

# **EVROPSKÝ POLITICKÝ A PRÁVNÍ DISKURZ**

**Svazek 13**

**1. vydání**

**2026**



**EUROPEAN POLITICAL  
AND LAW DISCOURSE**

**Volume 13**

**Issue 1**

**2026**

**DOI: 10.46340/eppd.2026.13.1**

## Přístup redakce

*Evropský politický a právní diskurz* – mezinárodní časopis věnovaný mezinárodnímu právu, vnitřním právním předpisům evropských zemí, politologie, mezinárodním vztahům. Pro publikaci v časopisu přijímají se vysoce kvalitní články, což představují důležité inovativní, teoretické, koncepční, metodické a empirické příspěvky v příslušných oborech vědy.

V časopisu se uplatňuje systém anonymního recenzování pro ověření kvality vědeckých článků.

*Evropský politický a právní diskurz* má velký zájem zejména o interdisciplinární výzkumy v oblasti politologie a právní vědy, jsou to srovnávací analýzy nebo prozkoumání jednotlivých jevů. Zároveň vítáme jakékoliv výzkumy týkající se politických a právních problémů různých národních a mezinárodních institucí. *Evropský politický a právní diskurz* přijímá k publikaci jenom původní materiály a nebere v úvahu možnost zveřejňovat dříve tištěné články.

### Redakční kolégie:

#### Šéfredaktor

Mykola Poliovyi, doktor politických věd, profesor,  
Univerzita Komenského (Slovensko)

#### Zástupce šéfredaktora

Arkadiusz Modrzejewski, dr hab., profesor UG,  
Univerzita Gdaňsk (Polsko)

Daniela La Foresta, profesorkyně,  
Univerzita jm. Federico II ve m. Napoli (Itálie)

#### Technický redaktor

Dilara Gadzhayeva, PhD v politických věd,  
Gruzínsko-ukrajinské expertní centrum (Gruzie)

#### Administrativní redaktor

Ilona Mishchenko, PhD, v oboru právo,  
Národní univerzita «Odeská právnická Akademie» (Ukrajina),  
Univerzita Vytautas Magnus (Litva)

#### Redakční kolégie

Borys Kornych, doktor právních věd, profesor,  
Národní univerzita „Odeská právnická akademie“ (Ukrajina);  
hostující výzkumný pracovník, George Washington University  
(USA)

Tamara Latkovska, doktor právních věd, profesor,  
Národní univerzita „Odeská právnická akademie“ (Ukrajina)

Oleksandr Merezhko, doktor právních věd, profesor,  
Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Cracow Academy (Polsko)

Anna Piszcz, dr hab., profesor UwB, Univerzita v  
Białystoku (Polsko)

Petra Joanna Pipková, Ph.D., JUDr., Univerzita Karlova,  
Praha (Česká republika)

Andreas Pottakis, advokát (D.Phil., Oxford),  
International Ombudsmen Institute Europe (Rakousko)

Julian Roberts, doktor právních věd, profesor kriminologie,  
University of Oxford, člen Sentencing Council of England  
and Wales (Velká Británie)

Olena Chaltseva, DrSc. v oboru politologie, profesora,  
Národní univerzita Doněckého regionu Vasyl' Stus (Ukrajina)

Sergey Sayapin, doktor práva, KIMEP univerzita, Almaty,  
(Kazachstán)

Ksenija Smirnova, doctor právnických věd, profesorkyně,  
Kyjevská Národní univerzita jm. Tarase Ševčenko  
(Ukrajina)

Leonid Tymčenko, doktor práva, profesor, Výzkumný  
ústav fiskální politiky, Univerzita státní fiskální služby  
Ukrajiny (Ukrajina)

Halyna Kuts, DrSc. v oboru politologie, profesorka,  
Charkovská národní pedagogická univerzita H. S. Skovorody  
(Ukrajina)

Lucia Mokrá, JUDr., PhDr., PhD., professor,  
Univerzita Komenského (Slovensko)

Iryna Myloserdna, Ph.D. v politických vědách, docent,  
Národní univerzita Odesa I. I. Mečnikova (Ukrajina)

Tetiana Nagorniak, doktor politických věd, profesor,  
Národní Akademie Kyjevské Mohyly (Ukrajina)

Tetiana Kuznietsova, doktor společenské komunikace,  
profesor, Kyjevská univerzita Boryse Hrinčenko  
(Ukrajina)

## Editorial Policy

The *European Political and Law Discourse* – international Journal of International Law, domestic Law of European countries, Political Science, Social Communications, International Relations, Sociology is a peer reviewed journal with blind referee system, which aims at publishing high quality articles that may bring innovative and significant theoretical, conceptual, methodological and empirical contributions to the fields.

The *European Political and Law Discourse* has a particular interest in interdisciplinary approaches to law, political science, social communications and sociology, whether through comparative or single case-study analysis, but by no means restricts its interests to these spaces, welcoming any relevant contribution from and about different parts of the World.

The *European Political and Law Discourse* accepts original articles which are not under consideration elsewhere at the time of submission.

### Editorial Committee:

#### Editor In Chief

Mykola Polovyi, D.Sc. in Political Science, Professor,  
Comenius University (Slovakia)

#### Vice Editors in Chief

Arkadiusz Modrzejewski, dr hab, Professor UG,  
University of Gdansk (Poland)

Daniela La Foresta, Professor,  
Naples Federico II University (Italy)

#### Technical Editor

Dilara Gadzhyieva, PhD in Political Science,  
Georgian-Ukrainian Expert Center (Georgia)

#### Administrative Editor

Ilona Mishchenko, PhD in Law,  
National University “Odesa Law Academy” (Ukraine),  
Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania)

#### Editorial Board

Borys Kormych, Doctor of Laws, Professor,  
National University “Odessa Law Academy” (Ukraine);  
Non-Resident Fellow, George Washington University (USA)

Tamara Latkovska, Doctor of Laws, Professor,  
National University “Odessa Law Academy” (Ukraine)

Oleksandr Merezhko, Doctor of Laws, Professor,  
Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Cracow Academy (Poland)

Anna Piszcz, dr hab, Professor UwB,  
University of Bialystok (Poland)

Petra Joanna Pipková, PhD, JUDr,

Charles University Prague (Czech Republic)

Andreas Pottakis, Attorney at Law (D.Phil, Oxon),  
International Ombudsmen Institute Europe (Austria)

Julian Roberts, Doctor of Laws, Professor of Criminology,  
University of Oxford, a member of the Sentencing Council  
of England and Wales (Great Britain)

Olena Chaltseva, D.Sc. in Political Science, Professor,  
Vasyl’ Stus Donetsk national University (Ukraine)

Sergey Sayapin, Doctor of Laws, Assistant Professor,  
School of Law, KIMEP University Almaty (Kazakhstan)

Kseniia Smyrnova, Doctor of Laws, Professor,  
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (Ukraine)

Leonid Tymchenko, Doctor of Legal Sciences, Professor,  
Chief Research Fellow, State Tax University (Ukraine)

Halyna Kuts, D.Sc. in Political Science, Professor,  
H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University  
(Ukraine)

Lucia Mokra, Prof. JUDr., PhD., PhD., Comenius University  
(Slovakia)

Iryna Myloserdna, PhD in Political Science,  
Associate Professor, Odesa I. I. Mechnikov National University  
(Ukraine)

Tetyana Nagornyak, D.Sc. in Political Science, Professor,  
National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy (Ukraine)

Tetiana Kuznietsova, Doctor of Social Communications,  
Professor, Professor, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University  
(Ukraine)

The Journal is indexed in Index Copernicus:

<https://journals.indexcopernicus.com/search/details?id=42760>

---

EVROPSKÝ POLITICKÝ A PRÁVNÍ DISKURZ

Evidenční číslo: MK ČR E 22311

Vydavatel: ENIGMA CORPORATION, spol. s r.o.

Adresa: Druzstevni ohoz 1717/5a, Nusle, 140 00 Praha 4

**Table of contents****THEORETICAL PROBLEMS OF LAW AND POLITICS**

Dmytro Yagunov, SACRED IMPERIALISM: ‘TRADITIONAL VALUES’ AND THE CONTINUITY OF RUSSIAN COLONIAL POLICY .....	5
---	---

**POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

Olena Chaltseva, AMBIDEXTERITY STRATEGY IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS UNDER CONDITIONS OF UNCERTAINTY .....	23
--	----

Nadiia Zubchenko, Mykola Yatsenko, Nataliia Dumych, Poppy Walton, Konstantin Ryabukhin, Oksana Khymovych, INTEGRATED CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN UKRAINE: GOVERNANCE, SYSTEM READINESS, AND STRATEGIC PATHWAYS FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN A WARTIME AND RECOVERY CONTEXT .....	30
---	----

REQUIREMENTS TO MANUSCRIPTS (in Czech).....	40
---	----

REQUIREMENTS TO MANUSCRIPTS (in English).....	43
---	----

# THEORETICAL PROBLEMS OF LAW AND POLITICS

DOI: 10.46340/eppd.2026.13.1.1

## SACRED IMPERIALISM: 'TRADITIONAL VALUES' AND THE CONTINUITY OF RUSSIAN COLONIAL POLICY

Dmytro Yagunov<sup>1</sup> , D.Sc. in Political Science,  
Ph.D. in Public Administration, MSc in Criminal Justice,  
Merited Lawyer of Ukraine

<sup>1</sup> Eberhard Karls University, Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University

Email: d.yahunov@donnu.edu.ua

**Citation:** Yagunov, D. (2026). Sacred Imperialism: 'Traditional Values' and the Continuity of Russian Colonial Policy. *Evropský politický a právní diskurz*, 13, 1, 5-22. <https://doi.org/10.46340/eppd.2026.13.1.1>

### Abstract

This article examines how the concept of '*traditional values*' functions as the main instrument of Russian neocolonial policy, transforming from domestic conservative rhetoric into a national ideology legitimising territorial conquest, human rights violations, and imperial expansion. Through critical discourse analysis of Presidential Decree № 809 (Russia, 2022) and related legislative acts, supplemented by examination of cultural artifacts and propaganda materials, the research reveals how Russia employs '*traditional values*' as multifunctional weaponry to dehumanise opponents, destroy the international human rights system, and restore hegemonic control over states within its self-proclaimed sphere of privileged interests.

The analysis demonstrates that Russia's '*traditional values*' discourse replicates classical *colonial patterns* – dehumanisation of subject populations, cultural appropriation, historical erasure, and construction of civilisational hierarchies. The study employs postcolonial theory to expose fundamental contradictions between Russia's constitutional provisions and actual policy implementation, revealing systematic subordination of universal human rights to particularistic statist imperatives. Case studies of Soviet cinema (*Officers*, 1971) and appropriated Cossack folk traditions illustrate how colonial violence is romanticised and normalised through symbolic manipulation.

The research identifies the Russian Orthodox Church as a critical instrument of '*soft power*' and ideological control, documenting its transformation into a norm-making entity that promotes theocratic tendencies despite the country's constitutional secularism. The '*Russkiy Mir*' (*Russian World*) concept emerges as the spatial dimension of this colonial strategy, evolving from cultural-linguistic discourse into military-political justification for aggression against Ukraine and other neighbouring states.

A distinctive contribution involves analysing Russia as a unique '*carceral state*' where criminal and prison subcultures have penetrated national culture over five centuries, creating an unprecedented symbiosis between imperial expansion and penal colonisation. This framework explains how '*traditional values*' represent not a temporary ideological construction but a deeply rooted cultural-historical phenomenon capable of self-reproduction regardless of specific political regimes.

The paper concludes that countering Russian neocolonialism requires deconstructing this ideology, supporting post-Soviet democracies' independence, and recognising Russian society as an active bearer rather than a passive victim of imperial values.

**Keywords:** Russian imperialism, traditional values, neocolonialism, cultural appropriation, carceral state, postcolonial theory, civilisational discourse, soft power, historical erasure, prison subculture.

### Introduction

The modern architecture of Russian foreign policy has undergone a fundamental transformation, evolving from a pragmatic search for points of contact with the international community into aggressive ideological expansion, where the concept of *'Traditional Values'* serves as a central instrument of neocolonial domination. This ideological construct is not merely a set of conservative ethical norms for domestic consumption; it functions as a multifunctional weapon designed to legitimise territorial conquests, dehumanise opponents, destroy the international human rights system, and restore control over states within Russia's so-called *'sphere of privileged interests'*. Through the lens of *'defending traditions'*, the Kremlin exercises what analysts call *'authoritarian soft power'*, attempting to present Russia not as an aggressor but as a global *'Restrainer'* saving humanity from the moral decay caused by Western liberalism.

### Genesis and Conceptual Evolution of Traditional Values in Russian Discourse

The process of reinventing *'traditional values'* began as a response to the domestic political challenges and the legitimacy crisis of Putin's regime after the 2011-2012 protests. Until that moment, the rhetoric of spirituality was a prerogative of marginal national-patriotic forces, but with the beginning of Putin's third presidential term, it was elevated to the level of state doctrine. This ideology was built on a conscious opposition between Russia and the *'decadent West'*, which allegedly abandoned its Christian roots in favour of aggressive secularism and minority rights protection.

The rhetoric about *'traditional values'* became widely known after a speech by Natalia Narochitskaya, a former member of the Russian State Duma, delivered in 2014. Her main points were as follows: 1) Russia abandoned its universalist ideology after the collapse of the USSR, unlike the United States, which imposes its values on the world; 2) Russia will defend 'traditional Christian values'; 3) European liberalism is acquiring 'totalitarian habits borrowed from communism'; 4) democracy must ensure the coexistence of different views, including conservative ones (Rakhimov, 2014).

Thus, the text demonstrates the mechanisms of Russian neo-imperial rhetoric: 1) *inversion* – Russia is positioned as the victim of Western ideological pressure, although it is Russia itself that promotes its own universalist model; 2) *religious legitimisation* – Orthodox Christianity as the marker of 'true' Europeanism as opposed to 'distorted' Western liberalism; 3) *civilisational discourse* – rhetoric about 'common roots' with Europe, masking imperial ambitions; 4) *defensive projection* – accusing the West of totalitarianism while building an authoritarian model.

Narochitskaya and other fellow thinkers appealed to romantic currents of the 19th century, such as Slavophilism and Eurasianism, asserting that Russia is a self-sufficient *'civilisation-state'* whose legitimisation is based on Christian revelation rather than secular humanism.

### Legislative Codification: Decree No. 809 as a Manifesto of an Ideological War

The pinnacle of institutionalisation of this ideology was Presidential Decree No. 809 of November 9, 2022, *"On the Approval of the Foundations of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values"*. This document not only formalises the list of values but also directly links them to national security, effectively introducing a regime of 'spiritual censorship' (President of the Russian Federation, 2022).

The Decree explicitly defines 'traditional values' as 'the foundation of Russian society'. Therefore, the President of the Russian Federation formulates and implements a separate state policy of the Russian Federation on the preservation and strengthening of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values, considering 'sociocultural threats to the national security of the Russian Federation in terms of protecting traditional values'. The Decree defines a wide range of such threats, including: the activities of extremist and terrorist organisations, certain media and mass communications, the actions of the United States of America and other unfriendly foreign states, a number of foreign and international non-governmental organisations, as well as certain individuals, aimed at imposing a destructive ideology on the Russian Federation.

According to the Decree, ‘protecting traditional Russian spiritual and moral values, culture and historical memory’ is declared a ‘strategic national priority’ of the Russian Federation.

The document contains a detailed definition of ‘traditional values’, which are understood to be “moral guidelines that shape the worldview of Russian citizens which have been passed down from generation to generation, form the basis of the all-Russian civic identity and the country's unified cultural space, strengthen civic unity, and have found their unique, distinctive manifestation in the spiritual, historical and cultural development of the multinational people of Russia”.

The list of ‘traditional values’ includes: life, dignity, human rights, and freedoms, patriotism, citizenship, service to the Motherland and responsibility for the Motherland’s fate, high moral ideals, a strong family, creative work, the priority of the spiritual over the material, humanism, mercy, justice, collectivism, mutual assistance and mutual respect, historical memory and continuity of generations, and the unity of the nations of Russia.

The hierarchy in the declared values is revealing: ‘patriotism’ and ‘service to the Motherland’ are placed significantly higher in the list than ‘strong family’, ‘humanism’, ‘mercy’, and ‘justice’. This sequence is not accidental – it clearly demonstrates the priority of the state over the individual, the collective over the individual, and ideological loyalty over basic humanistic principles.

Particular attention should be paid to the rhetorical technique of combining universal humanistic categories (*‘human rights and freedoms’*, *‘dignity’*, *‘humanism’*) with openly statist and militaristic concepts (*‘serving the Motherland’*, *‘responsibility for its fate’*) in a single document. Such an eclectic construction allows the regime to legitimise any actions – from repression of dissidents to military aggression – by referring to the ‘protection of traditional values’.

The Presidential Decree emphasises the religious component as the basis of state ideology. This constitutes a fundamental contradiction with the constitutional principles of the Russian Federation. According to Article 14 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, Russia is a secular state where no religion can be established as a state religion or be compulsory, and religious associations are separate from the state and equal before the law. Moreover, Article 28 guarantees freedom of conscience and religion, including the right to profess any religion or not to profess any.

Nevertheless, the Decree openly advocates the use of religion as a key instrument of colonial policy and ideological control. The document emphasises that ‘Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and other religions, which are an integral part of Russia’s historical and spiritual heritage, have had a significant influence on the formation of traditional values shared by believers and non-believers alike’. However, the most fundamental provision is as follows: *‘Orthodox Christianity plays a special role in the formation and strengthening of traditional values’*.

Thus, Orthodox Christianity – in fact, contrary to Articles 14 and 28 of the Constitution – is proclaimed as a *privileged, almost state religion*, which is called upon to provide the maximum assistance to the Russian Federation in the implementation of its neo-colonial policy and accompanying aggressive wars. This turns the Russian Orthodox Church into an institutional tool of state propaganda and mobilisation of the population to support the Kremlin's imperial ambitions.

This trend culminated in Vladimir Putin's statements during a Christmas service in January 2026, in which he proclaimed that ‘the Russian military, on behalf of the Lord, is carrying out a sacred mission to defend the homeland in Ukraine’ (Slavic Sacramento, 2026). The rhetoric of a *‘holy war’* is by no means new in Russian discourse – suffice to recall the iconic patriotic song of the Great Patriotic War period, *‘Holy War’* (also known by its first line: *‘Arise, mighty country!’*), which became the anthem of ‘defending the Motherland’ and appealed to messianic motifs of the struggle between good and evil.

