



Solidarity for Ukraine – issue 23 – The next day

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The Institute for Research and Information on Volunteering (iriv) is associated to the international solidarity for Ukraine attacked by Russia on 24th February 2022. After a pandemic that has weakened democratic countries with the disturbing rise of conspiracy theories and hate speech on social networks, we do hope this war in Europe will be an opportunity to reflect on a new solidarity, among European and international allies. This first for 2024 is the 23rd since the beginning of the war in Ukraine... The next day is the strategy that one is forced to consider after a sudden and unexpected change in one's plans - nothing happened as one had imagined. Forced to an intense and salutary brainstorming after a major upheaval, several options are possible. We can continue to play a sterile game, a forward flight without rhyme or reason, the Russian solution.

We can take the tangent, an uncertain bet that can be an alternative. Above all, one can suggest a trying experience into a future in line with one's hopes, the Ukrainian case. In a first point, we will question the day before which democracies are sometimes confronted to change. In the following points, we will discuss the Russian and Ukrainian situations whose states of mind are very different. At the beginning of a New Year that celebrates the ten years of the Maidan Revolution (Kiev, February 2014), we will consider a brighter future for Ukraine and Europe - the next day and the following days with glimmers of hope.

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* le logo a été dessiné par Caritas Canada en février 2022

The day before

On March 15th, 1968, a columnist for the French newspaper *Le Monde*, Pierre Viansson-Ponté, titled «When France is getting bored» (1). A few weeks later, the events of May 1968 were a major earthquake in French society forced to question itself and reflect on salutary developments to consider a future more in line with the expectations of young people but also women, who were often considered “guardianship” even when they were adults. The year 1968 celebrated the ten years of the Fifth Republic with a Gaullist unquestioned regime where the media (ORTF) were severely controlled. No one could suspect such a «disorder» for the most conservative, a «kick in the anthill necessary» for the most progressive. A calm before the storm.

After the defeat of Dien Bien Phu on May 7th, 1954, the appointment of Pierre Mendès France as head of the Council in a government of the Fourth Republic, had made it possible to settle the Indochinese conflict in one month, the condition of his commitment. On 18th of June he dealt directly with the emissaries of the Viet Minh and the agreements were concluded on the night of 20th to 21st of July 1954 (2). In a documentary about his life (3), Pierre Mendès France shared his vision of the process of decolonization that was inevitable. The Indochinese case should have served as an example to the Algerian conflict. The French army suffered new setbacks and Algeria regained its independence by the Evian agreements signed in March 1962 with the FLN militants. African countries under French influence followed the same path and independence was acquired in the 1960s (4). France should have taken the initiative to put an end to a shocking legacy of the past in a modern and democratic society, which demands social justice, equal opportunities, and respect for the universal values of humanity, solidarity and freedom of expression. Constrained and forced by legitimate demands and struggles, the homeland of human and citizen rights finally revived its republican ideals of freedom, equality, and brotherhood.

Democracies must constantly question themselves and bring about existential awareness when they are wrong. Demonstrations are signs of a democratic vitality, when they are not repressed in blood and where opponents are not executed or tortured in prison (as in Russia or Iran). Democracies differ from authoritarian regimes because they recognize their mistakes and wrongs, do not muzzle their oppositions, and do not use information as a propaganda weapon to contaminate and manipulate international public opinion (at the time of 4.0 communication). We know the ravages of «fake news» on heated opinions.

The destiny of a nation and its awareness can inspire individual destinies and vice versa. A democracy is not infallible, it is always perfectible and in constant evolution. It can be knocked, tripped, but it always finds its way when its foundations are solid. The reaction of the citizens and society, supportive and combative, is a good indicator.

In Russia, a day after worse than the day before

The day before in Russia was a long series of attacks and low blows against the countries it intended to subdue or destabilize that augurs a flight forward.

The former countries of the Soviet Union or under the influence of the USSR have been the prime targets of Vladimir Putin's regime since his accession to power in 2000. We remember the ultra-violence of the words used and the means used against Chechnya which is since the end of the two conflicts (1999-2009) in the hands of an autocrat at the orders of the Kremlin, Ramzan Kadyrov. We also know what has happened to Georgia since 2008 when Russia attacked it in the middle of summer; former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, an opponent, has been imprisoned and in a «serious» state since the beginning of 2023. Other countries are targets for Putin's Russia directly or indirectly: Moldova but also Bosnia and Herzegovina with a pro-Russian Serbian threat increasingly worrying, which jeopardizes the Dayton Accords, negotiated at the end of the Balkan war (1991-1995). This peripheral conflict just needs to be resumed. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 did not allow the Russian government led by Boris Yeltsin to exercise its capacity of nuisance.

