

Cross Party Group on Ukraine

Tuesday 24th September 2024 18:00 – 20:00
(hybrid)

Minute

Present

MSPs

Colin Beattie MSP
Ben Macpherson MSP
Clare Adamson MSP
John Mason MSP

Invited Guests

General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Will Tyler-Greig, Scottish Government
Niall Wilson, Scottish Government
Consul General Łukasz Lutostański, General Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Edinburgh
Consul Aurelia-Nicoleta Titirez, General Consulate of Romania in Edinburgh
Olga Rudneva, Superhumans Center
Oksana Tverdokhlibova, Ukrainian Product Design
Diletta Lauro, British Red Cross
Joe Goldblatt, Volunteer Edinburgh
Mykola Zinchenko, 24 Art Gallery
Maryna Zvarych, Individual
Serhii Kuzminov, Alfred Nobel University/ School of Business, University of Dundee
Varvara Mishyna, Project Inspiration
Daniel Smith, AstroAgency
Anna Makhlay, The John Smith Trust
Olga Niekrasova, Individual
Daria Shapovalova, Ukrainian Hub Aberdeen
Joyce Landry, Mission of Innocents
Olga Vivchar, Mission of Innocents
Mariia Miskova, Mission of Innocents
Lesia Vynnychuk, Mission of Innocents
Nataliia Khomenko, Mission of Innocents
Benjamin Carey, Carey Tourism

Non-MSP Group Members

Anna Kulish
Hanna Tekliuk
Peter David Kormylo
Olha Maksymiak
Hannah Beaton-Hawryluk
Tetiana Balanova
Doug Allan
Oleksandra Novatska
Juliette Lichman

Kseniia Smyrnova
Illia Malanchuk
Zhenya Dove
John Hawryluk
Steven Carr
Maryan Pokhylyy
Oleksandr Chernykh
Peter Cooper

Consulate of Ukraine in Edinburgh represented by Andrii Kuslii
AUGB Edinburgh represented by Hannah Beaton-Hawryluk and Tetiana Balanova
AUGB Glasgow represented by Olga Lutsyshyn
Ukrainian Collective represented by Anna Sokolchuk
Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council represented by John Hawryluk
Feniks represented by Magda Czarnecka
Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland represented by Peter Cooper
Scottish Refugee Council represented by Elodie Mignard and Andrii Nadych
The Scottish Council on Global Affairs represented by John Edward
Nazovni represented by Oleksandra Sologub
shevchenko.philia represented by Bohdan Kramar

Apologies

Miles Briggs MSP
Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP
Christine Grahame MSP
Yevgen Gorash
Victor Radchenko
Kvitka Perehinets
Vasyl Kren
Valeriya Golovina
Kateryna Campbell
Oleksandra Wierzbicka
Olga Biryuk
Center for Civil Liberties
Nadiya

Paul O'Kane MSP
Katy Clark MSP
Russell Findlay MSP
Yulianna Shalenyk
Bohdan Kruk
Anastasia Klimash
Anne Yarney
Giles Sutherland
Olena Litvinova-Kutsai
Dmytro Syrota
Olena Yuzkova
AUGB Dundee

Annual General Meeting

Agenda item 1 Convener

Welcome and Apologies

Colin Beattie MSP welcomes attendees (both in the Committee Room and online) and opens the meeting. Apologies are to be noted in the minutes.

Minutes 11th June 2024 Meeting

The Minutes are approved as presented.

Agenda item 2 Election of Conveners

John Mason MSP proposes that Colin Beattie MSP be re-elected for a further term of office as Convener.

John Mason MSP proposes that Miles Briggs MSP, Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP, and Paul O’Kane MSP be re-elected for a further term of office as Deputy Conveners.

Agenda item 3 Appointment of Secretary

Colin Beattie MSP proposes that Anna Kulish be re-appointed as Secretary for a further term of office.

Agenda item 4 Annual Return

To note that the Secretary will prepare the Annual Return as required by the Scottish Parliament. The form will be submitted once signed by the Convener and will be made publicly available on the CPG webpage.

Colin Beattie MSP formally closes the AGM.

Business Meeting

Agenda item 1 Convener

Colin Beattie MSP (CB MSP) proceeds to commence the Business Meeting.