However, there is a fundamental difference between Soviet and contemporary Russian rhetoric. Soviet propaganda, despite its use of religious terminology, remained within the framework of secular discourse, where the ‘sacredness’ of the struggle was more of a metaphor than a theological justification. The current invocation of ‘God’ in waging an aggressive, unprovoked war against a sovereign state indicates several important processes.

First, it demonstrates an open departure by the Russian Federation from the constitutional principles of a secular state. There is a de facto *sacralisation of political power and military aggression*, which is a sign of theocratic tendencies in a formally secular state. Religion is being transformed from a personal matter for citizens into a mandatory element of state ideology, imposed on the whole of society through the propaganda apparatus.

Secondly, this may indicate a deepening crisis of material and human resources for waging war in Ukraine. When rational arguments have been exhausted, economic incentives are insufficient, and human

losses have reached critical levels, the regime resorts to the sacralisation of war as a last resort to mobilise and justify senseless sacrifices. Clear evidence of the practical implementation of Viktor Pelevin's ironic 'formula' that 'a respectable Lord is only for respectable gentlemen' becomes clear: religion is becoming a tool for manipulating those segments of the population that do not have access to economic benefits and social mobility, instead receiving promises of spiritual reward for serving the Empire.

Thirdly, the instrumentalization of Orthodoxy in the context of the war against Ukraine has a specific colonial significance. Since a significant part of the Ukrainian population also belongs to the Orthodox tradition, Russian propaganda tries to present the war not as an interstate conflict but rather as a '*struggle for the souls of lost brothers*'. This is a classic colonial narrative; the metropolis claims the right to 'enlighten' and 'bring back into the fold' its former colonies.

Thus, the transformation of the Russian Federation from a constitutionally secular state into a *de facto* theocratic structure with the privileged status of the Russian Orthodox Church is not only a violation of its own legal norms, but also evidence of a deep systemic crisis of the Putin regime, which is forced to resort to increasingly archaic and irrational methods of legitimising its aggressive foreign policy.

Moreover, in the Decree, 'traditional values' are gradually replaced by the concept of '*spiritual and moral values*' (paragraph 18), which further indicates a significant religious injection into the public administration of the Russian Empire and the removal of the boundaries between religion and morality. This conceptual substitution is not accidental – it allows for the legitimisation of direct interference by religious institutions in the formation of state policy, giving it the appearance of protecting traditional morality. This semantic shift transforms a constitutionally secular state into a quasi-theocratic structure, where religious dogmas acquire the status of mandatory moral and ethical norms for the whole of society. In fact, this substitution of concepts leads to the sacralisation of the political regime, and any criticism of the state policy can be interpreted as an attack on the 'spiritual and moral foundations' of society. At the same time, this creates a mechanism for persecuting dissidents under the pretext of protecting religious feelings and moral values, which is a classic tool of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.

As a result, one of the goals of state policy on preserving and strengthening traditional values is to shape the image of the Russian state on the international stage as a guardian and defender of traditional universal spiritual and moral values. This aspect is of great importance because, in addition to replacing 'traditional values' with '*spiritual and moral values*', Russian elites openly declare their exclusive role as the 'guardian and defender', emphasising the global nature of this status. Such rhetoric creates the binary worldview, where an exclusively positive Russia is contrasted with a demonised '*collective West*', which is allegedly in moral and spiritual decline due to liberal values, multiculturalism, and a departure from traditional morality. This dichotomy serves not only as an ideological justification for domestic policy but also as a legitimisation of foreign policy expansion under the slogans of 'protecting' the Russian-speaking population and 'traditional values' in the post-Soviet space. At the same time, positioning itself as the moral leader of the global South and an alternative to the '*decadent West*' allows the Kremlin to build anti-Western coalitions and promote its own geopolitical agenda in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In fact, '*spiritual and moral values*' are becoming an instrument of soft power and an ideological cover for neo-imperialist policies that seek to restore spheres of influence and undermine the international liberal order.

A telling example of the practical implementation of this policy is an official post on the website of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) dated January 12, 2026, in which the SVR accused Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople of 'schismatic activity in the Orthodox church space'. In a statement unprecedented in its harshness, the SVR called the head of the Ecumenical Patriarchate 'the antichrist in a cassock' and 'the devil's incarnation, obsessed with the idea of ousting Russian Orthodoxy from the Baltic states'. The service announced that the patriarch is being assisted in this by British special services, 'which fuel Russophobic sentiments in European countries', as well as 'local nationalists and neo-Nazis'. The very fact that a special service, rather than a church institution, is making such statements about a spiritual leader demonstrates the complete subordination of religious life to state security structures. This statement effectively legitimises the persecution of any Orthodox communities that do not recognise the primacy of the Moscow Patriarchate and creates a basis for their criminal prosecution as 'agents of foreign influence'.

As stated in the Decree, the threat to traditional values is posed by the activities of extremist and terrorist organisations, certain media and mass communications outlets, the actions of the United States of America and other unfriendly foreign states, a number of transnational corporations and foreign non-profit organisations, as well as the activities of certain organisations and individuals within Russia. The imposition

of a system of ideas and values that is alien to the Russian people and destructive to Russian society (the so-called ‘destructive ideology’) is carried out through ideological and psychological influence on citizens.

The Decree defines the cultivation of selfishness, permissiveness, immorality, the rejection of the ideals of patriotism, service to the Motherland, the natural continuation of life, the value of a strong family, marriage, large families, creative work, Russia's positive contribution to world history and culture, and the destruction of the traditional family through the promotion of non-traditional sexual relations.

As can be seen, even if at the beginning of the text of the Decree, ‘*traditional values*’ include ‘human rights’, they subsequently disappear, giving way to collectivism, patriotism, and service to the Motherland. In fact, the best example is Russia's denunciation of the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture. On 29 September 2025, Vladimir Putin signed a law denouncing this Convention (the bill, prepared by the Russian government, was submitted by the President of Russia himself, and on 17 September, the State Duma approved the document).

The most telling indication of the direction of both the Decree and the policy of the Russian elites is that in Decree No. 809 of November 9, 2022, ‘On the Approval of the Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values’, human rights are mentioned only once.

This mention is contained in paragraph 5, which lists the so-called ‘*traditional values*’. It is noteworthy that human rights are formally included in the list alongside ‘life, dignity, rights and freedoms of the individual’, but this mention is purely declarative and ritualistic in nature – evidence of a formal adherence to international rhetoric without any substantive content.

The remaining 32 paragraphs of the document focus on a fundamentally different agenda: ‘combating destructive ideology’, ‘protecting against external influence’, supporting ‘traditional family values’ (with an emphasis on marriage as a union between a man and a woman), countering ‘non-traditional sexual relations’ and other ‘threats to traditional values’. It is telling that after a formal mention, human rights are not further developed anywhere in the document as a concept requiring protection or mechanisms for implementation.

The structural analysis of the document reveals a clear hierarchy in which human rights as a universal concept are deliberately subordinated to and effectively absorbed by particular ‘*traditional values*’. This is not simply a shift in emphasis, but a fundamental change in the ontological status of human rights in official Russian doctrine. While in the liberal understanding of law, human rights are primary, inalienable, and universal, in the logic of Decree No. 809, they become derivative of the cultural and historical context, limited by ‘tradition’ and national specificity.

The document operates with a binary logic of ‘*us and them*’, where human rights in their universal understanding are effectively labelled as part of a ‘foreign’, ‘Western’, ‘destructive’ ideological influence. Paragraphs 15-20 of the Decree clearly position ‘traditional values’ in opposition to ‘so-called universal human values’, creating a discursive framework in which the universality of human rights is perceived as a threat to Russian identity.

It is critically important not only that human rights are mentioned formally, but also that there is a complete absence of any mechanisms for their protection, monitoring, or implementation. In the same paragraphs concerning the ‘*protection of traditional values*’, institutional mechanisms are spelled out in detail (the creation of interdepartmental commissions, the role of ‘traditional religious organisations’, educational programmes, media policy). Human rights, on the other hand, remain an empty signifier without institutional content.

This asymmetry is methodologically significant. It shows that references to human rights serve exclusively legitimisation purposes – for external audiences and formal compliance with international obligations. However, real state policy is built around a fundamentally different value matrix, where individual rights are subordinated to collective ‘traditions’, state security, and ideological homogeneity.

Decree No. 809 marks the end of an evolutionary process that has lasted for the last two decades. While in the early 2000s, the Russian authorities still resorted to imitation practices of creating ‘controlled’ human rights institutions, after 2012 (the law on ‘foreign agents’), a phase of active delegitimization of human rights discourse began. The full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the adoption of Decree No. 809 mark a new stage – the open construction of an alternative value system, where human rights are either absent altogether or present as a subordinate, marginal element.

This is confirmed by law enforcement practices. Since February 2022, we have witnessed an unprecedented wave of repression against any form of dissent, the criminalisation of anti-war positions

(articles on ‘discrediting’ and ‘fakes’ about the army), and the effective elimination of independent civil society. The courts systematically refuse to protect constitutional rights, appealing to the ‘special period’, ‘national security’ and, increasingly, ‘traditional values’ as arguments that outweigh individual rights.

The Decree No. 809 marks a fundamental break with the legal understanding of the state that has developed in the European tradition since the Second World War.

Whereas modern liberal democracy is constituted through the recognition of the inviolability of human rights as the limits of state power, the Russian model articulated in this document offers an alternative formula for legitimacy: the state is legitimate not through the protection of individual rights, but through the preservation of collective identity, formulated in terms of ‘*traditional values*’.

Decree No. 809 demonstrates a return to a pre-modern type of political organisation, where loyalty prevails over law, and identity over freedom. It is telling that even the rhetoric of the document lacks any mention of autonomy, choice, or individual freedom – instead, it is dominated by vocabulary related to protection, preservation, and resistance to external threats. The subject of such a policy is not a free individual with rights, but a member of a collective whose identity is determined by their belonging to ‘tradition’.

Thus, Decree No. 809 is not just another regulatory document, but a programmatic statement about a fundamental change in the value foundations of Russian statehood. The formal, singular mention of human rights against the backdrop of 32 paragraphs on the fight against ‘destructive ideology’ eloquently testifies that the Russian elites have made a conscious choice in favour of a model of the state where human rights in their universal understanding have no place. This is not a departure from human rights, but their systematic replacement with an alternative ideological construct that legitimises unlimited power by appealing to ‘tradition’ and collective identity.

### **‘Russkiy Mir’ as the Spatial Dimension of Colonial Strategy**

The concept of the ‘Russian World’ originated in the 1990s among members of the Moscow Methodological Circle, who had close ties to the Russian political elite. The authors of the modern concept are considered to be members of the *Moscow Methodological Circle* – a philosophical-methodological and intellectual-practical school of the Soviet methodologist and philosopher Georgy Shchedrovitsky, whose roots date back to the 1950s. This intellectual centre brought together philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, and managers who developed specific methodological approaches to the analysis and construction of social systems.

The roots of this ideologeme date back to the late 1990s, when three political strategists – Pyotr Shchedrovitsky (son of the circle’s founder), Serhiy Hradynovskiy, and Yefim Ostrovskiy – constructed the concept of the ‘Russian World’ as one of the solutions to the problem of the collapse of the post-Soviet environment and Russia’s loss of its dominant position in the post-Soviet space. They proposed language as a bridge that would connect the independent post-Soviet states that were diverging in different directions. The Russian language could be a link to their homeland for those Russians who emigrated after the collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as for those who remained in the territories of the newly formed states. The language organises them into an intellectual network – without a single centre of gravity and without a clear political agenda.

Pyotr Shchedrovitsky defined the ‘Russian world’ as ‘a network structure of large and small communities that think and speak Russian’. This initial concept was primarily cultural and linguistic in nature and did not envisage strict political centralisation or territorial claims. However, this formula already contained the idea of a supra-territorial identity that could compete with the state sovereignty of the newly formed independent states.

### **Ideological Foundations and Target Audience**

The concept is based on an idea of protecting the rights of so-called ‘*compatriots*’ – members of the Russian diaspora or Russian-speaking minorities who remained living in other states after the collapse of the USSR. ‘*Compatriots*’ is not a legal concept, but rather a symbolic one. The Kremlin’s ideology assumes that these people have a certain emotional attachment to common cultural narratives based on the use of the Russian language, regardless of their citizenship or ethnicity.

This concept is deliberately vague and may include ethnic Russians living outside Russia, citizens of other states who speak Russian, bearers of Soviet cultural identity, and any individuals who have

a 'spiritual connection' with Russia. This vagueness allows the Kremlin to arbitrarily expand the circle of 'compatriots' depending on political expediency.

Particular importance is attached to 'Russian minorities' in the near abroad – the European countries of the former USSR, including Ukraine, Moldova, the Baltic states, as well as territories with a complex political status and a significant proportion of Russian-speaking population – Crimea, Donbas, and Transnistria. These regions are considered priority targets for the implementation of the 'Russian World' concept and the spread of Russian influence.

### **Romanticising Colonial Violence Through Cinematic Propaganda (Case Study 1)**

The Soviet film *Officers* (1971) exemplifies how imperial powers construct memorial narratives that transform colonisers into heroes and colonial wars into noble missions. Its enduring slogan – "*There is such a profession – to defend the Motherland*" – remains a sacred mantra in contemporary Russian discourse, justifying ongoing imperial aggression. Yet examining what the protagonists actually 'defended' in Central Asia, China, and Spain reveals not liberation, but classic colonial enterprise.

The film's Central Asian episode, set in the early 1920s, presents Soviet military operations as a romantic adventure – young officers '*establishing Soviet power*' in distant lands. Historical reality tells a different story: the brutal suppression of the Basmachi movement, a widespread anti-colonial uprising against Russian occupation. The Basmachi fought for independence from Russian rule that had continued since the nineteenth-century tsarist expansion. Soviet authorities merely changed ideological packaging – replacing the 'civilising mission of the white man' with the 'mission of proletarian revolution' – while maintaining identical colonial practices: mass repression, land confiscation, destruction of traditional life, and cultural-linguistic imposition.

The film deliberately romanticises these 'brave Red Army soldiers' defending against 'bandits', never acknowledging that these 'bandits' were indigenous populations defending their homeland from foreign occupiers. By focusing on the Russian family's personal sacrifice, the narrative humanises colonisers while rendering tens of thousands of murdered locals invisible.

China and Spain receive similar treatment. Soviet intervention in China represented imperial geopolitical manoeuvring – attempting to create Moscow-controlled puppet regimes using Chinese communists as instruments while retaining territories captured by the Russian Empire (Outer Mongolia, Manchurian railway zones). The classic 'white saviour' narrative presents Chinese as passive objects requiring their 'big brother's' help rather than subjects of their own history.

Spanish Civil War intervention, often portrayed as 'proletarian internationalism' against fascism, involved extracting Republican Spain's gold reserves, testing military technology, and suppressing competing left-wing movements to establish Stalinist control. This was a geopolitical strategy, not altruistic aid – yet the film shows only heroic sacrifice 'fighting for freedom'.

*Officers* demonstrates systematic propaganda techniques: (1) humanising the coloniser through personal stories that evoke identification; (2) dehumanising the colonised as voiceless objects or faceless enemies; (3) universalising imperial narrative through supposedly timeless values that obscure specific colonial contexts; (4) emotional manipulation via private sphere dramas distracting from political realities; (5) aestheticizing violence as heroic and meaningful.

A subtle but crucial detail reveals deeper truths: the cigarette case inscribed "*To Georgiy Petrovich, His Excellency, Lieutenant... August 1915. Galicia*" demonstrates institutional continuity between the Russian Empire and Soviet Russia. The tsarist officer of 1915 in Ukrainian Galicia organically transforms into the 1920s Soviet commander, preserving imperial logic across regime change. Both Galicia and Central Asia function as peripheries requiring 'civilisation' and Russian cultural integration – objects of an identical imperial gaze transforming diverse territories into homogeneous 'peripheries'.

This film shaped generations into perceiving imperial expansion as natural and noble. Contemporary Russian propaganda against Ukraine employs unchanged rhetoric: '*defence*', '*fighting Nazism*', and '*helping brotherly peoples*'. *Officers* taught that empires defend rather than aggress, that colonised peoples request help, that resistance equals banditry, and that soldiers killing on foreign soil are heroes, not occupiers.

Decolonisation requires deconstructing such cultural products, calling colonial wars what they are, recognising 'internationalism' as imperial intervention, and understanding romanticised 'service' as violence against other peoples. *Officers* remain an active instrument of imperial ideology, hindering genuine post-Soviet decolonisation. Exposing these cultural manipulation mechanisms constitutes essential liberation work.

### **Institutionalisation and Politicisation of the Concept**

During the 2000s, this ideological construct was incorporated into Russia's official political discourse and became the theoretical basis for the policy of protecting so-called compatriots abroad. The process of institutionalisation was accompanied by the creation of special structures and mechanisms for implementing the concept.

In 2007, the Russkiy Mir Foundation was established as a state structure designed to promote the Russian language and culture abroad. The Russkiy Mir Foundation was established by a Decree of the President of the Russian Federation on 21 June 2007. A series of Decrees in 2021-2024 (Nos. 215, 696, 451) radically restructured the foundation, strengthening its subordination to the state (Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 21 June 2007, Decree of the President of the Russian Federation "On Certain Issues of the Russkiy Mir Foundation" of 12 April 2021 No. 215; Decree of the President of the Russian Federation "On Certain Issues of the Activities of the Russkiy Mir Foundation" dated 18 September 2023 No. 696; Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated 30 May 2024 No. 451 "On the Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Russkiy Mir Foundation"). The founder of the Foundation was the Russian Foreign Ministry.

The official mission of the Foundation (preamble to Decree No. 696 of 2023) is to support and promote the Russian language in the world, strengthen its position as a language of international communication, and a key tool for increasing the significance of the Russian Federation in the global humanitarian space.

The fund's objectives include supporting Russian education abroad, financing Russian-language media abroad, preserving Russian cultural and historical heritage, supporting Russian compatriots, disseminating 'objective information about the Russian Federation', and organising cultural and educational events.

An analysis of the foundation's structure and activities reveals its function as a central instrument of Russia's neo-imperial policy:

1. *Institutional subordination*: The complete control of the Russian Foreign Ministry and the direct involvement of top Russian state officials indicate that the foundation is a state instrument of foreign policy rather than an autonomous cultural organisation.