Putin's Russia has continued to insidiously attack the former Western bloc, which he calls with disdain «the collective West» to destabilize democracy. His first «official» attacks were classic- the stocking of opponents, often former Russian intelligence officers horrified by the manoeuvres of the great-gangsterism employed by their former colleagues. The UK was a land of choice for their dealings with the Skripal business in 2018 or Litvinenko in 2006 (5). The Russian regime's most sophisticated attacks concern cyberbullying, of which Western public opinion is the prime target – they were clearly identified in 2016 during the Brexit campaign (and the Cambridge Analytica scandal) in the United Kingdom but also during the American elections the same year against the candidate for Democrats Hillary Clinton; that led to the unexpected success of the Pro-Russia candidate Donald Trump (6).

The strategy of over-destabilization of the western world has risen a notch since the attack on Ukraine in February 2022. The colonial war of Russia, which wants to vassalize an independent country, is presented as a «war of liberation» against «the influence» of the European Union. The subterfuge worked with many countries in the global South who refused to side with the attacked Ukraine, and did not condemn the Russian aggressor. An implacable process has operated - public opinions manipulated to excess by continuous campaigns of influence on social networks, each coarser than the other, where the aggressor manages to capitalize on all the resentments and resentments of populations that have often been disappointed by Western countries, such as France in Sahelian Africa (where a security approach was mainly implemented). The brutal Wagner militia terrorists may even appear as «liberators» on manipulated social networks (7).

In Ukraine, better days

Ukraine is a prime target for Russia. It would be part of a delirious nationalist logic of a «Great Russia» in hierarchical relations where Russia would be in first place and Belarus in third place. The same logic led a «Greater Serbia» in the hands of fanatical nationalists to attack firstly Slovenia in 1991, then Croatia but especially Bosnia and Herzegovina, victim of an ethnic cleansing that led to the massacre of Srebrenica in 1995, recognized as a crime against humanity. Bosnians had no right to their identity and were designated by their religion by Serbian nationalists who used the most degrading terms to describe them. It was necessary to deprive them of all humanity, dehumanisation is the first step in a larger extermination effort whose mechanisms have been well described from the Hitler regime's policy against the Jewish community in Europe that led to the Holocaust during the Second World War.

Russia's first attack on Ukraine in 2014 followed the democratic protests in Kiev's Maidan Square (Maidan Revolution in February) when thousands of Ukrainians demanded their membership of the European Union. This demand peacefully expressed by a free and sovereign people provoked violent reactions from pro-Russian nationalists. The clashes led to the annexation of Crimea and Donbass. The attacks of the pro-Russians have not ceased, insidious, hidden, with perpetual external interventions (including militiamen of Wagner, private army at the orders of Vladimir Putin). This war of nerves preceded the massive attack, which the West had not planned in February 2022. The barbarism and brutality of the aggression has been well documented despite the massive efforts of Russian propaganda to pass its action as a liberation. This initial aggression, with its ultra-violence, has never wavered like the Boutcha massacre - a series of war crimes committed by the Russian army, between 27 February and 31 March 2022, in occupied localities north of Kiev. This massacre caused the astonishment of international public opinion by its inhumanity before it was forgotten (8).

Ukraine's greatest strength has been the courage and resistance of an entire nation that has bravely resisted and impressed its allies with its fighting spirit and solidarity. This exemplary resistance as well as the efforts of the Ukrainian government to mobilize international public opinion (in the face of massive Russian disinformation) has been fruitful. On 8th of November 2023, the European Union officially paved the way for Ukraine's accession, alongside Moldova. At the same time, the EU opened negotiations for the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Georgia was granted official candidate status (9).

This message is addressed directly to Russia. This is very good news for Ukraine-Ukrainians are not alone, and they are not the «only» concern of the European countries, the only country that benefits from the support of the EU. This criticism was made, quite unfairly, by implying a «double standard» or “unequal treatment”.

The day after and the following days

At the beginning of the 21st century, the democratic world seemed to be back on a good track. The Soviet Union had disappeared in 1991. The bipolarity of the world (East/West opposition) had given way to a promising multipolarity. The economic evolution with the globalization supported by the advent of the digital era opened a new stage for a liberalism without borders, where personal initiative and entrepreneurial creativity would develop new services that would open new markets and enable millions (even billions) of people around the world to access endless knowledge and goods and services. The future looked bright. The European Union was about to open to new European partners (10). The former member countries of the Soviet Union had begun an economic and democratic transition, which are the two *sine qua non* conditions of an adhesion to the European project, born after the Second World War (WWII). Europe had to change and had begun a long and demanding process. The former adversaries (sometimes hereditary enemies such as France and Germany) had found common ground, an economic base that seemed more neutral. Emotions are less intense with the economy. The failure of the Society of the Nations (Société des Nations) during the interwar period had left its mark on people's minds, the economic foundations seemed more rational.

