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**HORIZON EUROPE**  
Office in Ukraine



**NATIONAL RESEARCH  
FOUNDATION  
OF UKRAINE**

## Report about the Webinar

### “Ukraine: Developing Transnational Access to European Research Infrastructures in the Social Sciences and Humanities”

October 1, 2024, 9-13h, Online

#### Short Summary

The webinar was a joint endeavour of the ESFRI Strategy Working Group on Social Sciences and Humanities, together with SSHOC, the Horizon Europe Office in Ukraine, and the National Research Foundation of Ukraine.

It follows up a webinar on Scientific Data about Society in Ukraine, also organised by the ESFRI SWG SSH together with the European Alliance of the Social Sciences and Humanities (EASSH), in May 2023, which received a lot of interest by the Ukrainian and European social sciences and humanities (SSH) research infrastructures community. The ESFRI SWG SSH decided to continue its activities with Ukraine.

At the webinar, Ukrainian researchers, research managers, research funders and policy makers involved in European research infrastructures in SSH presented their projects and their challenges with developing research infrastructures in Ukraine. The aim was to discuss challenges, for instance in the field of data collection, data archiving and data access for the social sciences and humanities including tools and collaborations to understand the dynamics of the Ukrainian diaspora across European countries. As discussants, the Directors of four European research infrastructures provided their perspectives. Then followed a session on the support of Ukrainian participation in European research infrastructures with speakers from the Horizon Europe Office in Ukraine, the European Commission (DG RTD), the EURIZON project (European network for developing new horizons for research infrastructures) and an example from a national research funder (NWO from the Netherlands).

The webinar gathered over 100 participants, the majority of which was Ukrainian (living in Ukraine and in other parts of Europe), as well as researchers, research infrastructure managers and policymakers from all over Europe.

## Detailed report

All presentations available here: [Link](#).

In their **welcoming words**, **Hanna Snellman**, Chairwoman of the ESFRI Strategy Working Group on Social Sciences & Humanities and (ESFRI SWG SSH) and **Bonnie Wolff-Boenisch**, Chairwoman of SSHOC (Social Sciences and Humanities Open Cloud) emphasised the importance to keep Ukraine and Ukrainian researchers involved in European ESFRI research infrastructure discussions. Both ESFRI and SSHOC can offer numerous ways how this can be achieved. **Zoia Petrenko**, representative of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and **Olga Polotska**, Executive Director of the National Research Foundation of Ukraine, expressed their gratitude for the possibility to take part in this webinar.

**Zoia Petrenko** is Head of the expert group on issues of development and work with research and critical infrastructure of the Science Development Directorate of the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science. Her expert group estimates the current costs of damaged scientific research institutions to approximately 1.3 billion US dollar until now. The Ukrainian ministry adopted nine priorities in March 2024 with the goal to be accomplished by 2027. One of the priorities is R&I infrastructure development. The ministry makes all efforts despite the war to support scientists who work in Ukraine. A Horizon Europe Policy and Support Facility (PSF) project is starting in Ukraine to improve to Ukrainian research and innovation system. Policy and management capacity of research infrastructures are part of it.

**Olga Polotska** is the Executive Director of the National Research Foundation of Ukraine and emphasised the importance of such webinars for Ukraine. Access to research infrastructures for Ukraine has always been important, but after the full-scale invasion of Russia even more. The extent of damage of R&I infrastructure at the end of the war is of course not yet known. She appreciated the focus of the webinar on the SSH because in current circumstances Ukraine is currently focusing more on the reestablishment or preservation of facilities and equipment, with a focus on energy equipment. It is not easy for Ukrainian researchers to reach out to Horizon Europe-projects to participate and she encouraged everyone to involve Ukrainian researchers where possible.