2. *Ideological basis*: The concept of the 'Russian World' is a neo-imperial construct that justifies Moscow's claims to the post-Soviet space and Russian-speaking communities globally. It postulates a single 'Russian world', independent of state borders, with its centre in Moscow.

3. *Geopolitical instruments*: 'Russian centres' function as cultural and political outposts of influence. The grant programme creates networks of loyalty among local elites and organisations. Media resources spread the Kremlin's narrative under the guise of 'objective information'.

4. *Mobilisation of diasporas*: Work with 'compatriots abroad' uses Russian-speaking communities as a tool to influence the policies of their countries of residence, creating a 'fifth column' for Russian interests.

5. *Undermining sovereignty*: The promotion of the Russian language and culture is presented as a cultural activity, but in fact undermines the linguistic and cultural sovereignty of other states, especially post-Soviet countries, including Ukraine.

6. *Legitimisation of aggression*: The ideology of the 'Russian World' has been used to justify Russian aggression against Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (since 2014). The foundation creates an informational and cultural basis for the Kremlin's narrative of 'protecting the Russian-speaking population'.

The Russkiy Mir Foundation is a key element of Russia's 'soft power' strategy, integrated into the Russian Federation's foreign policy system. Under the guise of cultural and educational activities, the foundation implements a neo-imperial agenda: creating a transnational network of influence, undermining the sovereignty of independent states, and forming an ideological justification for Russian expansion.

In 2006, Vladimir Putin stated: "The Russian world can and must unite all those who cherish the Russian language and Russian culture, wherever they live, in Russia or beyond its borders. Use this 'Russian world' more often". This statement marked the transition of the concept from the realm of intellectual discussion to the realm of practical foreign policy.

Since 2008, the narrative about the need to build and defend the 'Russian World' has been used by the Russian government as a foreign policy doctrine. The concept envisages the unification of Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, as well as strengthening influence in countries with a large Russian-speaking population, such as the Baltic states. At the same time, the original network model is gradually being narrowed down to a rigid hierarchical system with Moscow as the sole centre.

Thus, the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation of July 12, 2008, emphasised that “Russia sees its task as protecting the rights and legitimate interests of Russian citizens and compatriots living abroad based on international law and existing bilateral agreements, considering the multi-million Russian diaspora – the Russian World – as a partner”. This formula became the legal basis for Russia’s further interference in the internal affairs of other states under the pretext of protecting ‘*compatriots*’.

### **Transformation Into a Military-Political Instrument**

After 2008, ‘*Russkiy Mir*’ transformed from a cultural and value-based concept into a key instrument of the Kremlin’s aggressive colonial policy. This ideology became the basis for justifying military interventions and expanding Russian influence in the post-Soviet space, particularly in Ukraine. The turning point came with the 2008 Russian-Georgian war, when the concept of protecting ‘*compatriots*’ was used for the first time to justify military aggression.

In August 2008, Russia invaded Georgia under the pretext of protecting the population of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. After the end of hostilities, Russia recognised the independence of these regions and established military bases there. This precedent demonstrated the Kremlin’s willingness to use military force to implement the concept of ‘*Russkiy Mir*’ and created a model of ‘frozen conflicts’ that was later applied in Ukraine.

In 2014 and 2022, the ‘*Russian World*’ doctrine was used by the Russian authorities to justify the military invasion of Ukraine. The annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of war in Donbas in 2014 were accompanied by an intense propaganda campaign about ‘protecting the Russian-speaking population from the Kyiv junta’ and ‘reuniting Russian lands’. The full-scale invasion of 24 February 2022 was the culmination of this policy – Putin openly declared his intention to ‘denazify’ and ‘demilitarise’ Ukraine, effectively denying its right to exist as an independent state.

### **Mechanisms for Implementing the Concept**

The Kremlin uses a variety of tools to implement the concept of ‘*Russkiy Mir*’:

1. *Information and propaganda*: state media, social networks, troll factories, dissemination of disinformation and conspiracy theories aimed at discrediting democratic institutions and pro-European governments in neighbouring countries.
2. *Cultural and educational*: a network of ‘*Russian World*’ centres at foreign universities, funding pro-Russian cultural organisations, supporting Russian-language media abroad, promoting the Russian version of history through textbooks and academic publications.
3. *Economic*: energy blackmail (especially against countries dependent on Russian gas), investment in strategic sectors of the economy, corruption schemes to create pro-Russian business elites, and control over critical infrastructure.
4. *Political*: funding pro-Russian political parties and movements, supporting separatist groups, diplomatic pressure, and using international organisations to promote Russian interests.
5. *Military Operations*: creation and support of separatist pseudo-states (Transnistria, ‘DPR’, ‘LPR’, Abkhazia, South Ossetia), presence of Russian military bases on the territory of other states, hybrid operations using ‘little green men’ and mercenaries, cyberattacks against critical infrastructure.

### **The Neo-Imperialist Nature of the Concept**

The concept of ‘*Russkiy Mir*’ functions as a neo-imperialist doctrine that legitimises the violation of the sovereignty of independent states under the pretext of protecting ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking populations. It continues the long tradition of Russian imperialism, adapting it to the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Unlike classical 19th-century colonialism, ‘*Russian World*’ does not always seek formal annexation of territories (although this does happen, as in the case of Crimea in Ukraine) but rather the creation of zones of influence where Moscow retains de facto control over political, economic, and cultural processes while formally preserving state independence. This allows the Kremlin to avoid direct responsibility for the situation in these territories and reduce international pressure.

The concept is based on denying the former Soviet republics the right to full sovereignty and their own path of development. Russia considers them to be its ‘*natural sphere of influence*’ and believes it has the right to interfere in their internal affairs. This is particularly true of Ukraine, which Russian propaganda presents not as a separate nation, but as part of the ‘*triumphant Russian people*’ together with Russians and Belarusians.

The ideology of the 'Russian World' also serves a domestic political function in Russia itself, legitimising Putin's authoritarian regime by appealing to 'great power' and contrasting Russia with the 'hostile West'. It creates the illusion of Russia's special civilisational mission and justifies the sacrifices associated with aggressive foreign policy and international isolation.

### **Mechanisms of Dehumanisation and Erasure of National Subjectivity**

In Russian propaganda discourse, Ukrainian identity is systematically primitivized and reduced to the level of 'officially approved folklore'. Russian imperialism denies the existence of the Ukrainian language and culture as independent subjects, attempting to embed them into the 'all-Russian whole' with the status of a secondary, 'peasant' variation.

The process of dehumanisation of Ukrainians within the ideology of 'traditional values' takes the form of 'inverted Nazism'. While classical Nazism singled out the 'Other' based on racial characteristics, Russian colonialism brands Ukrainians as 'the same as us', who 'betrayed' their true nature by choosing the European path. This makes them, in the Kremlin's eyes, 'traitors par excellence', who are subject to either forced assimilation (desocialisation) or physical destruction as an 'anti-Russia'.

### **Cultural Appropriation and Historical Erasure: The Colonial Function of 'Traditional' Cossack Songs (Case Study 2)**

The deployment of 'traditional values' in the Russian colonial discourse extends beyond explicit ideological statements to encompass cultural artifacts that serve as instruments of historical erasure and colonial legitimisation. The song "Oisya, ty, oisya" (Oisya, You, Oisya), commonly known as 'the Cossack prayer', exemplifies how seemingly benign cultural production masks and perpetuates colonial violence. Set to the melody of a Caucasian lezginka and composed during the Caucasian War (1817-1864), this song embodies multiple layers of colonial instrumentalization that remain operative in contemporary Russian strategic discourse.

The historical context of the song's emergence reveals its fundamental dishonesty. The Caucasian War resulted in the near-complete destruction of indigenous North Caucasian populations through a combination of military extermination, ethnic cleansing, and forced deportation. Demographic data document this catastrophe: the Adyghe (Circassian) population collapsed from 39.6% in 1795 to 2.2% in 1867, while the Russian settler population grew from 8.8% to 30.5% – a textbook case of settler colonialism. Against this backdrop of genocide that cost Russia approximately 500,000 soldiers, the song's refrain – "*Oisya, you, Oisya, don't be afraid of me, I won't touch you*" – addressed to the Vainakhs (Chechens and Ingush) represents an exercise in colonial cynicism. The timing is critical: the song emerged precisely when three-quarters of the Chechen and Avar populations had been destroyed, and the Adyghe had virtually disappeared from the ethnic map. The imperial message was clear: having completed the genocide, the colonisers now offered survivors the 'gift' of not being afraid.

This mechanism of cultural colonisation operates on several levels simultaneously. First, the song constructs a narrative of Russian benevolence, positioning the Cossack as a bearer of 'truth', 'freedom', and divine favour who came 'not with a sword, but with good intentions'. This mirrors classic colonial rhetoric employed by European powers from India to Algeria, but Russia's particular innovation lies in its persistent refusal to recognise its actions as colonialism at all. Second, the appropriation of the lezginka melody – a symbol of Caucasian freedom and identity praised by Taras Shevchenko – constitutes symbolic subjugation. The coloniser absorbs and repurposes the cultural expressions of conquered peoples, transforming them into 'exotic additions to the dominant Russian tradition' and converting indigenous peoples into 'younger brothers' within a falsely 'multinational' imperial framework.

Most insidiously, the song functions as an instrument for destroying historical memory. Its soft, romantic character – Cossack culture, freedom, dancing – gradually displaces traumatic memories of genocide from collective consciousness. This represents the most effective form of historical erasure: not prohibiting discussion of crimes (which provokes resistance) but creating an attractive alternative narrative that organically replaces actual history. The song becomes 'Soviet heritage', 'common culture', and 'tradition', behind which the blood, ashes, and cries of deported peoples become invisible.

The more explicit colonial aggression appears in the Moscow Cossack Choir's repertoire, where a Russian girl demands that Chechens "*give way*" in their own bazaar, and where weapons (daggers, Finnish knives) become necessary prerequisites for "*dancing the lezginka*". Here, cultural appropriation is inseparable from overt violence: "*Are we not Cossacks? Are we not warriors? / We have sharp swords*

*and horses with fiery hearts*". This represents 'colonialism without apologies', revealing the military essence of Russian presence in the Caucasus before it required the pseudo-humanistic disguise of 'reconciliation' rhetoric.

These cultural artifacts illuminate how 'traditional values' discourse operates as a strategic colonial instrument. By embedding narratives of genocide and conquest within ostensibly 'traditional' cultural forms – folk songs, dances, prayers – the imperial project achieves multiple objectives: it legitimises past violence as romantic history, appropriates and neutralises indigenous cultural resistance, and creates a framework for ongoing colonial domination under the guise of 'shared heritage' and 'multinational unity'. The songs analysed here are not mere cultural curiosities but active components of an imperial system that fundamentally does not tolerate freedom and pursues the destruction of free peoples under slogans of 'civilisation' and 'Christianity'. Understanding this cultural dimension of colonial policy is essential for comprehending how historical atrocities are normalised, commemorated, and ultimately weaponised in the service of contemporary imperial ambitions.

### **Global Dimension: The 'Anti-Colonial' Paradox and the Global South**

Russian policy achieves particular cynicism in its relations with countries of the Global South, primarily Africa. Here, Russia, itself being a colonial empire, attempts to present itself as a leader of the 'anti-colonial movement' and defender of state sovereignty against 'Western dictates'.

This strategic narrative is based on the thesis that the West's economic success is a consequence of colonial exploitation, and the promotion of liberal values is 'new imperialism'. Russia offers an alternative: 'democratisation of international relations', which in Russian understanding means the right of authoritarian regimes to impunity and human rights violations under the cover of 'national specificity'. Thus, traditional values become a universal justification for any repressive practices in the world, creating a global network of authoritarian solidarity.

### **Psychological Foundation: Resentment and 'Imagined Otherness'**

Research demonstrates that the susceptibility of populations (both in Russia itself and in its colonial peripheries) to the rhetoric of traditional values is often based on feelings of social vulnerability and resentment. People who feel fear about the future and loss of stable social order more easily accept homophobic and xenophobic narratives as a way to restore the imagined moral purity of the past. The Kremlin actively exploits this 'imagined otherness', convincing citizens that the West wants to change what is most precious to them, and only a strong imperial state can protect them.

### **The concept of 'Russkiy Mir' in the Kremlin's Diplomacy**

At the end of January 2026, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov presented the key messages of Russian diplomacy in 2025. Although the term is not directly mentioned in the transcript of the press conference of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (January 2026), its conceptual elements permeate the entire speech through a system of narratives about 'Russian civilisation', the protection of 'Russian speakers', Eurasian integration, and opposition to the 'collective West'.

An analysis of Sergey Lavrov's speech and his answers to journalists' questions reveals four main dimensions of the concept of the 'Russian World' in the Minister's speech: (1) civilisational – the assertion of Russia as a separate civilisation with a 'thousand-year history'; (2) linguistic-cultural – justification of the 'right' to intervene to protect the Russian language and culture; (3) geopolitical – Eurasian integration as a form of neo-imperial expansion; (4) revisionist – revision of the results of World War II and the international order.

The central element of the speech is the positioning of Russia as a separate 'civilisation' opposed to the West. Lavrov emphasises: 'Russia, as our new modern foreign policy concept states, is a country of civilisation. We will not renounce our roots, we have no right to do so, we honour the memory of our ancestors, and we honour the covenants that our ancestors left us'.

This statement has several important implications.

First, it posits the civilisational exceptionalism of Russia, which allegedly does not fit into the pan-European or global context. Second, the appeal to 'millennial history' and 'ancestral covenants' creates the illusion of historical continuity, which justifies contemporary territorial claims. Third, the concept of a 'civilisation-state' allows Moscow to claim 'natural influence' over all who belong to this imaginary community, regardless of state borders.

It is characteristic that Lavrov lists other 'great civilisations' of Eurasia – Chinese, Iranian, Arab, Indian – but not the civilisations of other peoples, thereby denying the civilisational subjectivity of these peoples and inscribing them into the 'Russian world'.

A key tool for implementing the concept of the 'Russian world' is the construction of an image of 'oppressed Russian speakers' who need protection from Moscow.

Lavrov systematically returns to the topic of the '*rights of Russian-speaking Russians*' in Ukraine, accusing the Kyiv regime of 'exterminating and legislatively, and indeed physically, destroying all Russian education, language and culture'.

Particularly telling is his criticism that in the latest versions of the American proposals for a settlement, 'there was no mention of the need to restore the rights of the Russian language and the canonical Orthodox Church'. Lavrov insists that the settlement must include: (1) the lifting of bans on the use of the Russian language in all spheres; (2) the restoration of the activities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate; (3) not just 'tolerance' but full recognition of the rights of the 'Russian-speaking population'.

This rhetoric serves two purposes: first, it legitimises military aggression as 'protection of compatriots'; second, it lays the groundwork for future interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine and other states under the pretext of 'protecting the rights of Russian speakers'. It is important to note that this does not refer to citizens of the Russian Federation, but to all 'Russian speakers' – a category that, in the logic of the 'Russian world', automatically falls within the sphere of Russian interests.

Lavrov devotes a significant part of his speech to promoting the concept of 'Eurasian security' and 'great Eurasian partnership'. At first glance, these appear to be legitimate regional initiatives, but a detailed analysis reveals their neo-imperial nature: 'Our line is to create a belt of good neighbourliness and cooperation in the near abroad within the framework of the CIS, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation' – this list of structures forms a multi-level system of control over the post-Soviet space, where Russia positions itself as the natural hegemon.

Particularly telling is the Russian-Belarusian initiative on the 'Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the 21st Century', which, according to Lavrov, 'is open to participation by all, without exception, states of the Eurasian continent'. This initiative effectively proposes an alternative international order, with Russia as the architect of the new 'rules of the game.' It is characteristic that Lavrov emphasises the incompatibility of the OSCE (where Russia is in the minority) with the new 'Eurasian architecture' – this indicates a desire to replace existing international institutions with ones where Moscow will have a dominant position.

The concept of a '*belt of good neighbourliness*' is a direct continuation of the 'near abroad' doctrine, which denies the full sovereignty of the former Soviet republics. When Lavrov talks about 'eliminating the root causes' of the Ukrainian crisis, he is referring not to the causes of the conflict, but to the very existence of Ukraine as a sovereign state with a European choice.

An important element of the concept of the 'Russian world' is the monopolisation of historical memory, especially with regard to the Second World War. Lavrov pays a lot of attention to the 'lessons' and 'memory' of the war, where Russia is positioned as the sole heir to the victory over Nazism: "These two events [*the parade in Moscow and the events in Beijing*] clearly demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of states do not want to forget the memory, lessons and history of World War II". At the same time, the role of Ukraine and other republics of the USSR in the victory is silenced, and any criticism of Soviet policy is equated with 'rewriting history'.

Lavrov's remark about German Chancellor Merz is particularly cynical: "*Mr Merz recently said that Russia must not be allowed to get its way in Ukraine, as this would be tantamount to appeasing Hitler. What do you think of this statement?*" This passage reveals a manipulative logic: criticism of Russian aggression is equated with 'appeasing the aggressor', while Russia itself is portrayed as a victim of the 'Nazi regime' in Kyiv.

Lavrov's speech clearly demonstrates that the concept of the 'Russian world' is not limited to Ukraine. He pays particular attention to Armenia, criticising its move towards the EU and warning of a 'Moldovan scenario' where, in his words, 'the elections were rigged in the most blatant manner'. Threats to apply the 'Moldovan scenario' in Yerevan are a blatant interference in internal affairs and intimidation.

A telling comment is the one about the arrest of Armenian politician Vartan Gukasyan, who 'is being blamed for calling for consideration of Armenia's accession to the Union of Russia and Belarus'.

Lavrov presents this as a violation of freedom of speech, although in reality it is a call for the elimination of Armenia's state sovereignty.

Regarding Serbia, Lavrov criticises the EU for demanding that it recognise Kosovo's independence and join the sanctions against Russia as a condition of membership, calling it 'humiliating'. At the same time, Moscow itself demands that Armenia renounce European integration as a condition for maintaining relations. This double standard is characteristic of the entire logic of the 'Russian world'.

A paradoxical feature of Lavrov's speech is his simultaneous appeal to international law and its selective application. On the one hand, he criticises the 'rules-based order of the West and calls for a return to the UN Charter. On the other hand, he openly approves of Trump's statement that 'he is not interested in international law and that all norms of behaviour in the international arena are determined by his own morality'.

This ambivalence is not inconsistency – it reflects an instrumental approach to law. International law is applied when it is beneficial (for example, to criticise NATO) and ignored when it conflicts with interests (as in the case of aggression against Ukraine). Lavrov is effectively proposing the 'law of the strong', cloaked in rhetoric about 'equality' and 'balance of interests', where 'balance' is determined by power: "*In an equal dialogue, the one with more resources will have more influence on the outcome*".