But the heart has its reasons that reason ignores. Bilateral or even multilateral trade agreements do not prevent old or prematurely buried conflicts from resurfacing when a peaceful process is not accepted by extremist elements on both sides. A divided democratic society is less vigilant and does not see a «forgotten» conflict resurface. Dictatorships and authoritarian regimes are very sensitive to signs of division in a democracy, the ground is vulnerable after a political, economic, or social crisis. In Europe, countries have become the «Trojan horses» of authoritarian regimes (Russia and China) that undermine the European project - Hungary with Victor Orban, Slovakia with Robert Fico, or other leaders in countries of Central or Eastern Europe (11). It is not only support for Ukraine that is at stake but the democratic future of the European Union. It cannot and must not be attacked from within by anti-democratic elements that question its values.

The European Union is a danger to dictatorships - too free, too demanding on civil and individual freedoms, with a powerful legal arsenal to defend diversity and fight discrimination. Glimmers of hope emerged at the end of 2023 in an increasingly troubled geopolitical context with the war in the Middle East – the end of a reactionary regime in Poland in October with Donald Tusk (12) or the acceleration of the enlargement of the European Union to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in November (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Bosnia-Herzegovina).

The next day may look uncertain but also encouraging for Ukrainians. They are not alone - 2024 could be the year of better days for Democracy, in Europe, and worldwide.

- (1) Pierre Viansson Ponté, 15 mars 1968 « Quand la France s'ennuie », Le Monde- <https://www.charles-de-gaulle.org/lhomme/dossiers-thematiques/mars-1968/documents/quand-la-france-sennuie-pierre-viansson-ponte-le-monde-15-mars-1968/>
- (2) Speech by Pierre Mendès France on the 22nd of July 1954- <https://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/decouvrir-l-assemblee/histoire/grands-discours-parlementaires/pierre-mendes-france-22-juillet-1954>
- (3) Mendès France , documentary by Y. Jeuland & Alix Maurin, Paris, 2022- https://www.film-documentaire.fr/4DACTION/w_fiche_film/66510_0
- (4) Pierre Haski « Les décolonisations africaines », France Inter, August 2022- <https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/podcasts/les-decolonisations-africaines>
- (5) Sergey Skripal and his daughter Yulia Skripal poisoned in Salisbury (south-west England) in 2018, ancient Russian spy returned by MI6; Alexander Litvinenko , former agent of the KGB then of the FSB, fired from the Russian security services after denouncing their plan to murder a wealthy businessman, poisoned in London in 2006 https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2021/09/21/d-alexandre-litvinenko-a-l-empoisonnement-de-serguei-skripal-la-russie-de-nouveau-sur-le-banc-des-accuses_6095459_3210.html
- (6) Russian interference in an article published by Le Monde diplomatique in December 2017 <https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2017/12/MATE/58207>
- (7) abuses committed by Russian mercenaries of the Wagner Militia- «The civilian populations, the first victims of the Wagner group in Africa, according to a report by Aclé», Gilles Bensimon, Le Monde, 8 September 2022 - https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2022/09/08/les-populations-civiles-premieres-victimes-du-groupe-wagner-en-afrique-selon-un-rapport-d-acled_6140765_3212.html
- (8) William Audureau , Assma Maad , Pascaline David et Pierre Breteau « *Boutcha massacre: what is known about the discovery of civilian bodies*», *Le Monde*, , 5 avril 2022
- (9) European Commission, 8 avril 2023 - https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_5633
- (10) 10 new Member States join the EU in 2004- 5 Central and Eastern European countries + 3 Baltic States + 2 Mediterranean countries (Cyprus and Malta)
- (11) Fico's return to power in September 2023; pro-Russian elements in Bulgaria
- (12) Conservative party PIS becomes a minority after leading since 2015 Poland after the parliamentary elections of 15 October 2023, which brought to power a coalition led by former President of the European Council Donald Tusk.

