



The Open Dialog Foundation's statement of 31 July 2017 (funding and donors, or a few words about 'soroses')

In connection with the information about allegedly mysterious sources of funding of the Open Dialog Foundation (the Foundation, ODF) currently publicised by pro-government and right-wing media, as well as pro-Russian portals and the right-wing blogosphere, I declare the following:

1. In full compliance with applicable law, ODF submits its annual financial reports (to the Tax Office and the National Court Register) and implementation reports (to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland). Desiring to additionally fulfill the rules of transparency (as well as the requirements of the rules of some grant competitions), we have published all the reports in detail on our websites: <http://odfoundation.eu/sprawozdania> (the page contains all reports issued since the beginning of the activity by ODF). Due to the nature of our activity (our priority is activity regarding other countries), we also strive to provide translation of the reports to foreign languages. The dates of publication of the reports aren't always identical with the date of their drafting; also, it happened that the documents for previous years required an adjustment in order to make the data more complete and more accurate. According to our procedures, approval of the Foundation's implementation statements and financial statements requires an appropriate resolution issued by the supervisory board - the Board of the Foundation. Each time, they are preceded by a presentation by the Management Board and subsequent discussion. In addition, ODF strives to present its [activities](#) and their [result](#) in the most comprehensive possible way (which is difficult due to the large scale of its activity). It should be added that until now, our reports have never aroused special interest of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
2. In connection with the specific nature of its activity, ODF has also carried out [additional reporting](#) regarding financial means collected through public fund-raisings and allocated primarily to the financing of humanitarian aid, and even presented its results at regular press conferences. Settlements of public fundraisers are available on the ODF's website and on the websites of [Portal Zbiórek Publicznych MSWiA](#) [The Public Fundraiser Portal of the Ministry of Interior and Administration]; all previous reports have been approved by the Ministry. Additional and detailed [descriptive](#) i [financial](#) reports concerning the humanitarian aid for Ukraine are also available on the ODF website.
3. We must also mention that in connection with our activity (and the interest that it evokes), over seven years we have been subjected to various types of inspections (by fiscal services, Social Insurance Institution [ZUS] or the National Labour Inspectorate [Państwowa Inspekcja Pracy]). We have made available all the documents, provided explanations and fulfilled our obligations. Our activity, due to its earlier publicity (due to the mission's presence on Maidan between 2013 and 2014, the high-profile 2014 case of the transfer of bulletproof vests to Ukraine, the defence of Oleg Sentsov, [Nadia Savchenko](#) and a number of other so-called 'hostages of the Kremlin'; the case of [Mukhtar Ablyazov](#); attacks on the "[Ukrainian World](#)" centre, a conflict with the 'Change' party, hateful comments in the Internet), resulted in wide scanning of our actions. As part of the proceedings, we have already dealt with various prosecutors in the country and, at their request, with the Polish Central Anti-Corruption Bureau [ABW] and the Central Investigative Bureau [Centralne Biuro Śledcze]. Yes, we have become accustomed to telephone tapping, but never before have ministers of the Polish government, driven by the agenda of nationalist and anti-

Ukrainian militias, have set fiscal control bodies on us or considered our delegalisation. That is why we see it as the beginning of an attack on the civil society.

4. As we have pointed out repeatedly, ODF is financed due to various donations and grants from individuals, companies and institutions both from Poland and abroad. So far, there were no entities belonging to the [Open Society Foundations](#) network, or a different type of institution controlled by American philanthropist George Soros among them. At the same time, the Foundation does not conceal that it has collaborated with the International Renaissance Foundation, a Ukrainian civil society development organisation founded by George Soros. The project, implemented jointly with the Renaissance Foundation (and with other partners) in 2014, pertained to trainings for Ukrainian entrepreneurs in connection with Ukraine's signing of an Association Agreement with the EU and the opening of the EU market for Ukraine. Of course, the Foundation also maintained contacts, in various circumstances, with people and organisations associated and financed by the Open Society Foundations or other initiatives associated with George Soros. We also dare say that this applies to a large part of the civil society in Poland and other EU countries as well as in Ukraine. The activity of George Soros and his organisation receives positive assessment.
5. The donations from the Google company, listed in the reports (Google Ireland Ltd.) are connected with the provision of online services under the AdGrants programme to non-governmental organisations; we are one of the beneficiaries of the programme. It allows, among others, the promotion of content created by the Foundation, such as our reports on the cases of Ukrainian hostages of the Kremlin, political refugees, reform of INTERPOL or [Ukrainian volunteer battalions](#) participating in the defence of the country against Russian aggression (otherwise censored by the Russian Agency for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Media, known as Roskomnadzor). We therefore fully confirm the information provided by a representative of Google on 30 July (in response to the speculation of the adviser to the President of Poland, Professor A. Zybortowicz). The annual value of services rendered, in accordance with the principles of financial reporting, is shown in the reports. On a similar basis, the report includes estimates of the value of access to the premises, given to the 'Ukrainian World' centre by the Municipality of Warsaw between 2014 and 2016. This is also an expression of our concern for the transparency of our actions.
6. The ODF does not, in principle, comment on the events of private life nor does it speculate on surnames, careers or professional connections, or the countries and places of origin of their individual donors. It should be emphasised that in some cases, discussing these issues is not practical for safety reasons (for example, there were more than 2,000 donors in 2014; also, it's impossible to identify donors who put their money in charity boxes). While complete donor lists are published on websites and we attach great importance to ensuring that the actions are as transparent as possible, we would like to emphasise that the key issue for us is efficiency in obtaining financial resources, their proper spending and achieving measurable and sustainable results consistent with ODF's statutory objectives. As stated above, the assertion that 'most ODF donors are anonymous' is misleading if the right context is not taken into account: it's about the microdonations coming to the charity boxes of our volunteers, which, by their very nature, are non-identifiable. This is the general nature of public fundraising. It is the same mechanism which is used by the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity as part of their actions. The number of donors, especially in the years 2014-15, could have been great, but the amounts (although significant) coming from them did not constitute the majority of the Foundation's income. In recent years, all major donors have been indicated by name in the reports.

