

Ukrainians on the deportation of Lyudmyla Kozlovska from the EU and Poland: "Jaroslaw Kaczynski is Enemy of the Week in Ukraine and a laureate of the Order of Lenin."

"Poland was an example of democracy for us. Recent events indicate that this process is reversible."

"This is one of the black pages of our relationship."

"Jaroslaw Kaczynski is an enemy of the Week of Ukraine and a laureate of the Order of Lenin" – Ukrainian politicians, journalists and human rights activists do not mince their words on the decision of Poland to expel the Ukrainian president of the Open Dialog Foundation, Lyudmyla Kozlovska.

- Ukrainian politicians, journalists, and human rights defenders agree in their disgust at the deportation of Kozlovska from Poland and the EU.
- Politicians from several Ukrainian parties have asked the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry to obtain explanations from Poland.
- Ukrainian activists believe that Kozlovska's deportation was politically motivated and claim that this matter will worsen the already not-so-good relations between Ukraine and Poland

In Ukraine, the echoes of the expulsion of Lyudmyla Kozlovska, a well-known human rights defender from Poland and the EU, are still reverberating. The woman was detained late in the evening of August 13 at the airport in Brussels, where she flew to one of the offices of the Open Dialog Foundation she manages. The headquarters of the foundation, which deals with the defense of human rights in Russia, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Ukraine, is located in Warsaw, where Kozlovska lives with her husband and civic activist Bartosz Kramek.

At the airport in Brussels, Kozlovska learned that the head of the Office for Foreigners, at the request of an authorised body, had entered Kozlovska into the Schengen Information System (SIS), which allows persons crossing into the Schengen area to be checked. A day later, Kozlovska was sent by the Belgians on the first plane to Kiev without the right to enter the territory of the European Union.

Negative opinion of the Internal Security Agency. "Doubts about financing"

On Monday, August 20, the spokesman for the minister of special services coordinator Stanisław Żaryn presented a negative opinion of the Internal Security Agency regarding Lyudmyla Kozlovska's request for a long-term EU resident permit. As he explains in a statement published on Twitter, the ISA's opinion is connected with "serious doubts regarding the

financing of the Open Dialog Foundation managed by Lyudmyla Kozlovska, which may have further legal effects".

Currently residing in Kiev, Lyudmyla Kozlovska demands that the ISA disclose any information about her and the Foundation that the agency might have. "The ISA report is secret, because it has nothing to show," said Kozlovska the same day in a conversation with Onet. Making the reasons for Kozlovska's expulsion from Poland classified does not give her lawyers a chance to appeal. "Our lawyers have still not received any letter from the ISA," said Kozłowska, "so we are still officially not familiar with the opinion of the Internal Security Agency, as we can not appeal against the position of the spokesperson."

Kozlovska recalled that in earlier years all financial reports were accepted by the institutions appointed for this purpose and that the problems began when her husband undertook activities in favour of free courts and civil rights in Poland. "ISA's statement about a secret report stating that the financing of the Open Dialog Foundation is not clear is Mariusz Kaminski's personal political revenge on my husband, Bartosz Kramek," Kozlovska told Onet.

Outraged Ukraine. "Kaczynski is a laureate of the Order of Lenin"

Ukrainian public opinion is no less outraged. The leading English-language newspaper in the country "Kyiv Post" does not mince its words: "Jaroslaw Kaczynski, the president of Law and Justice, is (...) the enemy of the Week of Ukraine and the laureate of the Order of Lenin for a scandalous attack on the Ukrainian citizen activist," writes Euan MacDonald.

Support for Kozlovska and disappointment with the attitude of the Polish authorities are declared unanimously by politicians of the ruling party and opposition parties.

"This is one of the black pages of our relations [between Ukraine and Poland - ed.]," says Dmytro Bilotserkovets, deputy of the ruling party of the Petro Poroshenko Bloc "Solidarity" and a member of the Friendship Group between the Parliaments of Poland and Ukraine.