Useful contacts

We mean to share the following contacts

- 1- National Union of Journalists of Ukraine- [HTTPS://NUJU.ORG.UA/](https://NUJU.ORG.UA/)
- 2- Ukrainian Parish of Saint Volodymyr –Paris – paroisse.st.volodymyr@gmail.com
- 3- Catholic Mission of the Polish Church in France also suggests the following link:<https://mission-catholique-polonaise.pl/polska-we-francji/pere-brzys-la-mcp-lance-une-initiative-nationale-pour-aider-lukraine/>

A list of associations & ONG - **Source** : <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/actualites/A15542>

Support Ukraine -- <https://www.supportukraine.co/>

Croix-Rouge Française - **Croix-Rouge française** Redcross - <https://www.croix-rouge.fr/Nos-actions/Action-internationale/Rechercher-un-programme/LA-CROIX-ROUGE-FRANCAISE-EN-UKRAINE>

Médecins sans frontières - emergency funds in countries bordering Ukraine and seeking to bring in medical equipment and personnel. - <https://soutenir.msf.fr/faire-un-don/~mon-don>

Secours populaire – a call for support .- <https://don.secourspopulaire.fr/ukraine/~mon-don>

Protection civile - un appel aux dons pour financer d'autres besoins (défibrillateurs, respirateurs, groupes électrogènes, etc.) : <https://don.protection-civile.org/soutenir>

Fondation de France - lance un [appel à la générosité](#) pour soutenir les centaines de milliers de personnes affectées par le conflit en Pologne et en Roumanie - <https://dons.fondationdefrance.org/solidarite-avec-les-ukrainiens/~mon-don?>

Agence des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés - situation d'urgence de niveau 3 pour la crise en Ukraine, le plus élevé.: https://donner.unhcr.org/fr/fr-fr/urgence-ukraine?_cv=1

Unicef - un besoin urgent de financement pour répondre aux besoins essentiels des enfants Pour faire un [don sur le site Unicef.fr](#) - https://don.unicef.fr/b/mon-don?cid=322&_cv=1

ONG Care International - un [formulaire en ligne de dons d'urgence à l'Ukraine](#) pour apporter une aide d'urgence aux populations et aux réfugiés - <https://soutenir.carefrance.org/>

L'ONG française ACTED organise des convois humanitaires pour l'Ukraine

association Solidarités International –pour envoyer des convois de vivres et biens de première nécessité, distribuer de l'eau et des repas aux réfugiés - https://dons.solidarites.org/b/mon-don?cid=880&_cv=1

Plan International, pour apporter aide matérielle et psychosociale aux jeunes ukrainiens et à leur famille, et [sollicite des dons](https://formulaire.plan-international.fr/urgence-ukraine/~mon-don) pour ce faire.- <https://formulaire.plan-international.fr/urgence-ukraine/~mon-don>

L'Aide médicale et caritative France-Ukraine - envoi de convois d'aide humanitaire, des soins aux blessés, des échanges de savoir-faire médical, une aide psychologique et organise des colonies de vacances pour les enfants orphelins - HelloAsso - <https://www.helloasso.com/associations/aide%20medicale%20caritative%20france%20ukraine/collectes/aider-ukraine-amurgence-help-ukraine/don>

Le Comité d'aide médicale Ukraine - réfugiés en transit dans l'ouest du pays, et collecte fonds, médicaments et équipements pour l'hébergement et les soins via ses partenaires français, l'association SAFE et l'organisation FONDEMOS. - <http://www.cam-z.org/en/news/121/>

JeVeuxAider.gouv.fr est la plateforme publique du bénévolat, - une page dédiée Mobilisons-nous pour l'Ukraine .- <https://www.jeveuxaider.gouv.fr/engagement/benevolat-ukraine/>

Les Banques alimentaires - une aide d'urgence à apporter aux frontières de l'Ukraine, dans les pays frontaliers accueillant des réfugiés - <https://www.banquealimentaire.org/urgence-ukraine>

La Protection Civile et l'Association des maires de France ont établi une [liste](#) (lits de camps, sacs de couchage, lingettes, conserves, pansements hémostatiques, solutions antiseptiques ...).

L'Association des maires de France a dressé les [lieux de collecte](#) à travers toute la France. Les Maires de France appellent à la [solidarité avec l'Ukraine](#) . De nombreuses villes de France organisent des collectes de produits de première nécessité - <https://www.amf.asso.fr/documents-les-maires-france-appellent-la-solidarite-avec-lukraine/41122>

La plateforme officielle « [Je m'engage pour l'Ukraine](#) » lancée le 8 mars 2022 par le gouvernement pour accompagner les Français souhaitant héberger chez eux des Ukrainiens réfugiés et accueillis en France.- <https://parrainage.refugies.info/>

Les associations, fondations, entreprises et collectivités territoriales peuvent utiliser ce [formulaire en ligne](#) pour renseigner leur capacité d'hébergement.- <https://www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/commencer/hebergement-personne-morale-ukraine>

Bibliothèque sans frontière (BSF) - elle mobilise et déploie, partout en Europe, des solutions d'urgence pour l'accueil et l'intégration des populations réfugiées. - <https://www.bibliosansfrontieres.org/2022/10/14/bsf-lance-bonjour-france-une-application-innovante-dapprentissage-du-francais-pour-les-refugies-ukrainiens/>