Agenda item 2 Embassy of Ukraine in the United Kingdom of the Great Britain and Northern Ireland

General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

General Valerii Zaluzhnyi (GVZ) expresses gratitude to Scotland’s Parliament, Government, and people for their support and hospitality toward Ukrainians affected by the war, emphasizing Ukraine’s deep appreciation for Scotland’s aid.

GVZ highlights the ongoing need for military assistance and investment in defence, calling on allies to sustain sanctions to limit the aggressor's ability to continue waging war.

He underscores the importance of partnerships between Scotland and Ukraine, suggesting the Cross-Party Group on Ukraine play a role in linking Scottish regions

with ten frontline regions in Ukraine. Scotland's expertise in infrastructure and energy, he notes, would be especially valuable in Ukraine's reconstruction efforts.

GVZ draws attention to the upcoming 91st anniversary of the Holodomor, the Ukrainian Famine-Genocide, and encourages the Scottish Parliament to continue recognizing it as an act of genocide in support of historical justice.

He closes by envisioning collaboration between the two nations in fields such as renewable energy, agriculture, and tourism, and addresses a question from Zhenya Dove regarding the visit to Scotland.

Agenda item 3 The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

Elodie Mignard, Senior Partnership Manager, Scottish Refugee Council

Elodie Mignard (EM) provides an overview of the [New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy](#) and the [2024-2026 Delivery Plan](#), emphasizing its development through extensive consultation with over 2,000 individuals with lived experience of forced migration. The plan includes actions specifically tailored to address the needs of displaced Ukrainians and other New Scots in areas such as housing, language, employment, and visa support.

In housing, the strategy aims to improve collaboration between local authorities, social housing providers, and Registered Social Landlords to address both current and future housing needs, especially for those at risk of destitution and ineligible for statutory services.

For language support, EM highlights plans to convene experts to assess and improve ESOL delivery, with a focus on regional language assessment approaches and stakeholder roles. These proposals will be reviewed in a conference with New Scots stakeholders.

The employment section focuses on partnering with Scottish professional bodies to establish recognition pathways for various sectors. Efforts are underway to raise awareness about employability support and to engage employers in hiring from New Scots communities.

The strategy also includes visa support, with ongoing monitoring of UK immigration policies to inform responses that mitigate risks for displaced individuals in Scotland.

Andrii Nadych, Community Development Officer, Scottish Refugee Council

Andrii Nadych (AN) outlines the Scottish Refugee Council's commitment to supporting core group members involved in governance, providing financial, logistical, and pastoral support to enable full participation. The SRC is currently seeking volunteers with recent lived experience of forced migration, who demonstrate strong advocacy and leadership skills, to join this core group.

AN reflects on a key principle of the strategy: involving people with lived experience in decision-making. He emphasizes that ongoing dialogue and leadership from individuals with direct experience will remain central, allowing the strategy to adapt to real needs. Through the Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG), which includes people with lived experience represented by the Ukrainian Collective, displaced individuals play an active role in advising on integration efforts, ensuring service design and support align with their insights.

The SRG, established following the review of the Super Sponsor Scheme, serves as an advisory platform. Since March 2023, the SRG has convened five times, actively advising policymakers and fostering a collaborative approach to refugee integration with local authorities, third-sector organisations, and refugee-led groups. This structure strengthens the strategy's impact, ensuring it remains inclusive and responsive.

AN closes by reiterating the importance of partnership-driven integration and encourages continued collaboration to build on Scotland's support for displaced individuals.

Followed by questions and comments from Diletta Lauro, Magda Czernecka, Benjamin Carey, and Joe Goldblatt on various matters.

Agenda item 4 Membership Requests

All membership requests and relevant application materials were distributed to Members by the Secretary prior to the meeting.

Individual memberships of Joe Goldblatt, Mykola Zinchenko, Maryna Zvarych, Serhii Kuzminov and Varvara Mishyna, Daniel Smith, Anna Makhlay, Olga Niekrasova, and Daria Shapovalova were approved by the Cross-Party Group.

Organisational memberships of Mission of Innocents and Carey Tourism were approved by the Cross-Party Group.