An analysis of Sergey Lavrov's speech and answers allows us to draw the following conclusions about the concept of the 'Russian World' and its practical implementation in Russian foreign policy:

1. *The totality of the concept.* The 'Russian World' is not limited to the cultural and linguistic sphere but is a comprehensive ideology that legitimises Russian hegemony through civilisational, historical, geopolitical, and security dimensions. Even without being explicitly named, this concept structures the entire logic of the Kremlin's foreign policy discourse.

2. *Incompatibility with sovereignty.* The concept of 'Russian civilisation' and 'protection of Russian speakers' is fundamentally incompatible with the recognition of the full sovereignty of post-Soviet states. For Moscow, the existence of Ukraine, Armenia, or other countries as subjects with their own civilisational choices is unacceptable. Therefore, any 'settlement' on Russian terms would mean turning these states into vassal entities.

3. *Expansionist nature.* 'Eurasian integration', 'the great Eurasian space', 'the belt of good neighbourliness' – all these concepts are euphemisms for the restoration of Russian dominance in the post-Soviet space. The aggression against Ukraine is not an anomaly, but a logical embodiment of this ideology. Lavrov openly warns Armenia, Moldova, and other countries about the fate that awaits them if they attempt to break free from Russian influence.

4. *Strategic threat to the international order.* Russia's attempts to replace universal international institutions (the UN, OSCE) with 'Eurasian' structures under its control undermine the global security system. This is not a reform of the existing order, but its dismantling in order to create spheres of exclusive influence for the great powers.

5. *The need for a strategic response.* Countering the concept of the 'Russian World' requires not only military assistance to Ukraine, but also systematic work to deconstruct this ideology, support the independence of post-Soviet democracies, strengthen international institutions, and document Russian crimes. Any attempts at 'reconciliation' through concessions of territory or sovereignty will only encourage further expansion.

Lavrov's speech is an example of 21st-century imperial rhetoric, where overt aggression is presented as the defence of civilisational values, occupation as liberation, and the destruction of sovereignty as integration. Understanding these mechanisms is critical to formulating an adequate response to the Russian threat, both in Ukraine and in the broader regional and global contexts.

### **Carceral State as a Basis of the Concept**

The main and most common, yet most dangerous mistake made by most Western researchers, analysts, and politicians in understanding Russian society and the Russian state is the artificial opposition of the people to the authorities, the people to the regime, and the people to the political elites. According to this approach, it is emphasised that the people are dependent on the authorities, they are enslaved, they are dependent, they have neither the strength nor the desire to escape this dependence in order to build a qualitatively new democratic society. Such an interpretation of Russian socio-political reality, despite its prevalence in Western academic and political discourse, contains a fundamental methodological flaw that makes it impossible to adequately understand the nature of the historically, politically, and economically conditioned Russian state and the specifics of its relationship with its own population.

This is precisely where the critical error lies, because such a simplistic approach completely excludes two fundamentally important factors, without which any analysis of the Russian political system remains superficial and methodologically flawed.

First, it ignores the centuries-long history of the Russian Empire, whatever it was called at different stages of its existence: the Moscow Tsardom, the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation. This historical continuity of the imperial tradition is not accidental or situational, but is an organic part of Russian state identity, which has been formed over centuries and institutionalised in specific forms of social organisation.

Secondly, and this is perhaps most important for understanding contemporary realities, this approach does not consider the Russian people's own desire to remain within this system of Russian power. Ignoring this factor leads to the Russian population being viewed exclusively as a passive object of manipulation by the authorities, rather than as an active subject that consciously or unconsciously supports and reproduces the existing system of relations.

The Russian state and Russian society are a unique phenomenon, which has no analogues in history and, most likely, will not have any in the near future. This uniqueness is explained by the fact that the Russian state was formed as a prison state. Moreover, not even as a police state in the classical sense of the term, but precisely as a prison state, where several interrelated and mutually reinforcing processes are inextricably intertwined. The colonial policy of the Russian Empire, aimed at the constant expansion of territories and the subjugation of new peoples, was combined with an imperialist orientation that justified this expansion as a civilising mission.

The need to assimilate vast territories east of the Urals and to the south required the mobilisation of significant human and material resources, but the lack of sufficient resources available for such assimilation in the traditional colonial sense forced the Russian state to resort to a specific mechanism of colonisation. This mechanism consisted of involving its own people, who were stigmatised as '*criminals*', as well as the populations of conquered territories such as Ukraine, Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and many other countries, whose representatives were sent *en masse* to the east for forced colonisation.

It was thanks to this unique combination of colonial expansion, imperial ideology, and prison practices that the Russian Empire acquired the status of a *prison state*, not because of the number of prisons or the number of prisoners, although these indicators were traditionally extremely high, but because of the fundamental blurring of the boundaries between prison and society, between national culture and prison culture.

This blurring process was neither instantaneous nor artificially imposed; it took place gradually, over centuries, as prison culture first began to dominate national culture, then supplant it, and eventually became the national culture itself. A kind of inversion took place when marginal cultural practices, characteristic of the criminal environment and places of deprivation of liberty, penetrated the national cultural space and began to determine the norms of behaviour, value systems, and language practices of broad segments of the population.

All these things must be considered when analysing Russian statehood and society, but it is precisely this penal, prison factor that is systematically overlooked by Western researchers due to their methodological limitations. Western analysts, who essentially equate the Russian population with themselves, projecting their own cultural, historical, and political experiences onto it, do not consider the fundamental differences in the trajectories of historical development. Russia did not have a French Revolution with its slogans of liberty, equality, and fraternity, nor did it have an American Revolution with its cult of individual rights and restrictions on state power, nor did it have other revolutions of the same nature and direction that characterised the formation of all European nations. The absence of bourgeois-democratic revolutions meant the absence of the formation of civil society in the Western understanding of the term, the absence of a tradition of limiting state power by law, and the absence of a culture of political participation and civic responsibility.

This historical vacuum was compounded by the utterly humiliating position of private property, which never acquired in Russia the sacred status it had in Western societies. The absence of a guaranteed right to private property meant no economic basis for the formation of an independent civil society and a political class that could resist the arbitrariness of state power. This, in turn, was compounded by the carceral-prison nature of both Russian domestic and foreign policy, where methods of governance typical for prisons were systematically applied to the governance of society as a whole. The combination of these factors created the unique prison empire that modern Russia continues to be, despite formal changes in the political regime and economic system.

In this context, the phenomenon of the ‘Russian world’ serves as an ideological justification for the spread of Russian narratives and expansionist policies, giving them a pseudo-cultural and pseudo-civilisational dimension. A striking example of the penetration of prison subculture into the highest levels of Russian state power is the scandalous speech by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who publicly used criminal jargon and the conceptual apparatus of prison subculture to characterise international relations. This case demonstrates a systemic phenomenon in which representatives of the highest levels of power consider it entirely acceptable and natural to publicly use vocabulary and conceptual schemes borrowed from the criminal environment.

Therefore, the real danger to large social groups within the Russian population (and such a danger exists) does not lie in the fact that they are supposedly enslaved, subjugated, or dependent on the elites, as is usually interpreted in Western discourse. Such an interpretation is methodologically flawed because it is based on the false assumption of the passivity of the Russian population and its fundamental similarity to the populations of Western democracies. In reality, the Russian people are not passive victims of the regime, but active carriers, conscious adherents, and effective agents of this carceral Russian imperial subculture. This is an unprecedented phenomenon in world history, which is difficult for European researchers to understand precisely because of the absence of a similar historical experience in their own cultural tradition.

Understanding this fundamental difference is critical to the formation of an adequate policy toward Russia and to a realistic assessment of the prospects for democratic transformation in that country. As long as Western analysts and politicians proceed from the false assumption of a conflict between the people and the authorities in Russia, their policies will be based on false premises and doomed to ineffectiveness.

It must be recognised that Russian society as a whole is not a captive democratic society awaiting liberation from a tyrannical regime but rather an organic part of a stable prison empire, a bearer of its values, and an active participant in its reproduction. Only such a realistic assessment can form the basis for effective policies that consider the real, rather than imagined, characteristics of Russian society and the state.

### **The Nature of the Modern Russian Empire**

When discussing the nature of the modern Russian empire, it is necessary to consider a number of theses that deserve the status of methodological axioms for analysing this state phenomenon. These provisions allow us to highlight the specificity of the Russian model of imperialism and colonialism, which differs qualitatively from both classical European empires and other states based on criminal structures.

First, even considering that human history has provided numerous examples of states based on criminal structures, Russia stands out among them due to its role in the world, its territory, population, military power, and other factors that make it unlike other small criminal regimes and juntas that came to power as a result of criminal riots, uprisings, and revolutions. The scale of the Russian state, its geopolitical influence, and historical longevity place this phenomenon beyond the typological range of ordinary authoritarian or criminal regimes, giving it the status of a unique phenomenon in world history.

Second, when comparing Russia with other colonial empires that existed in the past – British, French, Portuguese, Spanish – it should be emphasised that all of these empires had the characteristics of classical empires, based on the power of a legitimate, non-criminal aristocracy supported by legitimate military force. At the same time, this aristocracy and military force had the characteristics of classical legitimacy, based on the traditional institutions of feudal and later bourgeois society. The Russian Empire, on the other hand, unlike all other empires, was founded precisely on the assimilation and colonial conquest of a significant part of the territory through hard penal labour, imprisonment, and criminal punishment. This is what makes it completely different from other countries and empires, as the penitentiary system became not just an instrument of repression, but the main mechanism of colonisation and state-building.

A comparative analysis with other states where the penal system played a role in colonisation only emphasises the uniqueness of the Russian case. The United States of America, despite the fact that criminals from England were sent there from the very beginning, was still a country of free people and developed as a country of free people, where the penal element quickly dissolved into the general mass of free colonists. Even if the French Empire sent prisoners to its colonies, their share was not significant enough to form a subculture that could influence the general population and determine the character of colonial society. Great Britain and Australia demonstrated an example where, even while saturating the Australian

continent with convicts and criminals, this penal base was eventually absorbed by the culture of other colonisers, who could arguably be called free, law-abiding people who arrived in the colony voluntarily and formed the dominant cultural matrix.

In light of the above examples, it can be reasonably argued that the Russian state and the Russian colonial empire represent a completely different example, which has continued to develop according to the same canons and principles since the 16th century. Unlike other cases, where the penal element was assimilated or marginalised, in Russia, it was the criminal-prison subculture that became the structuring basis of society in the vast colonised territories, determining the social norms, behavioural patterns, and value orientations of the population.

Taking all of the above into account, it can be emphasised that this unique mixture of colonialism, imperialism, the penal foundation of the state, and the criminal-prison subculture, which has transformed into a national culture, has made Russia a state phenomenon that is completely unlike any other historical examples. This phenomenon retains the enormous momentum of colonialism and imperialism and shows no signs of being ready to abandon these characteristics, as they are rooted not only in political structures but also in the deep layers of public consciousness and cultural identity.

In the context of studying the concept of the 'Russian world', it is necessary to emphasise that the very 'traditional values' that form the ideological basis of this concept are not simply a construct of the regime or the elites, but an organic product of the historical development of the Russian population, which has been shaped over the last five centuries precisely within the framework of this colonial-imperialist policy with all its inherent characteristics, trends and social movements. The bearers of these values are the people themselves, formed in the unique conditions of symbiosis between imperial expansion and penal colonisation, which makes the 'Russian world' not a temporary ideological project but a deeply rooted cultural and historical phenomenon capable of self-reproduction and expansion regardless of specific political regimes.

### Conclusions

This study has demonstrated that Russia's deployment of 'traditional values' represents not merely ideological rhetoric but a comprehensive *neocolonial apparatus* with five hundred years of institutional and cultural reinforcement. The analysis of Presidential Decree № 809, the 'Russkiy Mir' doctrine, cultural artifacts, and ecclesiastical instrumentalization reveals a systematic architecture of domination that distinguishes Russian imperialism from all historical precedents. Understanding the nature of the modern Russian empire requires recognising several methodological axioms that illuminate this state phenomenon's specificity.

While human history provides numerous examples of states founded on criminal structures, Russia occupies a singular position due to the scale, longevity, and systemic nature of its carceral imperialism. Unlike smaller criminal regimes or military juntas that seize power through coups or uprisings, the Russian state represents a five-hundred-year continuous experiment in fusing penal colonisation with territorial expansion. Its vast territory, nuclear arsenal, permanent UN Security Council seat, and capacity to destabilise the international order elevate this phenomenon beyond the typological range of ordinary authoritarian regimes, creating what might be termed a 'carceral empire' without historical parallel.

The distinction between Russia and classical colonial empires proves methodologically crucial. The European empires, despite their brutality and exploitation, operated through recognisable aristocratic and military institutions possessing juridical legitimacy within their own societal frameworks. Their colonial administrations, however oppressive, functioned according to codified (if unjust) legal principles rooted in feudal tradition and later bourgeois state structures. The Russian Empire, conversely, deployed the prison system not as an auxiliary instrument of repression but as the primary mechanism of colonisation itself. Siberian and Far Eastern expansion occurred through *katorga* (hard penal labour), prisons, banishment, deportation, and forced settlement of stigmatised populations, transforming punishment into *state-building* and criminals into *colonisers*.

Russia represents the inverse trajectory. Rather than penal culture being assimilated or marginalised by dominant free-settler norms, criminal-prison subculture (*blatnaya kultura*) became the structuring foundation of society across vast colonised territories. This subculture with its hierarchies, codes, language (*fenya*), and value systems penetrated upward and outward, ultimately transforming from a marginal phenomenon into a national cultural dominant. The notorious case of Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov publicly employing criminal jargon to characterise international relations exemplifies not individual

vulgarity but systemic penetration of prison subculture into the highest state echelons. This represents cultural colonisation in reverse: the colonisers themselves became colonised by the penal instruments of their own expansion.

The research demonstrates that ‘traditional values’ as codified in Decree No. 809 constitute not a recent ideological invention but the latest iteration of patterns established in the sixteenth century. The Decree’s explicit hierarchy placing ‘patriotism’ and ‘service to the Motherland’ above ‘family’, ‘humanism’, and ‘mercy’ reflects centuries of prioritising state survival and expansion over individual dignity. Its single, ritualistic mention of human rights amid thirty-two paragraphs devoted to combating ‘destructive ideology’ mirrors the historical subordination of person to empire that characterised serfdom, deportation regimes, and Soviet collectivisation alike.

This continuity manifests across multiple dimensions analysed in this study:

1. *Civilisational discourse*: The positioning of Russia as a separate ‘civilisation-state’ echoes Tsarist claims of Orthodox mission and Soviet assertions of socialist exceptionalism, always serving to deny former colonies their own civilisational subjectivity.

2. *Linguistic imperialism*: The obsession with ‘protecting Russian speakers’ replicates patterns whereby language functions not as a communication medium but as a colonial marker, justifying intervention wherever Russian is spoken, regardless of citizenship or self-identification.

3. *Religious instrumentalization*: The Russian Orthodox Church’s transformation into a state security apparatus continues the Tsarist model of the Orthodox Church as imperial administrative arm.

4. *Cultural appropriation*: The analysis of appropriated Cossack songs and romanticised Soviet cinema demonstrates how colonial violence becomes ‘tradition’, genocide becomes ‘heroism’, and occupation becomes ‘liberation’ through systematic cultural manipulation.

5. *The ‘Russkiy Mir’ doctrine*: Evolved from a 1990s intellectual concept to a 2008 military-political instrument, culminating in 2022’s full-scale invasion, this trajectory reveals how cultural-linguistic framing inevitably transforms into territorial claims when underpinned by imperial-carceral state logic.

The study’s most critical contribution involves dismantling the persistent Western analytical error that opposes ‘Russian people’ to ‘Putin’s regime’. This framework, however well-intentioned, projects onto Russia the European historical experience of bourgeois revolutions, civil society formation, and eventual democratic consolidation. Russia experienced none of these transformative ruptures. The absence of a French Revolution’s emancipatory universalism, an American Revolution’s constitutional rights fetishisation, or even a partial Glorious Revolution settlement means Russian society lacks the institutional memory, legal culture, and civic tradition that undergird Western democracy.

More fundamentally, the research demonstrates that Russian society functions not as a captive democratic polity awaiting liberation but as an active carrier, conscious reproducer, and effective agent of imperial-carceral values. The population’s support for the Ukrainian invasion, acquiescence to systematic human rights violations, and acceptance of international isolation reflect not mere manipulation by state propaganda but organic expression of values cultivated through five centuries of symbiotic relationship between individual and empire. The prison subculture that dominates Russian society valorises hierarchy over equality, collective identity over individual autonomy, state glory over personal welfare, and enemies’ destruction over coexistence – precisely the values enshrined in Decree No. 809 as ‘traditional’.

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine represents not an aberration but the logical culmination of the imperial-carceral state’s internal dynamics. When Decree No. 809 positions ‘traditional values’ as ‘strategic national priority’ and identifies the West’s ‘destructive ideology’ as an existential threat, it articulates the zero-sum logic inherent in Russian imperialism: either expand or collapse, either dominate neighbours or face one’s own internal contradictions, either maintain the imperial myth or confront the carceral reality.

Ukraine’s resistance, therefore, constitutes more than territorial defence; it represents the first sustained challenge to five centuries of Russian colonial expansion. Ukrainian victory would demonstrate that former colonies can escape the gravitational pull of the carceral empire, potentially inspiring similar movements in Chechnya, Tatarstan, and other subjugated nations. Conversely, a Ukrainian defeat would confirm the ‘Russkiy Mir’ doctrine’s validity, encouraging further aggression against Moldova, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and the Baltic states.

This study’s findings demand recognition that the Russian threat is not conjunctural but structural, not political but civilisational in the sense of representing an alternative civilisational model fundamentally incompatible with principles of sovereignty, human rights, and international law. ‘Traditional values’

function as this model's contemporary articulation, transforming what might otherwise be recognised as criminal aggression into purportedly legitimate cultural defence.

The international community faces a choice: continue operating within frameworks assuming Russian normalcy and potential reform or recognise the carceral-prison empire for what it is – a unique historical formation requiring not engagement but containment, not dialogue but decolonisation, not reform but transformation so profound it may only emerge from systemic collapse. Until such transformation occurs, 'traditional values' will continue serving their intended purpose: legitimising Russian imperial expansion while the world debates whether to believe the coloniser's claims of self-defence.