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7. The Foundation does not conceal the fact that its donors include members of its management and supervisory bodies (including the undersigned) and their family members. This isn't new information and, as pointed out above, it has been officially published in the reports. Given the need to ensure the transparency of our activities, we do not generally conceal the identities of our donors, both individual and institutional; domestic and foreign. We often do not have the opportunity (and, usually, the habit) of verifying the source of their financial resources. We have no influence on the vicissitudes of their fate or their subsequent relationships, or conduct, or decisions made in certain circumstances in authoritarian countries and occupied territories. Last but not least, of course, the possibility of the existence of individual oppositionists and opposition circles, even in authoritarian countries, should be also taken into account. We are fully aware of the consequences that this can have: this is the price for transparency. For my wife ([Lyudmyla Kozlovska](#)) and me, the source of the funds transferred to the Foundation include our business activity and funds from my wife's family members. We all have tax obligations, we submit financial statements and make settlements with the tax authorities. We do not, however, consider appropriate, deliberate detailed discussions on the issue of our private finances and the biographies of each of our donors in public. This does not contribute to their comfort and, thus, may adversely affect their further support of ODF. However, our role in this regard is limited. I will reiterate: we attach great importance to transparency; a transparent list of donors (which gives almost unlimited field for speculation) may result in some consequences pertaining to the image and finances, and even affect our donors' safety. The effectiveness of our activities is an absolute priority for us: we do not carry out detailed verification of our donors and, most often, we have no way of verifying the sources of funds coming from our donors. These are general remarks that should be kept in mind when screening our donors.
 8. We blankly deny the receipt of the alleged 'Russian money' and cooperation with Russian arms companies which were labelled 'sensational sponsors' of the Foundation, as reported recently, among others, by TVP and the weekly 'Sieci'. The mysterious Petro Kozlovsky is the brother (not the father) of Lyudmila Kozlovska, the ODF President. He is a Ukrainian businessman from Sevastopol (now residing in the USA); previously, he owned, among others, the industrial complex 'Mayak' as well as other companies operating in Sevastopol and Crimea. Petro Kozlovsky also runs business in the telecommunications field (we also have business relations with him). According to the information indicated in the reports, along with the family and a group of friends, he financially supported our activity between 2013-2015. As early as in 2004, he was involved in supporting the Orange Revolution and other Ukrainian initiatives in Crimea. Similarly to many Ukrainian businesses, in 2014, his business was taken over by the Russian occupation authorities. Local Russian media accused him of supporting the banderism, and earlier - the Ukrainian *Batkivshchyna* party. It should be emphasised that, in the current situation, the Russian authorities, which may wish to discredit our activities, may present any documents indicating that we are financed exclusively from Russian sources. Similarly, Lyudmyla Kozlovska, a former resident of the Crimea, is considered by the Russian authorities to be a Russian citizen. Russian passports were automatically issued by the occupation authorities to many Ukrainian inhabitants of Crimea (also to those who have resided outside the peninsula for years), often without their consent, or even awareness. Meanwhile, Andrey Brovchenko, mentioned by the TVP in the material, and donations from him go back to 2013, i.e. the period before the occupation of Crimea and Sevastopol! As far as we know, he has nothing to do with the Russian armaments factory in St. Petersburg and Severodvinsk. We do not keep in contact with him and we do not know what he is doing at the moment. In all likelihood, Andrey Brovchenko, the ODF donor in 2013, is not the same person as the man who manages the aforementioned company in St. Petersburg, and the similarity of surnames is coincidental (as it's relatively popular). It is sad

to note that, in this way, TVP not only, in fact, recognises the occupation of Crimea by Russia legal, but even does it retroactively (sic!).