Agenda item 5 Members on Working Groups

Steven Carr on the Working Group on Health and Wellbeing

Steven Carr (SC) reflects on the group's activities over the past six months and introduces each group member: Olha Maksymiak, Public Communication Officer of the AUGC Glasgow branch; Olga Lutsyshyn, certified Gestalt therapist; Magda Czernecka, CEO of Feniks, an organization addressing health inequalities and promoting integration for Eastern European communities in Edinburgh; Doug Allan, who leads Ukrainian support work at the Link Church in Dunfermline; and Joyce Laundry, Founder of Mission of Innocents, an organization supporting displaced Ukrainian children through afterschool and holiday programs focused on emotional well-being and talent development.

SC notes that the group hosted a Ukrainian Independence Day event in Perth on 24 August. This event provided an excellent opportunity for Ukrainians to gather in a welcoming environment, with Ukrainian entertainment and support agencies present to share information about their services.

Note from the Secretary: Steven Carr is stepping down as the group Chair, with Olha Maksymiak nominated as his substitute.

Olha Maksymiak, Member of the Working Group on Health and Wellbeing

Olha Maksymiak (OM) addresses employment challenges faced by displaced Ukrainians in Scotland, emphasising underemployment's impact on their well-being. Many are highly educated professionals from specialised fields, yet face barriers to

finding relevant work in the UK, with a lack of clear guidance for professions like teaching, medicine, and psychology.

OM highlights discussions at a recent group meeting, noting that programs like Scotland's Bridges Program for refugee doctors have limited spots and strict requirements. She suggests integrating Ukrainian doctors as assistants to retain their skills, similar to programs in Germany.

OM also mentions a meeting with Paul Sweeney MSP, attended by skilled Ukrainians working below their qualifications in jobs such as factory or cafeteria roles. Many face rejections for being "overqualified" despite willingness to work below their expertise.

For psychologists, regulatory differences between Ukraine and the UK hinder professional practice. A group of 20 Ukrainian psychologists, including the group's secretary, struggle to access UK professional bodies, while demand for psychological support among displaced Ukrainians remains high.

OM proposes a survey on professional backgrounds and employment barriers, with discussions ongoing with a university partner. She observes that current employment agencies mostly offer roles unrelated to these professionals' expertise.

OM concludes by noting that fully employed displaced Ukrainians could contribute up to £3 million in income tax for Scotland in a year if employed at the Real Living Wage. Followed by a comment from Ben Macpherson MSP regarding dental practice.

John Hawryluk on the Working Group on Resettlement

[John Hawryluk presents in a modified order. The original order is maintained in the minutes for consistency with the agenda].

John Hawryluk (JH) provides an update on the group, mentioning that it faced challenges in convening, as outlined in the written summary provided by the group. JH confirms a group's meeting will be scheduled in the coming weeks, coinciding with the one-year mark since the release of the "Ukraine - A Warm Scots Future" policy. In relation to EVOC's strategic focus, JH notes that a recent review has strengthened EVOC's commitment to supporting the community and voluntary sector in Edinburgh. Invitations will be extended to key Ukrainian organizations in Scotland, including branches of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain (AUGB), the Ukrainian Hub in Aberdeen, and the Scottish Refugee Council.

EVOC is dedicated to promoting long-term integration, supporting Ukrainian community groups, and advocating for policies that fulfil Scotland's "Warm Scots Welcome" commitment. This work will continue in close collaboration with local partners and the Ukrainian community.

Kseniia Smyrnova on the Working Group on Education

Kseniia Smyrnova (KS) highlights the Education Working Group's initiatives that foster collaboration between Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University (KNU) and the University of Edinburgh, advancing research and addressing critical global challenges. A notable project is the Environmental Sustainability Lab, where five KNU students conducted research at the University of Edinburgh as part of their Master's theses in chemistry, contributing to sustainable practices. In the area of Urban Regeneration, led by Dr. Kostyantyn Mezentsev (KNU) and Professor Soledad Garcia- Ferrari (University of Edinburgh), the Impacts of War Lab aims to minimize war damage and promote sustainable rebuilding in Ukraine. An online seminar titled "Post-War Urban Regeneration" facilitated knowledge exchange on urban reconstruction. Additionally, KNU students participated in the Una Europa One Health Summer School, where they

presented on Ukraine's food security amidst the war, addressing real-world health challenges and aligning with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

KS outlines a strategic plan to expand inter-school collaborations between Scotland and Ukraine, with the goal of launching bilateral student competitions across various disciplines. She proposes initiative is a mathematics competition in honour of Julia Zdanovska, a renowned mathematician and KNU alumna who lost her life in Kharkiv. KS emphasizes the intention to broaden partnerships with other Scottish and Ukrainian universities, focusing on the success of twinning programs. This expansion will cover important themes such as transitional justice, which has become a critical topic for Ukraine amidst current geopolitical conditions.

