

GLOBSEC Shows Support in Ukraine

On May 5, a GLOBSEC delegation led by President Róbert Vass alongside national parliamentarians from Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, and Poland visited Kyiv. In addition to showing its solidarity with Ukraine, and its people, in its fight against Russian aggression, a key objective of the trip was to hear from Ukrainian politicians and civil society. Getting a firsthand account of what Ukraine needs in this challenging time is crucial to understanding how both GLOBSEC and respective nations can continue to support the country. Furthermore, the delegation wished to promote the cause of both Ukraine's candidate status and its future EU membership, as well as to galvanize support of European parliaments.

"Now more than ever, it is crucial to show support to Ukraine in-person and signal to Russia we are not afraid of their bullying. We owe the people of Ukraine everything in Europe. Organizing this delegation with national parliamentarians from various EU members was one way for GLOBSEC to repay their efforts where we still have much to do," declared GLOBSEC President Róbert Vass.



Leaving from Przemysl, Poland the delegation travelled overnight to Kyiv. Upon arriving, a series of strategic meetings was held at the Verkhovna Rada, which included meetings with First Deputy Chairman Oleksandr Korniyenko, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee Oleksandr Merezhko, Chair of the Committee on European Integration Ivanna Klymush-Tsyntsadze, and Deputy Head of the Committee Mariia Mezentsseva. The meetings proved valuable to not only intensify existing channels of parliamentary diplomacy but also as an opportunity for the Ukrainian parliamentarians to reiterate the need to hold Russia accountable for war crimes,

advocate for stronger sanctions, and lobby support for EU candidate status. At the end of the sessions, members of the Verkhovna Rada were presented with the GLOBSEC Medal for their tireless efforts to defend democracy and freedom.



Following the meetings, the delegation visited both Bucha and Borodyanka and paid their respect to the victims of Russian violence. Bucha's Deputy Mayor, Taras Shapravskiy and Father Andrei recounted the horrors of Russia's temporary occupation and the lasting damage they had caused to the civilian psyche. In the rubble of Taras Shevchenko square in Borodyanka, Acting Mayor Georgiy Yerko recounted the toll of military attacks and indiscriminate destruction to residential buildings. Speaking to locals, the trauma of the events remains an open scar, and one that will take considerable time to heal.

The next day on May 6, the GLOBSEC delegation heard from additional strategic government policy makers. They met with Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Olha Stefanyshyna. The Vice Prime Minister outlined the implications of the new phase of the war and how Russia is specifically looking to demoralize Ukrainian citizens to question the competency of the government to keep them safe as a strategy to accelerate advantage peace talks. The delegation then heard from the Deputy Chief of European Affairs, Office of the President of Ukraine, Ihor Zhovkva. Much of the discussion focused on Ukraine's European path and how the government is making every effort to implement reform and meet European standards when it comes to the single market despite the ongoing war. To end the morning sessions, a detailed military briefing was provided by a representative

of the Ukrainian armed forces. The briefing focused on Russian military intentions in the southeast of the country and the desire for Russia to render Ukraine a landlocked country by cutting off their access to the Black Sea.



Following lunch, the delegation walked to Kyiv City Hall. Along the way, they witnessed Maidan Square, makeshift victim memorials at the Alley of the Havens Hundred from the 2014 Revolution of Dignity, and the heavy fortifications across the city. At the start of the meeting, Mayor Vitali Klitschko stressed the precarious state of security across the Ukrainian capital and extended his sincere thanks to the delegation for the courage to visit despite the risks. He outlined the future of Kyiv, including the expected one-year timeline to remove all the dangerous debris across the city, the city's reconstruction plan, as well as the need for safe and sustainable energy sources. Material needs like ambulances and buses remain priorities for his administration to source. Mayor Klitschko emphasized the lingering threat of Russian saboteurs inside Kyiv, who still represent a significant threat to Ukraine's safety. Finally, he reiterated the city's spirit to bounce back even better and that Russia would never take the city. Mayor Klitschko was also awarded the GLOBSEC Medal.



After the visit to Kyiv City Hall, the delegation heard from a collection of Ukrainian NGOs and humanitarian organizations. The session yielded fruitful discussions where talks touched upon a host of issues, including but not limited to energy security,

humanitarian needs, security analysis, and media support. Looking to the future, GLOBSEC agreed to cooperate and work with these groups to ensure they were provided more resources to deliver their critical work.

In the late afternoon, the delegation was hosted by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba. From the halls of the Foreign Ministry, which has been without heat since the invasion started, Minister Kuleba outlined the challenges facing Ukraine's EU accession process and refused to accept supposed technical arguments as a legitimate reason for Ukraine's declined application process. Furthermore, he delivered a stark message in regard to Ukraine's paramount priority – the constant delivery of weapons. For Minister Kuleba, the arrival of weapons is an existential national question of survival where other issues, like prosecuting war crimes, are secondary issues at this given time. To round out the fact-finding mission, the delegation heard from emergency combat medics and toured the city center, including St. Michael's Cathedral.



The two-day trip by the GLOBSEC delegation was a transformative experience that served to provide a clearer sense to GLOBSEC, and national parliamentarians, of what Ukraine needs and how to provide it to them. It, furthermore, reminded participants of the liberties that we all take for granted and the high cost that Ukraine has paid for our societies to enjoy them. Consequently, based on the mission's findings, it is irrefutable that Ukraine and its people are undeniably European and deserve the dignity of members of our community. GLOBSEC will continue to use all of its resources at its disposal to help Ukraine survive and thrive.

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