9. It should be added that ODF, as an apolitical organisation, has previously worked with a wide range of Polish politicians, including MPs and other members of the Law and Justice party (as mentioned in [the statement](#)). Our funding sources, available to the public, didn't pose a problem to them. What's more, they collaborated with us, among others, within the framework of projects financed from foreign sources, e.g. Mariusz Kamiński, as a former head of the CBA was one of the speakers sharing his experience in the fight against corruption in Poland with a visiting group of Ukrainian parliamentarians in Poland (including [Yehor Sobolev](#)). The project, implemented by the Ukrainian office of the Foundation (in which we formally act as a Ukrainian foundation '[Vidkryty Dialoh](#)'), was funded by USAID.
10. In the context of allegations of our connections with intelligence services: from 15 December 2014, ODF was the holder of a licence from the Ministry of Interior for conducting business activity in the field of trade in certain military or police products (in view of the need to provide bulletproof vests and protective helmets in humanitarian aid to Ukraine; they were also used by our volunteers, observers and journalists of Polish media in the so-called ATO zone). In order to obtain it, we have undergone the process of evaluation, among others, by the police, the ABW and the Military Counterintelligence Service. Members of the ODF governing bodies also underwent specialised training and psychological testing. The verification process ended successfully - [ODF received the licence](#). In this connection, we assume that the aforementioned institutions excluded the existence of ODF's potential dangerous actions and correlations (with intelligence services or such which go against the Polish national interest/security and public order), which we are accused of by the media involved in the current attack on NGOs and the civil society representatives in Poland which are critical of the government. As a result, the Foundation has successfully passed the police and MIA inspections in the second half of 2016 (that is, under the governance of Law and Justice party). On 12 June 2017, the Foundation lost its licence due to changes in the composition of its governing bodies (resignation of a member of the Management Board entitled to carry out the business activity within the scope of the licence). Due to the change of the situation and no further need for conducting the licenced activities, ODF did not complete the composition of the Management Board in order to retain the licence.
11. We have repeatedly issued statements about the alleged relationships with the Kazakhstani businessman and oppositionist Mukhtar Ablyazov. The unreliable and manipulative [article](#) in the weekly 'Wprost', frequently referred to by 'well-wishers', ended with a rectification posted under the text on a red background as a result of our lawsuit against the publisher and author. More detailed [information](#) is available on [the ODF websites](#) and the online portal [NGO.pl](#). Today, it is also well-known that the aforementioned article was based on half-truths and false quotes from some of the speakers and individuals referred to it, as well as dubious quality of the data of local (?) law enforcement agencies/security services which carried out the surveillance of the President of the Management Board of the Foundation Lyudmyla Kozlovska and her social activity in Sevastopol in previous years.
12. Given the broad spectrum and scale of its activities, the Foundation has become a victim of various attacks on the part of the security services of non-democratic states, pro-Russian environments (such as the 'Change' party), which accused us of... [insulting Vladimir Putin](#) and nationalist groups, also in the form of hate speech, threats, slander and many others. Our [last year's statement](#) refers to them.

13. The dissemination of false information that compromises the good name and public confidence in the Foundation will result in our firm response, including legal steps. In particular, we will respond to accusing us of having relationships with the Russian business and the state authorities with the intention of ascribing to us, links to Russia which involve cooperation with intelligence services, and actions carried out in the interest of the Russian Federation. The Open Dialog Foundation firmly supports (some even believe that our support is too radical) the territorial integrity of Ukraine, its defence and reform efforts, Ukraine's integration with the EU; from the very beginning, we have condemned and actively opposed Russian aggression. ODF's legal interests will be represented by Attorney [Wojciech Mądrzycki](#) and other law firms supporting us. We are experienced in this kind of matters. We are also filing reports to law enforcement agencies regarding the unprecedented scale of the xenophobic hatred and threats against our team members.

In our opinion, Poland's civil society is facing an unprecedented attack by state authorities. This is the price that critical organisations and activists (just like Free Citizens of Poland who have been subjected to surveillance and threatened by compulsory administration) pay for opposing the attempts to breach the Constitution and eliminate the rule of law in Poland. A massive campaign of disinformation and propaganda of state and pro-government media negatively influences the confidence in non-governmental organisations in Poland. We see that the current authorities are not only ideologically motivated in their actions (which is manifested even by controversial decisions regarding the receipt of funding for civil society initiatives); they also strive to eliminate independent environments as those which serve foreign (meaning: hostile) interests. This is another area that puts our country on a collision course with the EU. The subordination of NGOs and the elimination of disobedient organisations through financial and administrative harassment, and, finally, the oppression of their activists, are authoritative methods typical for authoritarian states: Putin's Russia, Belarus, and in recent years - also Hungary and Turkey. We will not allow it.

Bartosz Kramek, *Chairman of the Open Dialog Foundation*