The research presented here demonstrates that understanding Russian imperialism requires abandoning comfortable assumptions about universal human nature, democratic potential, and historical progress. The Russian carceral empire exists. It expands. It destroys. And it will continue until either contained by external force or transformed by internal revolution – neither of which appears imminent. Scholarship's responsibility is not to soften this reality but to illuminate it, providing policymakers and populations with the knowledge necessary to resist the 'Russkiy Mir's' seductive narratives and defend the possibility of a world where states exist for citizens rather than citizens for states, where tradition serves humanity rather than empire, and where values are measured by liberation rather than domination.

**Acknowledgements.** None.

**Conflict of Interest.** None.

### References:

- Rakhimov, A. (2014). Natalya Narochnickaya rossiya zashchishchaet tradicionnye hristianskie cennosti [Natalia Narochnitskaya: "Russia protects traditional Christian values"]. *Nasha Gazeta* [Our Newspaper]. <https://nashagazeta.ch/en/news/politique/natalya-narochnickaya-rossiya-zashchishchaet-tradicionnye-hristianskie-cennosti> [in Russian].
- Prezident Rossiyskoy Federatsii [President of the Russian Federation] (2022). *Ob utverzhdenii Osnov gosudarstvennoy politiki po sokhraneniyu i ukrepleniyu traditsionnykh rossiyskikh dukhovno-nravstvennykh tsennostey* [On Approving the Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values]. <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/48502> [in Russian].
- Slavic Sacramento (2026). Putin nazval voynu v Ukraine svyashchennoy missiyey [Putin Called the War in Ukraine a Sacred Mission]. *Slavic Sacramento. Russian, Ukrainian News in California*. <https://www.slavicsac.com/2026/01/07/war-putin-holy/>

# POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

DOI: 10.46340/eppd.2026.13.1.2

## AMBIDEXTERITY STRATEGY IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS UNDER CONDITIONS OF UNCERTAINTY

Olena Chaltseva<sup>1</sup> , D.Sc. in Political Science

<sup>1</sup> *Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University*

Email: o.chaltseva@donnu.edu.ua

**Citation:** Chaltseva, O. (2026). Ambidexterity Strategy in the Transformation of Political Institutions Under Conditions of Uncertainty. *Evropský politický a právní diskurz*, 13, 1, 23-29. <https://doi.org/10.46340/eppd.2026.13.1.2>

### Abstract

The article examines the theoretical and methodological foundations of adapting political institutions to conditions of permanent turbulence and aggressive uncertainty. The relevance of the work is determined by the inability of traditional hierarchical models of political system management to respond effectively to the 'uncontrollably complex' and unpredictable challenges of modernity.

The article applies a polyparadigmatic approach that synthesises the achievements of neo-institutionalism, adaptive governance theory, and «organisational ambidexterity». The work analyses the phenomenon of path dependence and the emergence of «institutional traps» that block the democratic development of the political system. Using the example of Central and Eastern European countries and Ukraine, the risks of democratic backsliding and imitative institutionalisation are demonstrated, where formal norms are not filled with real content due to weak political culture, external shocks, corruption, and other factors.

Particular attention is paid to the Ukrainian context in the context of war, which is characterised by «double institutionalisation» and the threat of further personalisation of power. As a mechanism for overcoming crises and «democratic backsliding», the concept of institutional ambidexterity is proposed as the ability of the political system to simultaneously combine the processes of «exploitation» (using traditional existing procedures) and «exploration» (introducing flexible innovations into management processes).

It is concluded that institutional flexibility and the ability to adapt to a changing and unpredictable environment, based on shared democratic values and partnership with civil society, are the key to preserving the state's subjectivity in the face of existential and utilitarian external threats and internal crises. The article hypothesises that a system built on the principles of ambidexterity is capable of effectively reforming (and even fighting) simultaneously, ensuring the transition from imitation to real quality in public policy.

**Keywords:** political institutions, adaptive governance, institutional traps, path dependence, ambidexterity, public policy, political system, transformation.

### Introduction. *Epistemological crisis in science and the challenges of interpreting political reality.*

The contemporary world is changing faster than political science can respond to these changes. The dynamics of global processes, the emergence of "black swans," and the permanent turbulence of political systems create a situation in which the traditional methodological toolkit proves insufficient for explaining atypical changes.

---

© Chaltseva, O. 2026. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International. It gives an opportunity to read, to load, to copy out, to expand, to print, to search, to quote or to refer to the full text of the article in this Journal.

The explanatory capacity of contemporary scholarship depends on many components: the level of ontological knowledge at a particular point in time, the epistemological position of scholars and the degree of their ideological bias, theoretical and methodological trends in the scholarly space, as well as the degree to which a problem is actualized in scholarly discourse.

Therefore, political science's response to the invariability of systems and to the capacity of institutions to adapt to new conditions must go beyond linear forecasts and form a new polyvariant methodology capable of explaining dynamic changes and processual features.

**The purpose of the article** is to identify the main directions for the theoretical substantiation of the problem of institutional quality and its significance for political development under conditions of uncertainty, on the basis of an analysis of the practical experience of the adaptation of political institutions amid the transformation of political systems.

The transformation of states can occur simultaneously with the process of democratization, which in methodological terms complicates the task of developing a research strategy. The adaptation of political institutions under conditions of transformation should include the renewal of governance models in the state, the development of instruments of public participation and oversight under crisis conditions, the formation of a culture of accountability, and ensuring the openness of decisions. As global indices (Freedom House, V-Dem) and the experience of stable democracies show, the key factor in this process remains not only the strength of formal norms, but also the depth of political culture, namely the rootedness of democratic practices and the effectiveness of institutions as such.

During a transition period, the quality of political institutions is of particular importance, since they are a basic instrument of public policy. The success of reforms, the introduction of new rules of coexistence among actors, and the effectiveness of conflict regulation practices depend on them. The question that is now at the center of attention of scholars and practitioners is which institutionalized subjects are capable of guaranteeing the success of the transformation of politico-administrative systems and ensuring equal access to policymaking and policy implementation. As of today, there is no universal and unambiguous answer. Accordingly, political science continues to expand and update its theoretical and conceptual approaches, clarifying the role of institutions, mechanisms, and actors in the processes of adaptation and the emergence of public authority systems under dynamic challenges.

### **Theoretical Polylogue: The Search for A Methodological Optic to Explain New Trends in The Political Environment**

The logic of scholarly inquiry regarding the problem of institutional adaptation in transformational systems, which in our study we present as an uncertain environment, rests in contemporary scholarly discourse on a multi-paradigmatic approach. Contemporary theoretical explanations in political science proceed from the assumption of the simultaneous variability of two components, the environment and institutional practices, which underscores the need to analyze the environment in light of time-relevant internal and external determinative factors, and to consider institutions not as abstract universals, but as dynamic structures embedded in specific political, historical, and social contexts.

The change in the environment of political systems' functioning today appears not as a situational anomaly, but as an objective ontological circumstance that unavoidably determines the logic of institutional behaviour. In this context, the adaptiveness of political institutions should be viewed not as an optional characteristic but as a fundamental condition of their survival and the preservation of legitimacy. External and internal factors, from geopolitical shifts and global economic crises to the transformation of societal demands and value orientations, create strong pressure on the politico-administrative system. This pressure forces institutions to go beyond established bureaucratic routines and seek new formats of interaction with reality, transforming static procedures into flexible mechanisms of response.

A direct response to the inability of traditional managerial approaches to explain contemporary governance practice has been the new paradigm of "adaptive governance." Non-hierarchical and flexible models of management have emerged as an alternative to the classic "command-and-control" model, the effectiveness of which is substantially reduced under conditions of contemporary societal challenges:

1. The complexity lies in the fact that contemporary problems (conflicts, wars, climate change, pandemics) are "unmanageably complex," where a change in one element unpredictably affects others.

2. "Uncertainty" is interpreted by the authors as confronting deep and irreducible uncertainty: "we do not know what exactly we do not know."

3. Conflictuality presupposes that society contains contradictory values and interests, which makes the existence of a single "correct" solution impossible.

Thus, under such conditions, traditional management that seeks one “optimal” solution to problems is doomed to fail. Adaptive governance, which recognizes the uncertainty of the environment, instead proposes an iterative (repeated) process of “learning through action.” Policy is treated as an experiment that involves implementing the best possible solution at a given concrete moment in time, subject to monitoring real consequences and to built-in mechanisms for flexibly changing the adopted decision on the basis of the data obtained.

Accordingly, contemporary theoretical explanations in political science have undergone a significant epistemological recalibration, moving away from the search for ideal models and traditional explanatory constructs. They rest on the assumption of the fundamental variability of institutional practices, which entails rejecting the view of institutions as abstract universals that can be mechanically transplanted from one context to another with guaranteed results. Instead, scholarly discourse focuses on institutions as dynamic structures that are deeply embedded in specific political, historical, and social contexts. This embeddedness includes historical memory, informal norms, levels of trust, and the structure of social ties, all of which shape how formal rules are interpreted and implemented in practice. Only this approach makes it possible to explain why institutional designs that are similar in form can perform very differently in stable democracies and in systems undergoing transit and uncertainty.

The synthesis of different methodological approaches makes it possible to comprehensively clarify the relationship between institutional design and a turbulent environment: neo-institutionalism (historical, social, normative, international, and others), rational choice theory, network theory, the systems approach, contingency theory, phenomenology, and others.

*Political neo-institutionalism* provides a foundational framework by offering a macro-level view of institutions within the state–society system. As Skocpol, Peters, Hecl, and Krasner argue, institutions possess relative autonomy and play a dominant role in structuring political space. They are not merely passive arenas of interest-group conflict, but independent variables that shape the trajectories of political system development. Historical neo-institutionalism (Getham, Steinmo, Thelen, Tilly) deepens attention to context by foregrounding time. It explains the inertia of change through “path dependence,” whereby choices made at critical junctures constrain contemporary alternatives. Rational choice theory (Scharpf, Olson, Ostrom) analyzes public policy (PP) at the micro-level through the search for optimal decisions, interpreting institutional adaptation as the product of individual and collective action aimed at reducing transaction costs and uncertainty. Social neo-institutionalism (DiMaggio, Powell) is central to this analysis because it directs attention to legitimacy and to the social ties among public policy actors. In conditions of structural uncertainty, institutions often engage in mimetic adaptation, aligning with environmental expectations by copying successful models not primarily for efficiency, but for survival and social approval. This strategy is frequently characterized as imitative (Chaltseva, 2017).

Network theory (Börzel, Rhodes, Marsh) and the managerial approach (Sabatier, Mazmanian) explain dynamics in contemporary polycentric systems, where institutional adaptation does not occur hierarchically but through complex bargaining and interaction among multiple actors (Chaltseva, 2017).

Systems and spatial approaches (Luhmann, Giddens, Bourdieu, Fligstein) introduced the concepts of emergence and autopoiesis, making it possible to analyze not only the survival of political systems but also their capacity for dynamic self-reproduction and the acquisition of new qualities in response to critical destabilizing factors. A key property of an integrated system is its capacity for self-reproduction and for the adaptation of subsystems and elements in response to “external shocks” (Kaufman). The concept of “liminal fields” (Turner) helps conceptualize transitional conditions in which old rules no longer operate while new ones have not yet been formed, or are still forming. Consistent with contingency theory (Burns, Stalker), high levels of external entropy require institutions to abandon rigid hierarchies and traditional managerial practices in favour of more organic, adaptive structures and flexible governance models.

### **Phenomenology of Institutional Traps and “path dependence”**

Institutional development, like technological development, includes two key components: an *innovative component* (natural selection or design) and a *transplantational component* (borrowing from advanced systems). An organic combination of tradition and innovation enables actors to expand the field of opportunities. However, in transitional systems, this process often encounters serious obstacles (Chaltseva, 2024).

Accordingly, the system confronts two key problems: the first is the unpreparedness to install new institutions due to the absence of necessary conditions (for example, e-democracy without an appropriate

IT infrastructure and the digital literacy of society). The second is the emergence of so-called institutional “traps,” which are interpreted as stable, inefficient norms that block the development of the political system. Such a “trap” often becomes the preservation of a routine system of governance (administrative-command) under the mask of new democratic façades (Chaltseva, 2024).

A separate and extremely complex type of “trap” is the phenomenon of similarity, which in the scholarly literature is qualified as “path dependence.” In the transitional systems of the 1990s and 2000s, new institutions created according to Western templates proved instrumentally and formally present, but functionally incapable of creating stable democratic traditions and of building a national model of public policy.

This problem acquired particular specificity in transitional countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), which, despite differences in chosen trajectories and the final outcomes of transformation, encountered a shared challenge. The key determinant triggering the institutional “trap” was that new democratic institutions were installed on the “old ground” of informal social ties and a statist culture.

In this context, a cognitive and functional gap emerged: formal institutional designs borrowed from the experience of stable democracies proved to be only “facade” constructions. Beneath their shell, inertial mechanisms of patron–client networks, nomenklatura ties, and legal nihilism inherited from the Soviet and post-socialist system continued to function.

It was precisely this mismatch between progressive formal instruments and the conservative content of social capital that led to the fact that in CIS countries, transformation often ended in the personalization of power, while in a number of CEE countries, it resulted in a “deferred crisis” and democratic reversal. Thus, “path dependence” manifested itself not so much in a deficit of laws and processes of formalizing new democratic institutions as in the resilience of informal practices that adapted new institutions to old elite interests.

For example, in Poland and Hungary in the 1980s, there were attempts by political elites to reform political systems “from above.” Yet the tradition of treating law as an instrument of the party as a political subject, rather than as an independent arbiter, persisted and acquired new features, including proximity to governing elites and the reproduction of hierarchical nomenklatura practices. Even after Constitutional Courts were established (Poland in 1982, Hungary in 1989), elites through the mid-1990s often treated courts as bodies meant to “confirm” political expediency rather than constrain power. This pattern of “socialist legalism” and legal nihilism laid a foundation for later attacks on judicial independence in the 2010s in these countries.

Further manifestations of this “trap” include the imitation of multiparty competition and the creation of “pocket parties” in transformational systems in the 1990s. By 2000, many CIS and Balkan countries (for example, Yugoslavia under Milošević) had formally installed electoral democratic procedures into their systems, taking their first steps in electoral politics. However, given a statist political culture, parties were often created not as representatives of social groups’ interests but as administrative superstructures organized around leaders. This contributed to the emergence of “illiberal democracies” already in the 1990s (Zakaria, 2003), where elections occurred, but rights and freedoms were not protected.

Another indicator of the “trap” can be called the deficit of trust as a consequence of the authorities’ “total control” over society. Sociological research in the 1990s (for example, Putnam’s work on social capital in post-communist countries) confirmed that, after decades of forced (mobilizational) participation in Soviet organizations, citizens in the 1990s felt distrust toward any civic activity. For example, the weakness of the trade union movement and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Ukraine until 2000 was a direct consequence of “path dependence” on the Soviet model of “state public organizations.” Thus, the institutional memory of statism proved stronger than the rational design of Western consultants.

By 2000, a paradox had formed in the CEE region: democracy in form, but clientelism in content. Despite energetic rates of European integration and positive dynamics of formal democratization, the deep transformation of the public sphere in a number of states slowed down or underwent reversal. The effect of the so-called “deferred crisis” operated. Among the key determinants that activated the “path dependence” trap in CEE are the following:

- weak institutional culture and a deficit of trust in political systems. The alienation of society from power inherited from socialism turned democratic procedures into rituals that imitated the public process;
- historical centralization of power (a statist political culture). The tradition of executive dominance proved stronger than the system of checks and balances;

- imitative inclusion of civil society in governance processes. Co-governance mechanisms often remained declarative, which created prerequisites for the formation of pseudo-democracies (hybrid, incomplete, imitative);

- populist tendencies that became the mainstream of contemporary political systems. The use of democratic instruments (elections) by anti-system forces to dismantle democracy from within.

In Poland (2015–2023), institutions, including the judiciary and public media, proved vulnerable to political capture despite formal adherence to procedures. In Hungary, under V. Orbán, this process took the form of a proclaimed “illiberal democracy,” with systematic media control and pressure on NGOs, enabling the regime to be characterized as “competitive authoritarianism” or an “electoral autocracy.” In Slovakia, the return of R. Fico’s government signaled troubling tendencies of following the Hungarian scenario, including attacks on anti-corruption bodies and the media. In Serbia, a “hybrid regime” formed under A. Vučić, where boundaries between the state and the ruling party were blurred, and administrative resources undermined the substance of political competition.

Thus, the experience of CEE has shown that the simple borrowing of forms without changing political culture and the value paradigm of both society and the elite does not guarantee stability, and under crisis conditions can lead to the regeneration of authoritarianism.

### **The Ukrainian Dimension: Dual Institutionalization and The Challenges of War**

Ukraine, despite significant efforts to reform public administration after 2014 (decentralization, anti-corruption infrastructure), continues to face problems of political fragmentation and “dual” institutionalization. This phenomenon is characterized by the simultaneous functioning of post-Soviet in content (patron–client, hierarchical) and new (transparent, democratic) institutions. This collision reduces the effectiveness of the implementation of procedures and contributes to the personalization of power (Chaltseva, 2017).

Under conditions of full-scale war, the situation takes on an existential character. A particular threat arises when citizens, under extraordinary circumstances, are prepared to exchange some freedoms for security. This creates space for emergency executive powers that are extremely difficult to revoke after the crisis ends. What is temporary tends to become permanent and may produce irreversible consequences for the future of democracy in Ukraine.

Institutional “traps” under such conditions not only impede development potential but can also trigger mechanisms of irreversible degradation of social structures. The public sphere may contract, giving way to narrow group interests, the slowing of reforms, and corruption.

One of the main means of preventing this scenario is the development of a real rather than a façade democracy, which ensures consideration of different actors’ views and provides institutionalized representation and self-organization. Ukrainian civil society, which has demonstrated unprecedented resilience and capacity for self-organization during the war, is a resource that can compensate for weak state institutions and constrain arbitrary exercises of power. However, this non-state actor also requires institutionalization through new forms of partnership.

### **Ways of Resolution: The Concept of Institutional Ambidexterity**

The analysis shows that there may be many scenarios for the development of public policy in transitional systems; however, it should be treated as axiomatic that only expanding the boundaries of high-quality socio-political representation, developing social partnership, and strengthening institutional adaptiveness can help absorb problems that destabilize, and at times even destroy, the system. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to create conditions for the formation of public capital and a national model of PP that would correspond to the principles of democratic and effective governance. In this context, the task of the academic community is to provide analytical support for the processes of political system adaptation: risk modeling, forecasting the consequences of temporary decisions, and advancing dialogue.