In the first block of presentations on **examples of current initiatives and reflections from ESFRI-research infrastructures**, Ukrainian researchers presented their research infrastructure-related activities. **Olha Kanishcheva**, K-centre manager from CLARIN started with presenting the K-centre for Ukrainian NLP and corpora (see slides). **Sofia Diyak** from the Center for Urban History in Lviv spoke about the center's activities in the context of EHRI (see slides). **Olena Kaminska**, Research Fellow at Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) of the University of Essex talked about current challenges of building social science research infrastructures in Ukraine (see slides). Co-operations exist with Germany and Poland as regards

refugees from Ukraine in these countries. Collaboration with other European countries will be sought. However funding is a challenge and many programmes are not suited for short-term, emergency-related research proposals or data collection initiatives. In the pursuing discussion several funding options from different European funding agencies were discussed.

**Tymofii Brik**, Rector of the Kyiv School of Economics, is the National Coordinator of ESS in Ukraine and spoke about preparing and conducting data collection for the ESS in Ukraine. The 10<sup>th</sup> ESS wave was conducted before the war and work on the 11<sup>th</sup> wave with funding from the UK ESRC is still ongoing. Ukraine will participate in ESS Round 12 as well, however funding still needs to be established.

**Olga Zhmurko** works at the Czech Social Science Data Archive and presented activities from the Kyiv Data Archive, which was founded in 2015 by charitable funds. Even after the outbreak of war, the Archive continues its work. However, it is impacted by electricity and security challenges as well as methodological challenges such as the definition of the general population or the disruption of phone service in occupied territories (the main mode of surveys often is telephone interview).

The statements by **Bonnie Wolff-Boenisch**, Director of CESSDA ERIC, **Darja Fišer**, Director of CLARIN ERIC, **Reto Speck** Co-Director of EHRI, **Angelika Scheuer**, Deputy Director External of ESS ERIC, can be summarised as follows:

A networking and coordination platform for Ukraine could be envisaged, that could be modelled in a similar way as the European platform SSHOC, that connects research infrastructures in SSH. In this way, synergies and complementarities of infrastructures like ESS, SHARE, GGP or CLARIN and EHRI could be pursued from the beginning of their establishment in Ukraine. Another example was the possibility to make use of the availability of learning programmes for data-archiving by Ukrainian researchers.

The focus should not only be on how European researchers are helping Ukrainian researchers but also on how other Europeans are benefitting from Ukraine's involvement and from the input of Ukrainian data in archives and data collections. It is essential to work and improve now, so that when the war is over the community can develop faster. Transfer of knowledge needs to be ensured, on methodological level as well as technical knowledge needed to run research infrastructures. Such knowledge is also necessary on the policy level. Ukraine (and this goes as well for many other European countries) need support and improvement on how to establish national research infrastructure roadmaps.

EHRI is a prominent example to show the high importance for the inclusion of Ukraine in European research infrastructures. Many archives with documents from the Holocaust are in Ukraine and its data, researchers and institutions are very important for Europe as a whole.

For Ukraine to become a member of an ERIC, the function and processes of the Ukrainian Science ministry in the research landscape should be strengthened. It is also important that the research community understands their role. It would be very valuable to have Ukraine on board as a permanent member in several SSH research infrastructures, because Ukraine has many excellent methodologist.

There are organisational and legal barriers. For ESS for example, it was easier for Ukraine to be a member before ESS was established as a legal entity in the form of an ERIC (European Research Infrastructure Consortium) in 2014. Now, ten years after the establishment as an ERIC, ESS has reached the number of members it had before becoming an ERIC. Fieldwork in Ukraine is easy to conduct and personal interviews are the preferred choice. This is different to many other European countries. It can be seen as a positive signal showing the interest of the Ukrainian population.

Further discussions by participants showed that the main problems Ukraine currently faces in the SSH research infrastructure field is the lack of (technical) personnel due to low salaries, the lack of funding and the lack of data sharing practices as well as missing political support.

The next block of presentations concentrated on **support for Ukrainian participation in European research infrastructures**. **Igor Taranov**, Head of the Horizon Europe Office in Ukraine, presented the newly established office in Kyiv, which is fully funded by the European Commission. The main objective of this hub for National Contact Points for Horizon Europe is to boost Ukrainian participation in the EU research framework programme since Ukraine's association to Horizon Europe. Funding for research infrastructures in Ukraine has been well established in Horizon 2020 and continues in Horizon Europe. Institutions in the social sciences and humanities could, however, be encouraged further to actively participate in project applications.

