

**Meeting of the Ministers of Culture, Education, and Sports
April 4, 2022**

Speech by Oleksandr Tkachenko, Minister of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine:

I was born in Kyiv. And know what Babyn Yar means . When I was a child my grandpa brought me there to pray. He believed we are all humans and we all need to respect tragedy, despite I am Christian orthodox. Frankly speaking, at that moment I was thinking more about the football game in my yard. For me, it was a faraway story from my life, but I remembered that thousands of citizens of my city were killed simply because they were Jews. Now after Bucha I don't know what to think. Except for one thing - all of you now are witnesses of genocide against Ukrainians by putin's rashists regime.

Today, in Kyiv I hear sirens of missiles attacking several times a day. I am not thinking about safety in the bombshelter at all. I'm thinking about when we can finally get an aircraft or air defense systems, and tanks from our allies who declare the same democratic values.

Please, don't tell me about great russian ballet. Because millions of citizens in my country can tell you stories about killed civilians on Bucha streets and about 15 years old girls that were raped by rashists soldiers in front of their parents in Irpin. Or about hundreds of killed civilians just because they were Ukrainians. These towns are just 10 minutes far from Kyiv. We know about these facts because Ukrainian forces liberated these towns. But we don't know what is happening in Mariupol even now. And how many facts we don't know yet.

Anyone who refuses to know and study history is doomed to relive it once again. To understand what Putin will do next, we need to transfer to Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 1940s. Because the Putin regime has all the components of the fascist regime. What the Nazis did with Jewish people - now Russia is doing with Ukrainians. You will never see on Russia's propagandistic channels what happened yesterday in cities around Kyiv: Irpin, Gostomel, Worsel, and others. Instead, they probably show videos of zigging Russians who are supporting this war.

Putin claims that Ukraine is not a country, but a part of Russia. But why are people being killed from this part now? The answer is very simple: they believe they are above Ukrainians. The same is about fascism. Dictatorship and nationalism - it is a clear definition of Putin's regime. The main weapon of this regime is not a military threat - they are not so much strong as many in Europe were afraid of

before. Because Ukrainians are stronger, of course. Their main weapon of this propaganda is Russian TV channels and Russian ballet.

And I tell you why. In Russia, they switched off all opposition media, Facebook, and Twitter. But they still have their propagandistic channels on-air across EU, which are killing people in my country. And my first request and the main one - to impose sanctions and switch off all their channels from your satellite platforms and cables network. And replace them with Ukrainian one. You can do like our colleagues in Lithuania and Poland, these countries have done it already

We talk about culture so much.

As ministers of different countries, we want to support and develop it. Because culture is about creating a new person, a new society, and creating the future. But not in the time of fascism. Adolf Hitler used all kinds of art, making them an instrument of propaganda for the Third Reich. Putin's Russia is doing the same now.

Pay attention to the composition of the speakers at the official concert, which was broadcasted in Russia throughout the country, or to the speakers who are used to legitimize the invasion of Ukraine. These are actors, composers, presenters, media personalities, and rappers. Almost all members of the modern creative economy are involved in the same way as architecture was used in Nazi Germany to bring a person into a certain emotional state.

Putin now has several audiences, two of which are major. Internal, which is closed in Russia and has been fed with propaganda for 20 years. And the second, which is less controlled, but no less important, - is the whole world. People like you and citizens of your countries. Putin needs to manipulate mass opinion and bring chaos, which is followed by war. To do this, special operations are carried out, with the help of media and culture, this propaganda is promoted. Music, literature, songs, and movies are becoming tactical weapons.

In the second month of the war, the question of culture became extremely important not just like that. Because it was Putin's culture and all its folk artists and propagandists that urged Muscovite society to go to this war. They carefully, step by step, built the fascist ideology of a great race that must either subdue or wipe out those who disobey. Other countries, nations, cultures ... This is not about unity in diversity, but total subordination. Those who are not with us must die. This is confirmed by Putin, who says that culture is "the only effective tool" to convey the "truth about the Russian world." Like Goebbels, who portrayed the same voice of Nazi truth for the media, so do Russian channels combined now.