In connection with the above, the response of scholars in different fields, primarily managerial disciplines, was the proposed concept of ambidexterity (from Latin *ambo*, meaning both, and *dexter*, meaning right, literally “two-handedness”), namely a dynamic capability that enables organizations to succeed in the long term while simultaneously engaging in two seemingly contradictory types of activity: “exploitation” and “exploration.” Duncan (1976) was the first to introduce the term “organizational ambidexterity,” describing the capacity of structures to change in order to implement innovations while maintaining stability. A founder of the contemporary discussion of this phenomenon, March (1991),

who advanced the idea of dividing activity into two types, “exploitation” and “exploration,” argued that a system’s survival depends on the balance between them. “Exploitation” is an activity oriented toward efficiency, cost reduction, and incremental innovations in the system. It involves concentrating on improving existing, traditional products, processes, and technologies that have already operated within the political system. “Exploration” is an activity oriented toward institutional flexibility, radical innovation, and the introduction of new opportunities, with a focus on searching for new knowledge and developing new products and services, mechanisms, and so forth.

The article by Charles O’Reilly and Michael Tushman (2011) provides empirical confirmation and theoretical deepening of the concept of ambidexterity. Earlier work confirmed the importance of ambidexterity but did not provide a clear understanding of the specific mechanisms that allow managers to actually reallocate resources and reconfigure assets in order to balance exploitation and exploration. Their work moved ambidexterity from the theoretical to the practical level by offering managers a concrete set of interrelated decisions, concerning structure, culture, rewards, and processes, that must be made in order to use current assets successfully while simultaneously exploring new opportunities for future growth. The authors argued that the capacity of senior leaders to moderate and integrate existing assets for simultaneous exploration and exploitation is critically important for overcoming inertia and ensuring organizational adaptation to a changing technological and market environment. The research methodology is based on qualitative case studies and in-depth interviews with executives from thirteen different organizations, which enabled the authors to obtain a detailed understanding of the actions managers took to implement ambidextrous designs and to identify what facilitated success or impeded it. O’Reilly and Tushman (O’Reilly, & Tushman, 2011) found that, in linking and managing separated units, the successful implementation of ambidexterity depends on an interconnected set of decisions about organizational design and the way the senior leadership team operates. It should have the following characteristic features:

1. Shared vision and values: clear articulation of a shared vision and values that create a unified identity for all units (exploitation and exploration) and serve as an ideological “umbrella” for different cultures.
2. Strategy accountability: the senior team must explicitly take responsibility for the ambidexterity strategy. This includes creating a reward system based on shared fate that motivates cooperation.
3. Relentless communication: continuous communication about strategy, decisions, and priorities in order to manage inevitable conflict and tension between units.
4. Ambidextrous leadership: the need for senior leaders who themselves possess ambidextrous thinking, the capacity to champion both exploitation and exploration initiatives simultaneously (to be “consistently inconsistent”).

Thus, O’Reilly and Tushman (O’Reilly, & Tushman, 2011) translated theory into practice and demonstrated that ambidexterity requires a specific design: separate units for innovation and stability that are integrated through shared strategy and leadership.

Gibson and Birkinshaw (Gibson, & Birkinshaw, 2004) examined “contextual ambidexterity,” in which the capacity to be “two-handed” depends not on structure, but on employees’ individual choices and a culture of trust within the system.

In contemporary political science theory, the concept of “institutional ambidexterity” is gaining prominence. The transfer of ambidexterity from business to the public sector entails a shift from “bureaucratic inertia” to “adaptive resilience.” Institutions must differentiate between processes that maintain order and processes that advance reform. “Exploitation” is classical public administration operating under rigid regulation, such as paying pensions, providing basic services, and maintaining public order. Vertical authority and accountability dominate here. “Exploration” consists of project offices and digital laboratories (for example, the Ministry of Digital Transformation in Ukraine) and crisis centers. They operate through flexible methodologies and experiment with new forms of interaction with citizens. To ensure that the “two hands” do not work against one another, for example, so that digital reforms are not sabotaged by the old bureaucracy, an ideological umbrella is required, which in the context of transformational systems represents shared democratic values and the idea of publicity that can justify temporary inconveniences associated with change.

For institutions, this is the most difficult level. It requires political leadership to be “consistently inconsistent”: on the one hand, to ensure stability and security, especially during war, and on the other hand, simultaneously to sanction the dismantling of old, ineffective ties in the name of innovation. Ambidexterity is an antidote to institutional “traps.” If a system only “exploits” old experience, it becomes locked into a path

of inefficiency. The exploration strategy makes it possible to create alternative pathways of development in parallel with core activities, which facilitates the gradual transformation of an entire system without its collapse.

### Conclusions

In summary, it should be noted that the adaptiveness of political institutions under conditions of uncertainty is not an automatic process. It requires the deliberate construction of a design that takes into account the “traps” of path dependence and the risks of “democratic backsliding.” The experience of CEE countries and Ukraine demonstrates that the formal presence of democratic institutions, without filling them with the substantive content of co-governance between state and society and public oversight, is insufficient.

The future of transformational political systems will depend on the capacity of elites and civil society to form a governance model that combines institutional resilience with flexibility, ensuring a transition from imitation to genuine subjectivity in public policy.

Contemporary political reality should be approached through the concept of “institutional ambidexterity” as a key strategy for survival and development. The problem of ambidexterity has evolved from a narrow concept in organizational management into a fundamental strategy for the survival of complex socio-political systems. This term, borrowed from organizational theory, describes the capacity of a system of public governance to be “two-handed,” that is, to sustain a binary reality simultaneously: exploitation and exploration. “Exploitation” entails the effective use of existing, stable procedures to ensure order in the system, security, and predictability, which is critically important under conditions of war. “Exploration” entails the simultaneous active search for and implementation of new innovations and flexible approaches in response to future challenges and rapid environmental change.

It is precisely institutional flexibility, grounded in shared democratic values rather than exclusively in the rigid letter of bureaucratic procedures, that can serve as a guarantee of preserving democracy under conditions of systemic threats. An ambidextrous system is capable of waging war and reforming simultaneously, while maintaining governability and openness to innovation.

Under conditions of war, Ukraine has become a “laboratory of ambidexterity.” The state is compelled to be as rigid as possible on issues of mobilization and defense (“exploitation”) while simultaneously being highly flexible on issues of digital transformation, the mobilization of volunteer networks, and decentralization (“exploration”).

**Acknowledgements.** None.




**Conflict of Interest.** None.

### References:

- Chaltseva, O. M. (2024). Instyutsionalna nevyznachenist aktoriv publichnoi polityky. Ukrainskyi keis [Institutional Uncertainty of Public Policy Actors. Ukrainian Case]. *Public Networks and Communications*, 1, 5-11. <https://doi.org/10.31558/3083-5895.2024.1.1>
- Chaltseva, O. M. (2017). *Publichna polityka: teoretychnyi vymir i suchasna praktyka* [Public Policy: Theoretical Extinction and Contemporary Practice]. Vinnytsia.
- Duncan, R. B. (1976). The Ambidextrous Organization: Designing dual structures for innovation. *The Management of Organization Design*, 1, 167–188.
- Gibson, C. B., & Birkinshaw, J. (2004). The Antecedents, Consequences, and Mediating Role of Organizational Ambidexterity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(2), 209–226. <https://doi.org/10.5465/20159573>
- March, J. G. (1991). Exploration and Exploitation in Organizational Learning. *Organization Science*, 2(1), 71–87. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2.1.71>
- O'Reilly, C. A., & Tushman, M. L. (2011). Organizational Ambidexterity in Action: How Managers Explore and Exploit. *California Management Review*, 53(4), 5–21. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272552334\\_Organizational\\_Ambidexterity\\_in\\_Action\\_How\\_Managers\\_Explore\\_and\\_Exploit](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272552334_Organizational_Ambidexterity_in_Action_How_Managers_Explore_and_Exploit)
- Zakaria, F. (2003). *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*. <https://scispace.com/pdf/the-future-of-freedom-illiberal-democracy-at-home-and-abroad-kvar94cge3.pdf>

DOI: 10.46340/eppd.2026.13.1.3

## INTEGRATED CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN UKRAINE: GOVERNANCE, SYSTEM READINESS, AND STRATEGIC PATHWAYS FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN A WARTIME AND RECOVERY CONTEXT

Nadiia Zubchenko<sup>1</sup>, PhD in International law, Mykola Yatsenko<sup>1,2</sup>, PhD in Sociology, Nataliia Dumych<sup>3</sup>, Poppy Walton<sup>4</sup>, Konstantyn Ryabukhin<sup>5</sup>, PhD in medicine, Oksana Khymovych<sup>1,6</sup>, PhD in Sociology

<sup>1</sup> *Products and Systems Ukraine (i-APS Ukraine), Odesa, Ukraine*

<sup>2</sup> *National University "Odesa Law Academy", Odesa, Ukraine*

<sup>3</sup> *Odesa National Medical University, Odesa, Ukraine*

<sup>4</sup> *HelpAge International, Lviv, Ukraine*

<sup>5</sup> *HelpAge International, London, UK*

<sup>6</sup> *Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine*

**Corresponding author: Zubchenko Nadiia; E-mail: nzubchenko@i-aps.com**

**Citation:** Zubchenko, N., Yatsenko, M., Dumych, N., Walton, P., Ryabukhin, K., & Khymovych, O. (2026). Integrated Care for Older People in Ukraine: Governance, System Readiness, and Strategic Pathways for Implementation in a Wartime and Recovery Context. *Evropský politický a právní diskurz*, 13, 1, 30-39. <https://doi.org/10.46340/eppd.2026.13.1.3>

### Abstract

Ukraine is undergoing accelerated population ageing under conditions of full-scale war, displacement, and systemic pressure on public institutions. These dynamics have exposed structural limitations of fragmented health and social care systems and intensified the need for integrated, person-centred approaches to supporting older people. This article analyses Ukraine's systemic readiness to implement the World Health Organization's Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) framework, with a particular focus on governance, financing, workforce policy, and administrative coordination.

The study is based on a national mixed-methods readiness assessment conducted in 2025–2026 across two regions of Ukraine. Using the WHO ICOPE Implementation Scorecard as an analytical framework, the research evaluates macro-level (system) and meso-level (service delivery) capacities for integrated care implementation. Findings indicate that Ukraine demonstrates partial and uneven readiness, corresponding to an early implementation stage. While important enabling factors exist – including primary health care reform, decentralised social service networks, and high professional motivation – critical systemic enablers remain underdeveloped. These include interministerial governance mechanisms, integrated financing models, workforce coordination structures, and interoperable information systems.

A structured SWOT analysis suggests that Ukraine's challenge lies not only in limited system capacity but in the misalignment of institutional, financial, and governance arrangements. Workforce shortages and resource constraints remain significant, yet existing elements of integrated care operate largely in parallel rather than as a coordinated system, reducing their effectiveness and sustainability. At the same time, post-war recovery, digitalisation, and ongoing public administration reforms create a window of opportunity to align these capacities and institutionalise integrated care as a core component of national ageing policy.

---

© Zubchenko, N., Yatsenko, M., Dumych, N., Walton, P., Ryabukhin, K., & Khymovych, O. 2026. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International. It gives an opportunity to read, to load, to copy out, to expand, to print, to search, to quote or to refer to the full text of the article in this Journal.

The article argues that ICOPE implementation in Ukraine should be understood not as the introduction of a new service model but as a strategic instrument for systemic integration of existing health and social care structures. A phased, governance-led approach is proposed, combining pilot implementation with institutional reform and equity-focused financing mechanisms. Embedding integrated care into Ukraine's recovery and European integration trajectory could transform current fragmentation into a resilient, person-centred system for ageing populations.

**Keywords:** integrated care, ICOPE, ageing policy, health and social care integration, governance reform, Ukraine, post-war recovery

## Introduction

Population ageing in Ukraine has transitioned from a long-term demographic trend into an acute policy and humanitarian challenge. Even prior to the full-scale invasion of 2022, approximately one-fifth of the population was aged 60 years or older, with a high prevalence of chronic disease, disability, and poverty. The war has significantly intensified these vulnerabilities. Large-scale displacement, infrastructure destruction, loss of family support networks, and disruption of services have disproportionately affected older people, many of whom now experience overlapping medical, functional, social, and economic risks.

These developments have revealed structural limitations of Ukraine's traditionally fragmented care model. Health and social services for older people operate largely in parallel institutional and administrative systems. Medical care is primarily organised through the Ministry of Health and financed via the National Health Service of Ukraine (NHSU), while social support and long-term care services fall under the Ministry of Social Policy and local self-government bodies. Coordination between these sectors is not institutionalised and typically depends on informal professional relationships or project-based initiatives. As a result, older people and their families must navigate complex and disconnected service pathways.

In the context of war and demographic ageing, such fragmentation has become increasingly unsustainable. Older persons who are displaced or living alone often lose access not only to health care but also to informal caregiver support and community networks. Under these conditions, integrated care is not merely a matter of service efficiency but of survival and dignity. A coordinated system capable of addressing medical, functional, and social needs simultaneously is essential for maintaining functional ability and quality of life.

The World Health Organization's Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) framework provides a comprehensive model for such coordination. Rather than focusing solely on disease treatment, ICOPE emphasises maintaining intrinsic capacity and functional ability through person-centred, multidisciplinary, and community-based approaches. Core components include early identification of functional decline, comprehensive assessment, coordinated care planning, support for caregivers, and enabling governance and financing structures. Implementation of ICOPE requires alignment across health and social sectors, shared information systems, and policy frameworks that support intersectoral collaboration.

Ukraine presents a complex environment for ICOPE implementation. On one hand, ongoing primary health care reform, decentralisation of social services, digitalisation initiatives, and strong civil society engagement create favourable preconditions. On the other hand, structural fragmentation, workforce shortages, and fiscal constraints limit the system's capacity for coordinated action. The wartime context further intensifies these challenges while simultaneously creating a window for systemic transformation during reconstruction.

This article examines Ukraine's readiness to implement the ICOPE approach from a governance and administrative perspective. Rather than reassessing the clinical effectiveness of ICOPE – which has been established through WHO guidance and international evidence – the paper focuses on institutional capacity to operationalise integrated care at scale within the Ukrainian context. Drawing on findings from a national readiness assessment, it explores systemic strengths and weaknesses, identifies strategic opportunities and risks, and outlines pathways for embedding integrated care into Ukraine's recovery and ageing policy framework.

The central argument advanced here is that integrated care in Ukraine should be understood not as a new programme or pilot intervention but as a strategic mechanism for aligning existing reforms in health care, social services, decentralisation, and digital governance. Whether ICOPE becomes a collection of local experiments or the foundation of a new system architecture will depend on policy choices made in the coming years.

## Methodology

This article is based on findings from a national readiness assessment of the feasibility and systemic capacity for implementing the World Health Organization's Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) approach in Ukraine. The assessment was conducted in 2025–2026 using a mixed-methods design and focused explicitly on system, governance, and service-delivery readiness rather than clinical outcomes.

## Study Design and Analytical Framework

The study employed a cross-sectional mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative data sources. The analytical framework was derived from the WHO ICOPE Implementation Scorecard, which evaluates readiness across key system domains required for integrated care implementation. These domains include governance and accountability, workforce capacity, financing mechanisms, information systems, and coordination of service delivery.

The scorecard framework was adapted to the Ukrainian context and used qualitatively to determine the stage of readiness across domains, ranging from initial awareness to structured implementation and scale-up. Rather than assigning purely numerical scores, the analysis emphasised structural alignment, institutional capacity, and feasibility of operationalisation.

The research design allowed for triangulation across macro-level (policy and system), meso-level (service delivery and institutional practices), and micro-level (experience of providers, caregivers, and older people) perspectives. This multi-level approach enabled the identification of both systemic constraints and operational realities affecting integrated care implementation.

## Data Collection

Data collection was conducted across two Ukrainian regions selected to reflect diverse administrative and service-delivery contexts, including both urban and rural communities and varying levels of war-related disruption. Selection criteria included relative functionality of health and social infrastructure, accessibility for research teams, and presence of both governmental and non-governmental service providers.

The following data sources were used:

- structured desk review of national legislation, policy documents, reform strategies, and financing mechanisms related to health care, social services, ageing policy, and decentralisation;
- key informant interviews with national and regional policymakers, representatives of ministries, local authorities, service managers, and civil society organisations;
- focus group discussions with older people and informal caregivers;
- structured surveys of caregivers and social workers, older people.
- facility-level checklists assessing organisational capacity for coordination and integrated service delivery.

The combined sample included approximately 240 older persons and 60 informal caregivers, alongside a purposive sample of service providers and institutional stakeholders from primary health care, specialised medical services, social protection institutions, local authorities, and non-governmental organisations. Sampling aimed to reflect the diversity of service contexts and administrative levels across the study regions. Data collection tools were designed to capture both structural conditions and experiential insights regarding service fragmentation, coordination practices, and perceived feasibility of integrated care. A detailed methodological description and full stakeholder breakdown are presented in the underlying assessment report.

## Data Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups were analysed using thematic analysis, with coding structured around key health system and governance dimensions reflected in the ICOPE readiness scorecard, alongside emergent cross-cutting themes. Quantitative survey data were analysed descriptively to identify patterns in service access, coordination practices, and workforce capacity. Findings were triangulated across data sources to ensure consistency and reliability.

Particular attention was paid to identifying systemic barriers and enabling factors affecting integrated care implementation. These included governance arrangements, financing flows, workforce availability and competencies, information-system interoperability, and the role of informal caregivers.

The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analytical framework was applied as a complementary strategic tool to synthesise findings and identify structural conditions influencing

implementation trajectories. This approach enabled integration of empirical data with policy-oriented analysis and facilitated the formulation of strategic recommendations.

Validation of findings was conducted through consultations with selected national stakeholders and experts involved in ageing, health, and social policy. Feedback was incorporated to ensure that interpretations accurately reflected institutional realities and policy constraints.

## **Results: System Readiness for Integrated Care Implementation**

### **Overall readiness level**

The assessment indicates that Ukraine demonstrates partial and uneven readiness for the implementation of integrated care for older people. Overall system readiness corresponds to an early implementation stage. While important enabling elements are present, they remain insufficiently aligned to support systematic, coordinated, and person-centred service delivery at scale.