"Lyudmyla is the wife of a Polish citizen, so by expelling her, the family was separated. This is a terrible situation not only from the point of view of democracy, but also human rights. It is very important for us to receive the official position of the Polish side, because only then Lyudmyla will be able to defend her reasons in court. I know that for now, she can not get an official answer from Poland. It is very bad that the Polish side has not explained why this all had been done to her."

“It is a terrible news for us,” says Jehor Sobolev, a member of the opposition party of young reformers “Samopomich”. “For us Ukrainians, since many years Poland has been an extremely strong example of democracy built in a truly free society. Recent events, including the deportation of Lyudmyla Kozlovska, show that this process is reversible.”

Svitlana Zalishchuk, the deputy member of the opposition Democratic Alliance, uses even more powerful words. “It is scandalous,” he says. “Lyudmyla Kozlovska is a well-known defender of human rights in Ukraine. She is respected not only here, but also in the international environment. Her deportation disappointed me in the first place, but it also surprised me. How is it possible that Poland has done that to someone like this? I would really like to believe that this is a misunderstanding.”

Jehor Sobolev and Svitlana Zalishchuk submitted ministerial questions in the case of Kozlovska. “I asked the Ukrainian foreign minister to ask his Polish counterpart for the reasons for what happened and which violated the rights of a Ukrainian citizen,” says Sobolev.

“I wrote an interpellation to the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to learn from Polish institutions what happened and why the name of Kozlovska appeared in the Schengen Information System (SIS). I believe that this matter will be resolved positively, because if it does not, it will mean that it is the retaliation of the Polish government for the political activity of her husband,” adds Zaliszczuk.

Human rights defenders are protesting. "Politically motivated deportation"

The disappointment of Kozlovska deportation is expressed by leading human rights defenders in Ukraine. The largest non-governmental organizations issued a joint appeal in defense of their friend and withdrawal of her surname from SIS. "We consider the placing of Lyudmyla Kozlovska, the head of the Open Dialog Foundation, in the Schengen Information System (SIS) list and depriving her of her right to stay in the Schengen area as a dangerous precedent, which opens the way for a new type of prosecution of civic activists in the EU countries due to their public disagreement with the state policy of individual countries," representatives of 11 organizations write.

Placing Kozlovska in the SIS without any evidence, where there are criminals and terrorists, is completely incomprehensible to us,” says Oleksandra Matviychuk, president of the Center for Civil Liberties. “A discriminatory campaign against her, conducted in some Polish newspapers and social media, is also not supported by any evidence . All this leads us to the conclusion that the decision to deport her was politically motivated.”

“I was involved with her in the defense of human rights in Donbas and Kazakhstan and I consider her a person of unblemished reputation,” adds Oleksandr Pawlichenko from the Kharkiv Human Rights Group. “The last thing I would suspect her of would be that she is a threat to Poland's security or has contacts with unwanted environments like the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSS) or other services of Russia.”

Threatened Ukrainian–Polish relations. "Open discussion is needed"

Onet's interviewees emphasise that the matter of expelling Lyudmyla Kozlovska from Poland has a bad influence on the already tense relations between Kiev and Warsaw.

“For years, Polish citizens and the Polish government have supported Ukraine,” says Oleksandra Matviychuk from the Center for Civil Liberties. “We are very grateful to the Poles for the support we received during Euromaidan and against Russian aggression on our country. But now various incidents, including the expulsion of Lyudmyla Kozlovska, exert a chilling effect on our relations, which is bad for both Ukraine and Poland.”

“Whenever Poland and Ukraine were confronted, both countries lost their independence,” adds Jehor Sobolev from “Samopomich”. “Poland and Ukraine should be in friendly relations at all costs, because history teaches us that otherwise we will all end up as slaves of Russia. But of course, good relations will be impossible without an open and honest discussion about our problems, and in particular, problems related to freedom.”

The Embassy of Ukraine in Poland refused to comment on the article.

Link: <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/tylko-w-onecie/ukraincy-o-deportacji-z-ue-i-polski-ludmily-kozlowskiej/xel504d>