EU-countries. Then there have been examples of funding for institutions in Ukraine received from international donors (*Worldbank* but also USAID). However, larger, more systematic activities to include Ukraine in research infrastructures will need additional support from the European level.

Not everything is about funding. The setting up of a cross-RI task force on Ukraine challenges as well as a coordinated approach to survey data collection und support for Ukraine itself in helping to design surveys on context-specific issues (internal displacement and separated families etc.) could be initiated. Platforms to exchange this type of Information and activity could be facilitated by the ESFRI SWG SCI. But it could also be taken up by other platforms like SSHOC, the *Social Sciences & Humanities Open Cloud*.

In her concluding remarks, Denisa Fedakova, Vice Chair of the ESFRI SWG SCI underlined that today's discussions show that expectations are high, that activities and cooperation will continue and bring data on interesting/important topics of relevance to us all. There are many challenges and it is essential to have colleagues from Ukraine involved. This webinar should be repeated in future to see what has been achieved and to build a platform for more stable collaborations.