Across all data sources, respondents consistently described a system in which health and social services operate in parallel rather than as components of a unified continuum of care. Coordination between sectors occurs primarily through informal professional relationships rather than institutionalised mechanisms. As a result, continuity of care depends heavily on individual initiative and local context.

The current configuration can be characterised as a system in which integrated care exists in fragments but not as an organised model. Informal coordination practices demonstrate professional commitment and adaptive capacity, yet they remain vulnerable to disruption and cannot be reliably replicated across regions.

### **Governance and Institutional Alignment**

At the governance level, the most significant constraint is the absence of a national regulatory or organisational model for integrated care. Health and social protection systems operate under separate ministerial mandates, financing structures, and accountability frameworks. No interministerial body or formal mechanism exists to coordinate policy development or implementation of integrated care.

This institutional separation extends to regional and local levels. While decentralisation has granted communities substantial authority over social service provision, coordination with health-care providers is not structurally embedded. Local initiatives often depend on personal relationships between family doctors, social workers, and community administrators rather than formal protocols or shared planning processes.

The absence of defined roles for care coordination further complicates integration. No nationally recognised position of care coordinator or case manager exists to facilitate communication between sectors and ensure continuity of support for older persons with complex needs.

### **Financing and Resource Allocation**

Financing arrangements represent another major barrier. Health care is financed primarily through national-level contracting by the NHSU, whereas social services rely on local community budgets supplemented by targeted state subventions and donor funding. These funding streams are not designed for joint planning or integrated service delivery.

As a result, even when local authorities and service providers recognise the need for coordinated care, they lack mechanisms to finance multidisciplinary teams, case management functions, or joint service packages. Budgetary fragmentation reinforces sectoral boundaries and limits the scalability of integrated models.

Resource disparities between communities further exacerbate inequalities. Wealthier or more stable regions may pilot integrated initiatives with donor support, while resource-constrained or war-affected communities struggle to maintain basic services. Without equalisation mechanisms or dedicated funding for integration, territorial disparities are likely to widen.

### **Workforce Capacity**

Workforce constraints significantly affect readiness for integrated care. Both health and social sectors report shortages of qualified personnel, high workloads, and limited opportunities for specialised training in geriatric and multidisciplinary care. The war has intensified these challenges through displacement, mobilisation, and burnout among professionals.

Social workers are often overburdened with administrative and household-support tasks, limiting their capacity to engage in case management or coordination activities. Informal caregivers – typically family

members – carry a substantial share of care responsibilities but remain largely invisible within formal service structures. They receive minimal training, support, or respite services, despite functioning as de facto coordinators of care.

### **Information Systems and Data Integration**

Digital infrastructure has developed unevenly across sectors. The health system has established eHealth platforms for clinical documentation and service contracting, while the social sector maintains separate registries and information systems. However, these systems are not interoperable, and secure data-sharing mechanisms are largely absent.

Consequently, providers often work in information isolation. Health professionals rarely have access to social assessments, and social workers cannot easily obtain the medical information necessary for comprehensive support planning. The absence of a shared data architecture limits continuity of care, monitoring of functional ability, and evaluation of outcomes.

### **Impact of War and Decentralisation**

The wartime context has both intensified the need for integrated care and constrained its implementation. Destruction of infrastructure, displacement of populations, and loss of family support networks have increased demand for coordinated services. At the same time, fiscal pressures and workforce depletion have reduced system capacity.

Decentralisation reforms create opportunities for locally adapted models but also introduce risks of uneven development. Without strong central coordination and support, integrated care may emerge only in selected communities with sufficient resources and leadership.

Overall, the findings suggest that Ukraine possesses significant latent capacity for integrated care but lacks the structural alignment necessary for system-wide implementation. The following section presents a structured SWOT analysis synthesising these conditions and identifying strategic implications for policy and practice.

### **Systemic SWOT Analysis of ICOPE Implementation in Ukraine**

To synthesise structural conditions influencing implementation of integrated care for older people, a structured SWOT analysis was conducted based directly on the national readiness assessment. The analysis focuses on governance, administrative, and system-level factors affecting the feasibility and scalability of the ICOPE approach in Ukraine.

#### **Analytical Interpretation**

The SWOT profile indicates that Ukraine's readiness for integrated care implementation should be understood as transitional rather than initial. The system already possesses many of the core elements required for integrated care – primary health care reform, decentralised social service infrastructure, motivated professionals, and active civil society engagement. However, these elements exist as parallel subsystems that interact situationally rather than structurally.

#### **Strengths: Latent Integration Capacity**

The principal strength of the Ukrainian system lies in its human and institutional capital. Integrated practices already occur informally: family doctors communicate with social workers in complex cases, social workers address the multidimensional needs of clients, and caregivers perform essential coordination functions. This demonstrates that the conceptual and practical foundations for integrated care are present.

Importantly, integrated care does not need to be constructed from the ground up. Instead, existing practices require formalisation, institutional support, and financing. The decentralised governance framework provides flexibility for local innovation, while the presence of non-governmental and international organisations enables pilot implementation and methodological development.

#### **Weaknesses: Systemic Architecture Gaps**

Weaknesses are structural rather than operational. The system lacks the institutional “engine” necessary to sustain coordination: there is no unified governance mandate, no integrated financing mechanisms, no defined coordination roles, and no shared data infrastructure. These gaps prevent existing practices from evolving into a coherent model of care.

Table 1

**SWOT Analysis of ICOPE Implementation in Ukraine**

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Primary health care reform provides a platform for continuous follow-up of older people</p> <p>Established network of social services and territorial centres</p> <p>High level of awareness of ageing challenges among professionals</p> <p>Motivation of health and social workers toward person-centred models</p> <p>Active NGO and international sector capable of piloting models</p> <p>Decentralisation enables local pilot implementation</p> <p>Existing eHealth infrastructure in the health sector</p> <p>Presence of social workers at the community level</p> <p>Strong resource of informal caregivers</p> <p>Experience of pilot and project-based integration</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Absence of a national regulatory model for integrated care and interministerial governance</p> <p>Institutional separation between the health and social sectors</p> <p>Coordination exists mainly informally and is person-dependent</p> <p>No formal care coordinator or case manager role</p> <p>Workforce shortages exacerbated by war and migration</p> <p>Fragmented financing and inability to jointly fund multidisciplinary teams</p> <p>Lack of interoperability between eHealth and social service systems</p> <p>Social workers limited to administrative and household functions</p> <p>Caregivers remain unsupported and institutionally invisible</p> <p>Services remain institution-centred rather than person-centred</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>WHO ICOPE as a legitimate framework for intersectoral alignment</p> <p>Pilot projects as a foundation for a national integrated model</p> <p>Integration of ICOPE elements into NHSU financing packages</p> <p>Post-war recovery as an opportunity for systemic transformation</p> <p>Development of joint SOPs and care pathways</p> <p>Formalisation of care coordinator roles</p> <p>Creation of a secure shared data architecture</p> <p>Integration of caregiver support into a formal system</p> <p>Donor interest in long-term care reform</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>Prolonged war and infrastructure destruction</p> <p>Risk of permanent pilots without policy decisions</p> <p>Exhaustion of local community budgets</p> <p>Growing regional inequality between communities</p> <p>Professional burnout and workforce erosion</p> <p>Legal and data-sharing risks</p> <p>Institutionalisation of fragmentation</p> <p>Demographic pressure of population ageing</p> <p>Shifts in political priorities</p>

The institutional separation between health and social protection sectors remains a central barrier. Different mandates, budgets, and accountability systems create parallel administrative logics that rarely intersect. Budgetary fragmentation further limits the possibility of funding multidisciplinary teams or coordinated service packages.

Workforce shortages and burnout represent additional structural constraints. The absence of formal recognition and support for informal caregivers reinforces inequities and places unsustainable pressure on families.

### **Opportunities: ICOPE As an Instrument of System Integration**

The SWOT analysis highlights that ICOPE can function not only as a service model but as an instrument for broader intersectoral integration of public systems. Pilot programmes can serve as controlled environments to develop and test joint operating procedures, shared care pathways, new financing arrangements, and coordination roles.

Post-war recovery and ongoing public administration reforms create a unique policy window. Reconstruction of infrastructure, digital transformation initiatives, and alignment with European standards offer opportunities to embed integrated care principles into emerging system architectures. Rather than introducing ICOPE as a standalone project, it can be integrated into broader reforms of health financing, social services, and digital governance.

### **Threats: Consolidation of Fragmentation**

The main strategic threat is the potential consolidation of existing fragmentation. Without political and institutional decisions at the national level, pilot initiatives risk remaining isolated and donor-dependent. Integrated care may continue to function primarily as a humanitarian or project-based activity rather than a state responsibility.

Additional risks include continued workforce depletion, fiscal pressures on local communities, widening territorial inequalities, and demographic ageing. If coordination remains informal and unfunded, caregivers may continue to serve as an invisible and unsupported “shadow system” of care.

### **Strategic Implication of SWOT Findings**

The SWOT analysis leads to a central strategic conclusion: the core task is not to introduce a new model of care but to transform existing informal integration into a governed, financed, and accountable system. Integrated care should be framed as a system-level reform aligning health, social protection, decentralisation, and digital transformation policies.

This requires a shift from pilot logic to policy logic. Pilot implementation remains necessary but must be explicitly linked to institutional reform, development of regulatory frameworks, and creation of sustainable financing mechanisms. Without such alignment, the opportunity presented by the current policy window may be lost.

The following discussion examines governance and policy implications of these findings and outlines strategic pathways for embedding integrated care into Ukraine’s long-term system architecture.

### **Discussion: Governance, System Integration, and Implementation Pathways**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the central challenge of implementing integrated care for older people in Ukraine is not the absence of professional capacity or conceptual understanding, but the absence of systemic alignment. Elements of integrated care already exist across the Ukrainian health and social service landscape. However, these elements operate in parallel institutional environments and depend on individual initiative rather than structural design. As a result, integration occurs episodically rather than systematically.

### **Integrated Care as A Governance Challenge**

From a policy perspective, implementation of the ICOPE framework in Ukraine should be understood primarily as a governance reform rather than a service-delivery innovation. The assessment indicates that structural fragmentation between health and social sectors remains the principal barrier to coordinated care. Separate ministerial mandates, financing streams, accountability systems, and information infrastructures create institutional boundaries that inhibit collaboration.

In the absence of a national regulatory model for integrated care, coordination relies on informal professional relationships and local leadership. While such informal mechanisms demonstrate flexibility and commitment, they are inherently unstable and cannot support nationwide implementation. A transition toward integrated care, therefore, requires formal governance arrangements that define roles, responsibilities, and accountability across sectors.

Establishing an interministerial coordination mechanism or national integrated care platform could provide a structural foundation for alignment. Such a body would not necessarily require extensive new administrative structures but would need a clear mandate to harmonise policy development, financing strategies, and implementation planning across sectors. Without such a mandate, even successful pilot initiatives may remain isolated and difficult to scale.

### **Financing and Incentive Alignment**

Financing structures represent a second critical dimension of system integration. Current arrangements reinforce sectoral separation by allocating resources through distinct channels with minimal opportunities for joint planning or pooled funding. Health services financed through national contracting mechanisms and social services funded through local budgets operate under different logics and incentives.

Introducing integrated care, therefore, requires not only additional resources but new financing mechanisms that encourage coordination. Potential approaches include pilot funding streams for multidisciplinary teams, incorporation of functional ability indicators into NHSU service packages, and targeted state subventions supporting community-based long-term care. These mechanisms would signal institutional recognition of coordination as a core system function rather than an optional activity.

Equally important is addressing territorial inequality. Decentralisation has enabled local innovation but also produced disparities in service capacity between communities. Without equalisation mechanisms or minimum service guarantees, integrated care risks developing unevenly, benefiting only better-resourced regions. National policy frameworks must therefore incorporate equity considerations, ensuring that integrated care becomes a universal rather than selective feature of the system.

### **Workforce and Professional Integration**

Workforce capacity is both a constraint and an opportunity for integrated care implementation. Ukraine retains a strong base of committed health and social service professionals, many of whom already practice elements of person-centred care. However, high workloads, limited training opportunities, and a lack of formal coordination roles restrict their ability to operate within integrated models.

Introducing recognised roles for care coordination or case management would represent a significant step toward institutionalising integration. Such roles could be assigned to existing professionals – social workers, nurses, or primary care teams – rather than requiring entirely new positions. Complementary training programmes focused on multidisciplinary collaboration, geriatric care, and functional ability assessment would strengthen professional capacity.

Recognition and support for informal caregivers must also become a central component of system design. Currently, family members provide substantial care without formal training or institutional support. Integrating caregiver support into policy frameworks, including training, respite services, and information resources, would enhance the sustainability of care and align with the ICOPE emphasis on community-based support.

### **Digital Infrastructure and Information Sharing**

Integrated care requires shared information environments enabling providers to access relevant data across sectors. Ukraine has made progress in digitalising health records and social service registries, yet these systems remain largely disconnected. The absence of secure interoperability limits coordinated planning and monitoring of outcomes.

Developing a shared data architecture or, at a minimum, interoperable data standards represents a priority for implementation. Even incremental steps such as shared assessment templates, referral forms, or local registries could significantly improve continuity of care. Ensuring data protection and privacy will be essential, particularly given legal and institutional sensitivities around personal data sharing.

### **Implementation in Wartime and Recovery Context**

The wartime environment both complicates and reinforces the need for integrated care. Destruction of infrastructure, displacement of populations, and strain on public finances create substantial operational challenges. At the same time, these conditions highlight the inadequacy of fragmented systems and underscore the importance of coordinated responses to complex needs.

Post-war recovery planning provides a unique opportunity to embed integrated care principles into the reconstruction of public services. Rather than rebuilding pre-war structures, Ukraine can design new institutional arrangements that incorporate coordination between health and social sectors from the outset. Alignment with European integration processes and international ageing policies further supports this direction.

Pilot implementation remains a pragmatic starting point. Carefully selected communities representing diverse contexts can serve as demonstration sites for governance arrangements, financing models, and service-delivery pathways. However, pilot projects must be explicitly linked to national policy development and institutionalisation processes. Without such linkage, they risk remaining isolated experiments rather than catalysts for systemic change.

### **From Fragmented Practices to System Architecture**

The overarching implication of this analysis is that integrated care in Ukraine should be framed as a strategic system choice. The country faces a decision between maintaining a fragmented model reliant on informal coordination and developing a coherent architecture that recognises coordination, caregiver support, and functional ability as public responsibilities.

Transforming existing informal integration into a governed and financed system will require political commitment, administrative alignment, and sustained investment. Yet the necessary building blocks already exist. With deliberate policy action and strategic use of current reform and recovery processes, Ukraine has the potential to establish an integrated care system capable of supporting its ageing population in both crisis and recovery contexts.

### **Conclusion**

Ukraine's readiness to implement integrated care for older people can be characterised as partial but promising. The system possesses significant human, institutional, and policy foundations for integrated care, including ongoing primary health care reform, decentralised social service networks, professional motivation, and active civil society engagement. However, these elements remain insufficiently aligned to function as a coherent and sustainable model of care.

The analysis presented in this article demonstrates that the primary barriers to implementation are structural rather than conceptual. Fragmented governance arrangements, siloed financing, workforce constraints, and disconnected information systems limit the capacity of existing services to operate as an integrated continuum. At the same time, the current context of war and post-war recovery creates both urgency and opportunity for systemic transformation, while also constituting a significant constraint on institutional capacity, workforce availability, and public financing. These dual dynamics mean that implementation of integrated care must proceed under conditions of simultaneous pressure and reform.

Integrated care should therefore be understood not as a new programme to be introduced but as a framework for aligning ongoing reforms across health care, social protection, decentralisation, and digital governance. Implementation of the ICOPE approach offers a pathway for consolidating these reforms into a unified system oriented toward functional ability, dignity, and quality of life for older people.

A phased, governance-led strategy is required. Initial pilot implementation in selected communities can generate practical models and evidence, but must be accompanied by development of national regulatory frameworks, financing mechanisms, workforce strategies, and data-sharing infrastructures. Equity considerations must remain central to ensure that integrated care becomes accessible across diverse regions and communities.

Ultimately, Ukraine faces a strategic choice regarding the future of its ageing policy and care system. Maintaining the current fragmented model risks deepening inequalities, overburdening families, and limiting the effectiveness of public services. Conversely, embedding integrated care into recovery and reform agendas offers the possibility of building a resilient, person-centred system capable of responding to demographic change and post-war reconstruction challenges.

The experience of Ukraine illustrates that integrated care implementation in fragile and transitional contexts is both complex and feasible. By transforming existing informal practices into institutionalised and accountable structures, Ukraine can move from fragmented support toward a coordinated system that better serves its ageing population and strengthens the social fabric of recovery.

**Acknowledgments.** We extend our special thanks to older people in Ukraine who generously gave their time to participate in interviews and focus group discussions

We also wish to express our sincere gratitude to the staff of international and national humanitarian organisations, representatives of WHO (World Health Organization), as well as Ukraine's Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Policy, regional departments of health and social protection, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention of Non-communicable Diseases, the National Health Service of Ukraine (NHSU), and the D. F. Chebotarev Institute of Gerontology of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine, who took part in the interviews and shared their valuable insights.

We are also grateful to our research colleagues from i-APS for their dedication and hard work, as well as to Viktoria Aguti and other colleagues from HelpAge International who contributed to the preparation of this report.

**Funding.** HelpAge International contracted the study and design of the data collection, and it was funded by Sida.

**Conflicts of Interest.** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Zveme vás k účasti v časopise!

### EVROPSKÝ POLITICKÝ A PRÁVNÍ DISKURZ

Časopis vychází šestkrát ročně.

#### Požadávky k rukopisům:

Vědecký časopis « Evropský politický a právní diskurz » zve k spolupráci k publikaci vědeckých článků doktory věd, PhD, mladé vědce (postgraduální studenty, doktorandy a uchazeče o magisterský titul), kteří se specializují na různé obory právní a politické vědy, sociálních komunikací, mezinárodních vztahů a sociologie.