And the Russians now take the position: "no Russophobia", "do not limit Russian culture and people." When people in Ukraine die from their fellow citizens, they try to show themselves as victims. I urge you not to be manipulated! What they fear most are sanctions. Because sanctions work. No matter what they say to the general public that they don't care.

But sanctions are different. The first - is economic. I would like to remind you at once that there is still no embargo on Russian oil and gas, SWIFT payments for all Russian banks have not been cut off and the aggressor continues to receive money from Europe. Every time a European fills a car with fuel made from Russian minerals, he helps the Russian army to kill peaceful Ukrainians. Look at the tragedy that happened in Bucha, Irpen, Gostomel, and Mariupol. Hundreds of innocent children, women, and men were killed cruelly by Russians. The Russian Federation is committing genocide against the Ukrainian people right now.

In addition, there is military assistance. We are very grateful for her: for every bullet, every projectile, and equipment. It saves our lives and brings us closer to victory in the struggle for justice for a free democratic world. Ukraine is fighting not only for its territory and nation. Ukraine is fighting for European values, for peace and freedom in Europe, and the greatness of democracy. This is for you as members of EU governments.

That's why I urge to next cultural and informational sanctions, such as:

- we would like to raise the question of suspending any cooperation with institutions financed from the state budget of the Russian Federation and freezing the assets of Russian cultural centers in European countries.
- we declare our position, that the Russian Federation's UNESCO membership should be suspended when this country is violating the Hague and Geneva Conventions, and committing war crimes in Ukraine.
- we request to move the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee from Kazan to Lviv. It's impossible now to speak about preserving cultural heritage in the country that is destroying it right now and which kills civilians
- we appeal to block all Russian propaganda mouthpieces on the satellite platform "Eutelsat" and impose sanctions on Russian propagandistic channels that spread disinformation on war.
- we ask to apply mirror personal economic and other restrictive measures to individuals and legal entities of the Russian Federation based on a sanctions list approved by the Government of Ukraine.

Also, I would like to ask you to support in such a way as to assist Ukrainian TV channels with equipment and provide them with technical support because of

Russia's constant efforts to damage the equipment of Ukrainian TV channels and obstruct their broadcasting.

Please support the immediate needs of mass media and cultural institutions, as well as individual cultural workers during the war. Additionally, we ask you to create a fund for the reconstruction and restoration of cultural heritage after the war will be over in Ukraine.

'Never again' - so Europe says to fascism and Nazism and often now closes its eyes to what is happening in its heart. In Kyiv, a city with a thousand-year history, churches, relics, and ties with the royal families of Europe since 10-13 centuries. This is what frightens first of all and what Putin wants to appropriate now. He has not so much heritage without Kyiv, Kyivan Rus.

I am here now. And I do not recognize my city. It is in scars and "anti-tank defense", bags with sand around monuments. I did not think that my children would be children of war, as my grandparents told me after World War II. But now they are.

Putin is pursuing his goals in many ways.

So my claim for you: you need to ban all Russian propagandistic channels. It will be a real sign of your support for Ukrainians. No promises. Not the day after tomorrow. But today.

As I said, it's genocide against Ukrainians.

As in the Second World War Jews were spread across Europe, as now Ukrainians. And Russians after them with bombs.

You are saying about unity in diversity. But as we see now you don't show it in values. We were thinking that Russians are not crazy about invading Ukraine, but they did. So you believe they are not coming for you, as France and other European nations believed in 1939? But they will. Just continue to watch their TV at your home and applaud Russian ballet.

So the real proof of your support is the true actions of Europeans, who shared human values, as happened in the second world war against the Nazis.

And finally, I am hindered on the behalf of President Zelensky to invite all of you to come next week to share views about the cultural future of Europe. To see the scale of Russian aggression, come to Ukraine and see for yourself. We will help to arrange the trip to Bucha too.