**Frederik Sondergaard** from the European Commission, DG RTD stated that the European Commission encourages participation of Ukraine overall in Horizon Europe in order to raise excellence both at the European and Ukrainian side. He encouraged researchers to get in touch with the Horizon Europe Office in Kyiv. The focus of the Commissions' activities with Ukraine are on accession and on reconstruction. He spoke about ongoing projects that target Ukraine, for example the future Coordination and Support Action "Accessing the state of Ukrainian Research Infrastructure", the Horizon Europe mission on climate-neutral and smart cities, and the inclusion of Ukrainian cities to the city mission in Horizon Europe.

**Greta Facile** presented experiences with the call for fellowships "Remote Research Grants for Ukrainian Researchers" that was launched as part of the EURIZON project. The demand was huge, more than 780 applications were received. The initial budget was tripled and finally 4.5 million Euro were provided by the European Commission. The applications came from research

institutions all over Ukraine with the majority from Kyiv, Kharkiv and Lviv. Thematically the most applications were from physics and engineering, followed by environment and social sciences and humanities. EU-partner institutions were mostly from Poland, Germany and France. The experience was, that it was easy to find collaboration partners in Europe as European scientists were very willing to cooperate. It was highlighted that programmes funding Ukrainian scientists are urgently needed and a flexibility and quick adaptability due to the fast changing context is crucial. For the future Eurizon is planning a mapping of the status and of the needs for capacity building of Ukrainian Research Infrastructures, an activity that will be conducted in collaboration with the NRFU.

**Barbara Dammers-Szenadi** from the Dutch Research Council NWO was invited to present the perspective of a national research funder that launched a call for cooperations with Ukraine. She gave an overview about the Hop-On Call for Researchers based in Ukraine from 2023, a partnership between NWO and NRFU. 13 grants were awarded to a variety of disciplines. Learnings from the call were the need for clear and open communication. She said that next time it would be better to plan for more time to spread the information in the research community in Ukraine. Because of the current challenges like power outages, unstable internet, etc. researchers cannot access the information as quickly as expected.

**Tetiana Stepura**, Professor at the Department of Business Economics and Investment at the Lviv Polytechnic National University followed with her practical experience as a successful applicant to the Hop-On call from NWO (with the project "Working Democracy. A philosophy of work for democratic societies"). She highlighted the challenge of migration of researchers due to the war as well as the good progress in the development of research infrastructures in Ukraine. Lacking language skills and working experience are some of the barriers in the field. From her perspective needs for further development are courses on data management, data security, ethics of research, intellectual property or sustainable development for scientists. Matchmaking activities for calls and programmes would also be necessary as well as more communication and more transparency in the evaluation of proposals.

**Matthias Reiter-Pázmándy**, the representative of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Europe in the research infrastructures of CESSDA and SHARE, summarized some findings from the webinar and its discussion: The focus on research infrastructures in the social sciences and humanities is useful in order to address their specific challenges and opportunities. The field needs further awareness in Ukraine. A major challenge is the lack of funds. Some opportunities have been created on European level as well as some bilateral initiatives in EU Member States, however more efforts are needed. Another huge challenge is research infrastructure personnel. Useful models how to support Ukrainian research infrastructures with capacity building and support mechanisms for personnel have been tested in some research infrastructures. In this area, European research infrastructures can support with models that include in-kind contributions by partners, etc. Cooperation to build a community of social

sciences and humanities research infrastructure people would be very helpful. Maybe researchers and institutions can join together to create synergies in the participation in European SSH research infrastructures in a similar model like the SSHOC platform. A mapping exercise in Ukraine could be another useful measure, either by research infrastructures individually or overall for the Ukrainian social sciences and humanities research infrastructure landscape. Last but not least, the contact to the policy side is necessary. First steps were taken with the support of representatives of the NRFU and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in the webinar.