Redakční rada časopisu « Evropský politický a právní diskurz » přijímá k posouzení a publikaci následující typy článků:

empirický článek – článek založený na struktuře IMRAD. Články tohoto typu by měly obsahovat původní interpretaci analyzovaných dat;

teoretický článek – článek, jehož struktura závisí na jeho obsahu a ve kterém jsou na základě analýzy vědecké literatury vyvíjeny a předkládány nové teoretické postuláty, které přispívají k rozvoji. Články tohoto typu mohou zahrnovat: původní teorie, upřesnění, doplnění a kritiku stávajících teoretických konstruktů a konceptů, srovnání různých teorií, kritiku a rozvoj metodologických přístupů;

review článek – vědecká práce, která systematizuje a analyzuje stávající výzkum v určitém vědeckém oboru s cílem poskytnout komplexní pohled na aktuální stav znalostí, identifikovat nevyřešené otázky a určit perspektivy dalšího výzkumu. Review články jsou důležité pro aktualizaci vědecké komunity o dosažených výsledcích a trendech v zemědělském sektoru, stejně jako pro pomoc vědcům ve formulaci jejich vlastních výzkumných otázek a hypotéz.

případová studie – typ vědeckého článku, který obvykle popisuje konkrétní případ, situaci, událost nebo objekt s podrobnou analýzou a kontextem. Tento typ článku je používán pro zkoumání konkrétního jevu nebo jevů s cílem pochopit jejich povahu, příčiny, důsledky a možná řešení.

Autoři by měli následovat níže uvedené pokyny pro přípravu článků. Příspěvky, které tyto pokyny nesplňují, budou vráceny autorům, což zpozdí proces recenze. Opakované podávání příspěvků, které nesplňují naše standardy, může vést k jejich odmítnutí.

Při hodnocení příspěvků nebude brán ohled na profesní hodnost nebo příslušnost autora. Podání od mladších vědců a autorů z rozvojových a nově rozvinutých zemí je vřele vítáno.

Pro články s otevřeným přístupem formulář rovněž stanovuje the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International za jakých podmínek je článek uživatelům poskytnut: základním principem otevřeného přístupu je, že obsah by neměl být pouze přístupný, ale také volně použitelný. Články budou standardně publikovány pod licencí Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY). To znamená, že článek je volně dostupný ke čtení, kopírování a redistribuci a může být také upraven (uživatelé mohou dílo “remixovat, transformovat a stavět na něm”) pro jakýkoliv nekomerční účel, pokud je dodrženo řádné uznání autorství.

Jakýkoliv materiál podléhající autorským právům, které nevlastní nebo nekontroluje příspěvatel, musí být doprovázen příslušnými povoleními od relevantních držitelů autorských práv. Jakýkoliv potenciální konflikt autorských práv pro dříve publikovaná díla, na kterých jsou založeny příspěvky, musí být jasně oznámen redaktorům prostřednictvím e-mailu v době podání nebo co nejdříve poté.

Korektury: na fázi korektur mohou být změněny pouze zásadní typografické nebo faktické chyby. Jakékoli větší revize nebo podstatné doplnění textu ve fázi korektur budou ignorovány, pokud nebyl dán předchozí souhlas vydavatele. Vydavatel si vyhrazuje právo účtovat autorům poplatky za opravu netypografických chyb.

Odbitky: papírové odbitky nejsou poskytovány, ale autorům bude poskytnut elektronický pdf soubor jejich publikovaného článku pro jejich osobní použití za podmínek licenční smlouvy k publikaci. Tiskové odbitky mohou být zakoupeny za náklady ve fázi korektur.

#### Akademické psaní: Jazyk a styl

V Knihovně USC jsou některé klíčové body, které vám pomohou rozvíjet váš akademický styl psaní.

## Jazyk

Články a abstrakty by měly být psány v angličtině nebo v jazycích EU s akademickou úrovní znalosti.

## Struktura a délka článku

Článek založený na struktuře IMRAD. Strukturální prvky článku by měly být Abstrakt, Úvod, Metodologie, Hlavní část, Závěr, Reference a Přílohy (pokud je to nutné). Hlavní část je obvykle rozdělena do několika pododstavců, neboť článek by měl obsahovat přehled relevantních faktických pozadí, doktrín, širšího kontextu, analýzu problémů; výsledky autora, diskusi a nástin dalších studií.

Délka článku by obvykle měla být minimálně 4 000 slov včetně abstraktu a seznamu referencí. Kratší nebo delší práce mohou být na uvážení redaktorů zváženy jako výjimka.

## Abstrakt

Abstrakt článku by měl mít přibližně 1800 znaků a měl by být doplněn 6-10 klíčovými slovy.

## Úvod

Tato sekce zdůrazňuje aktuální stav studovaného problému na globální úrovni, analyzuje nejnovější výzkumy a publikace s odkazy na vědecké publikace za poslední 3-5 let. Relevance, cíl, úkoly a novost studie jsou odůvodněny. Odkazy na literaturu musí být uvedeny v kulatých závorkách. Tato sekce je nepovinná a měla by obsahovat výsledky výzkumu vědců, kteří analyzovali určité aspekty tématu. Každé jméno výzkumníka musí být doprovázeno příslušným odkazem ze seznamu referencí.

## Materiály a metody

Tato sekce popisuje hlavní etapy studie a odůvodňuje výběr metod, technik, přístupů nebo akcí použitých k získání nových vědeckých výsledků. Jsou vysvětleny strategie a kritéria pro výběr vzorků (pokud článek obsahuje empirickou část), je poznamenán experimentální základ studie. Uvedená metodologie by měla poskytnout úplný obraz o průběhu výzkumu tak, aby jej mohli opakovat i další vědci s použitím stejných materiálů a metod. Tato sekce je vyžadována ve struktuře vědeckého článku.

## Výsledky a diskuse

Tato sekce prezentuje hlavní materiál studie s plným odůvodněním získaných vědeckých výsledků. Tabulkové nebo grafické materiály jsou nezbytně doprovázeny výsledky zpracování statistických dat. Zdroje jsou umístěny pod tabulkami a obrázky. Měly by se vyhnout hodnotícím soudům, stejně jako prvkům popisu metodologie a přímému opakování dat prezentovaných v tabulkách a grafickém materiálu v textu článku. Numerické výsledky by měly být zaokrouhleny v souladu s ustálenými pravidly, s ohledem na průměrnou chybu výzkumu, interval spolehlivosti nebo rozložení hodnot. Výsledky výzkumu musí být dostatečně podloženy, metodologicky správné, mít novost a praktickou hodnotu.

Diskuse by měla být založena na interpretaci výsledků výzkumu. Do úvahy jsou zahrnuty nejdůležitější vědecké fakty, s ohledem na předchozí data a analýzy, v souladu s literárními zdroji o aktuálním stavu problému s odkazy na práce podobného směru výzkumu prováděné v jiných zemích.

## Závěry

Závěry by měly plně a konkrétně odrážet výsledky výzkumu, odpovídat účelu a názvu studie, doslovné opakování v abstraktu je nepřijatelné. Je důležité uvést perspektivy dalšího výzkumu na vybrané téma.

## Poděkování

Tato sekce je určena k vyjádření vděčnosti jednotlivcům nebo organizacím za veškerou možnou technickou pomoc, nápady, finanční (materiální) podporu, která umožnila výzkum atd.

Pokud nemáte žádná poděkování, uveďte „Žádné“.

## Střet zájmů

Autoři by měli zveřejnit všechny potenciální zdroje střetu zájmů. Jakýkoliv zájem nebo vztah, finanční nebo jiný, který by mohl být vnímán jako ovlivňující objektivitu autora, je považován za potenciální zdroj střetu zájmů. Tyto je nutné zveřejnit, když jsou přímo relevantní nebo přímo související s prací, kterou autoři popisují ve svém rukopise. Existence střetu zájmů nevyklučuje publikaci. Pokud autoři nemají žádný

střet zájmů k prohlášení, musí to také uvést při podání a zahrnout prohlášení v sekci Poděkování. Je odpovědností odpovídajícího autora projednat tuto politiku se všemi autory a kolektivně při podání zveřejnit VŠECHNY relevantní komerční a jiné vztahy. Zjištění nedostatečného zveřejnění střetu zájmů při podání nebo během procesu recenze může vést k odmítnutí rukopisu nebo jiným sankcím pro autory.

### **Citace v textu a reference**

Citace v textu a odkazy v bibliografii musí splňovat požadavky APA-Style.

Odkazy na literaturu se v textu článku uvádějí v závorkách a skládají se z příjmení autora a roku vydání.

Reference na konci článku by měly být latinizovány. Při uvádění bibliografických odkazů na články psané cyrilicí (včetně ukrajinských a ruských) publikované v časopisech a almanaších, důrazně doporučujeme následující strukturu referencí:

Jméno autora/autoři (transliterované); původní název článku transliterovaný latinskými symboly a jeho anglický překlad v hranatých závorkách [ ]; původní název zdroje transliterovaný latinskými symboly a jeho anglický překlad v hranatých závorkách [ ]; údaje o vydavateli v angličtině.

V Referencích, při uvádění města vydání jak v anglických, tak i cyrilských zdrojích, by mělo být jméno města uvedeno v angličtině, zatímco název vydavatelství by měl být transliterován.

Pro automatickou transliteraci cyrilských zdrojů můžete použít následující zdroje: <http://www.translit.ru> – pro zdroje v ruštině; a <https://slovnyk.ua/translit.php> — pro zdroje v ukrajinštině.

Pro vaše pohodlí můžete níže vidět příklady uspořádání bibliografických popisů zdrojů a literatury podle typu zdroje; každý je uveden ve dvou formátech postupně: první je příklad poznámky pod čarou; druhý je příklad uspořádání stejného zdroje v Referencích.

Ilustrace k článkům (grafika, obrázky a diagramy) by měly být předloženy ve formátu TIFF nebo PDF (každý obrázek v samostatném souboru).

### **Podání článků**

Článek by měl být zaslán Redakční kanceláři v elektronické podobě ve formátu Microsoft Word ve dvou souborech.

#### **1. Titulní strana, která obsahuje:**

název článku;  
jméno, příjmení autora/autorů, příslušnost a pozice;  
kontaktní údaje autora/autorů: e-mailová adresa, ORCID číslo;  
abstrakt článku (podle Abstraktu).

#### **2. Anonymizovaný článek (bez uvedení informací o autorovi), který obsahuje:**

název v jazyce článku;  
abstrakt článku;  
klíčová slova;  
hlavní text článku.

#### **Adresa pro korespondenci:**

E-mail: [admedit@eppd13.cz](mailto:admedit@eppd13.cz)

Web: <http://eppd13.cz>;

<https://interscience.press/cs/o-nas/>

#### **Adresa:**

ENIGMA CORPORATION, spol. s r.o., Druzstevni ohoz 1717/5a, Nusle, 140 00 Praha 4

## Become a Contributor for the Journal

### EUROPEAN POLITICAL AND LAW DISCOURSE

The Journal is issued 6 times per year.

#### Requirements to manuscripts

Scientific journal «European political and law discourse» invites Sc.Ds, Ph.Ds, young scientists (postgraduates, doctorates and master degree seekers), specializing in various branches of Legal and Political Science, Social Communications, International Relations and Sociology to cooperation for publication of scientific articles.

The editorial board of the journal «European political and law discourse» accepts for consideration and publishes the following types of articles:

empirical article – an article based on the IMRAD structure. Articles of this type should contain an original interpretation of the analysed data;

theoretical article – an article whose structure depends on its content and in which, based on the analysis of scientific literature, new theoretical provisions are developed and put forward that contribute to the development. Articles of this type may include: original theories, clarification, supplementation and criticism of existing theoretical constructs and concepts, comparison of different theories, criticism and development of methodological approaches;

review article – a scientific work that systematises and analyses existing research in a particular scientific field in order to provide a comprehensive view of the current state of knowledge, identify unresolved issues and determine the prospects for further research. Review articles are important for updating the scientific community on achievements and trends in the agricultural sector, as well as for helping researchers to formulate their own research questions and hypotheses.

case study – a type of scientific article that usually describes a specific case, situation, event or object with detailed analysis and context. This type of article is used to scrutinise a specific phenomenon or phenomena to understand its nature, causes, consequences and possible solutions.

Authors should follow the paper preparation guidelines below. Submissions that do not follow these guidelines will be sent back to authors, which will delay the review process. Repeated submission of papers that do not meet our standards may result in rejection.

No preference shall be given to submissions in respect of the professional rank or affiliation of the author. Submissions from younger scholars and authors in developing and newly developed countries are warmly encouraged.

For open access articles, the form also sets out the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International under which the article is made available to end users: a fundamental principle of open access is that content should not simply be accessible but should also be freely re-usable. Articles will be published under a Creative Commons Attribution license (CC-BY) by default. This means that the article is freely available to read, copy and redistribute, and can also be adapted (users can ‘remix, transform, and build upon’ the work) for any non-commercial purpose, as long as proper attribution is given.

Any material subject to copyright restrictions other than those owned or controlled by the contributor must be accompanied by appropriate permissions from the relevant copyright holder(s). Any potential conflict of copyrights for previously published works on which submissions are based must be clearly notified to the Editors via email at the time of submission or as soon as possible thereafter.

Proofs: only essential typographical or factual errors may be changed at proof stage. Any major revisions or substantive additions to the text at proofs stage will be disregarded, unless prior consent has been given by the publisher. The publisher reserves the right to charge authors for correction of non-typographical errors.

Offprints: no paper offprints are provided, but authors will be provided with an electronic pdf file of their published article for their personal use subject to the conditions of the license to publish form. Print offprints may be purchased at cost at proof stage.

#### Academic Writing: Language and Style

In USC Library (<https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/academicwriting>) are some key points to help you develop your academic writing style. Authors are encouraged to follow these tips.

**Language**

Papers and abstracts should be written in English or languages of EU with an academic level of proficiency.

**Paper Structure and Length**

Article based on the IMRAD structure. Structural elements of a paper should be Abstract, Introduction, Methodology, Main Body, Conclusion, References, and Annexes (if necessary). Main Body usually divided into a few subparagraphs as a paper should include an overview of relevant background facts, doctrines, wider context, analysis of issues; author's results, discussion and outlines of further studies.

The length of a paper should normally be a minimum of 4,000 words, including the abstract and references list. Shorter or longer works may be considered at the Editors' discretion as an exception.

**Abstract**

The Abstract of a paper should be about 1800 symbols and should be supplied with 6-10 keywords.

**Introduction**

The section highlights the current state of the problem under study at the global level, analyses the latest research and publications with links to scientific publications over the past 3-5 years. The relevance, purpose, objectives and the novelty of the study are substantiated. References to literature must be given in round brackets. This section is optional and should contain the results of research by scientists who analysed certain aspects of the subject matter. Each name of the researcher must be accompanied by a corresponding reference from the list of references.

**Materials and Methods**

The section describes the main stages of the study and justifies the choice of the methods, techniques, approaches, or actions used to obtain new scientific research results. The strategies and criteria for sampling (if the article contains an empirical part) are explained, the experimental basis of the study is noted. The stated methodology should provide a complete picture of the research progress so that it can be repeated by other scientists with the use of the same materials and methods. The section is required in the structure of a scientific article.

**Results and Discussion**

The section presents the main material of the study with full justification of the scientific results obtained. Tabular or graphical materials are necessarily accompanied by the results of statistical data processing. Sources are placed under tables and figures. Value judgments should be avoided, as well as the elements of the description of the methodology and direct repetition of the data presented in the tables and graphic material in the text of the article. Numerical results should be rounded in accordance with established rules, taking into account the mean research error, confidence interval or distribution of values. Research results must be sufficiently substantiated, methodologically correct, have novelty and practical value.

The discussion should be based on the interpretation of the research results. The most important scientific facts established are involved in the consideration, taking into account the previous data and analysis, in accordance with the literary sources on the current state of the problem with references to the works of a similar direction of research conducted in other countries.

**Conclusions**

Conclusions should fully and specifically reflect the results of research, correspond to the purpose and title of the study, word-by-word duplication in the abstract is unacceptable. It is important to indicate the prospects for further research on the selected topic.

**Acknowledgements**

The section is for expression of gratitude to individuals or organisations for all possible technical assistance, ideas, financial (material) aid, which made the research possible, etc.

If you have no Acknowledgements, state "None".

**Conflict of Interest**

Authors should disclose all potential sources of conflict of interest. Any interest or relationship, financial or otherwise that might be perceived as influencing an author's objectivity is considered a potential source

of conflict of interest. These must be disclosed when directly relevant or directly related to the work that the authors describe in their manuscript. The existence of a conflict of interest does not preclude publication. If the authors have no conflict of interest to declare, they must also state this at submission and include a statement in the Acknowledgements section. It is the responsibility of the corresponding author to review this policy with all authors and collectively to disclose with the submission ALL pertinent commercial and other relationships. Discovery of the failure to adequately disclose a conflict of interest at submission or during the review process may result in the rejection of a manuscript or other author sanctions.

### **Citations in the text and References**

Citations in the text and Bibliography references must meet the requirements of the APA-Style.

Referencing to the literature makes in the text of paper in brackets and consist of the Authors Surname and year of publication.

References at the end of the article should be Latinized. When making bibliographic references to Cyrillic (including Ukrainian and Russian) articles, published in journals and almanacs, we strongly recommend the following structure of references:

Name of author/authors (transliterated); original title of the article transliterated by Latin symbols and its English translation in square brackets [ ]; original title of the source transliterated by Latin symbols and its English translation in square brackets [ ]; publisher's imprint information in English.

In References, when indicating a city of publication both in English and Cyrillic sources, the name of the city should be given in English, while the name of the publishing house should be transliterated.

For automatic transliteration of Cyrillic sources, you can use the following resources <http://www.translit.ru> – for sources in Russian; and <https://slovnyk.ua/translit.php> — for sources in Ukrainian.

For your convenience, below you can see examples of arranging bibliographic descriptions of sources and literature organized by source type; each one is given in two formats sequentially: the first one is the footnote example; the second is the example of arranging the same source in References.

Illustrations to articles (graphics, images and diagrams) should be submitted in the TIFF or PDF format (each image in a separate file).

### **Submission of Papers**

The paper should be submitted to the Editorial Office in electronic form in a Microsoft Word format in two files.

1) Title page, which includes:

- a title of the paper;
- name, surname of the author(s), affiliation, and position;
- contact details of the author(s): email address, ORCID number;
- abstract of the paper (according to the Abstract).

2) Anonymized paper (without specifying the information about the author) which includes:

- a title in the language of the paper;
- abstract of the paper;
- key words;
- a main text of the paper.

#### **Address for service:**

E-mail: [admedit@eppd13.cz](mailto:admedit@eppd13.cz)

Web: <http://eppd13.cz>;

<https://interscience.press/cs/o-nas/>

#### **Mailing Address:**

ENIGMA CORPORATION, spol. s r.o., Druzstevni ohoz 1717/5a, Nusle, 140 00 Praha 4