KS announces plans to establish a Ukrainian-Scottish Center in Edinburgh and a reciprocal Scottish-Ukrainian Center in Kyiv, designed to strengthen academic and scientific collaborations across fields including chemistry, urban studies, physics, biology, and medicine. KS expresses a desire for Cross-Party Group support to help position Scotland as a leader in academic collaboration and excellence, enhancing the impact of the proposed centers and expanding research activities beyond traditional boundaries.

Followed by a comment from CB MSP reiterating the support from the CPG where possible.

Zhenya Dove on the Working Group on Culture

Zhenya Dove (ZD) notes recent resource development efforts in collaboration with SCVO and EVOC, resulting in a Ukrainian-language resource library aimed at empowering cultural groups to organize and access funding, addressing a key obstacle of limited organisational knowledge.

ZD highlights the launch of the [Museum of Ukrainian Craft and Culture Scotland](#) on Ukrainian Independence Day. This digital platform shares Ukrainian culture widely, with contributions from Ukrainian artists that capture areas impacted by the war. She encourages further sharing and collaboration.

Recent cultural events include an Independence Day exhibition featuring works by Maria Prymachenko, supported by the Kyiv City Administration, and talks at the Biggar Museum on Ukrainian heritage. ZD also announces an upcoming collaboration with Museums Galleries Scotland, focused on digital preservation workshops with students.

ZD describes the group's involvement in "The Things They Carried," a research project with Edinburgh University examining displaced Ukrainians' experiences through artifacts and narratives. An exhibition of this project will debut at the Edinburgh Central Library in February.

In partnership with the Ukrainian Community Development Officer, the group has consolidated information on Ukrainian groups across Scotland, aiming to strengthen networks and support cultural initiatives.

Looking ahead, ZD reaffirms the group's commitment to promoting Ukrainian culture and fostering diplomatic ties. She mentions upcoming collaborations with Leith Custom House on the digital museum project and with the Romanian Consulate for cultural events.

Followed by comments from Joe Goldblatt regarding Edinburgh 900 celebration and the Ukrainian Consulate in Edinburgh regarding the launch of the Ukrainian Institute in Scotland.

Anna Kulish on the Working Group on Business and Economy

AK opens by reporting on the Business and Economy Working Group's progress over the past six months, emphasising efforts to lay a solid foundation for future activities. The group has conducted productive meetings with members, stakeholders, and experts to identify opportunities and address challenges for businesses entering the Scottish market.

In September, the group hosted an online event, "[Opening Scotland](#)," in partnership with Nazovni, for Ukrainian exporters interested in the Scottish market. Featuring insights from experts on legal distinctions and practical business advice, the event was well-received.

Looking forward, AK announces plans for industry-specific events, aligning with Scotland's strengths in different sectors.

AK highlights the development of an investment guide for Scottish businesses considering Ukraine. Recognising the increased responsibilities faced by Ukrainian women, AK expresses a commitment to empowering them in the business sphere and invites support and ideas to further this goal.

In closing, AK introduces Nazovni as the formal member of the Working Group.

Followed by comments from CB MSP and Daniel Smith regarding Scottish businesses with Ukrainian roots, as well as questions from Peter Cooper about the Scottish Government's call to sever ties with Russia, and from Benjamin Carrey regarding trade missions held by local chambers of commerce, both of which were addressed by CB MSP.

Note from the Secretary: All Working Groups prepared a written summary of their activities over the past six months, distributed by the Secretary ahead of the meeting. The operation of the Working Groups has been extended for an additional 12 months.

Agenda item 6 Highlight Discussion: Superhumans

Olga Rudneva, CEO, Superhumans

[Olga Rudneva presents in a modified order. The original order is maintained in the minutes for consistency with the agenda].

Olga Rudneva (OR) opens by discussing the severe healthcare crisis in Ukraine, emphasising that no healthcare system is fully prepared for war on its own soil. As the conflict endures, Ukraine's healthcare system faces mounting pressure, with both military and civilian casualties overwhelming medical facilities. OR explains that the Superhumans Center, established in the western part of Ukraine, has been dedicated to prosthetic, rehabilitative, and psychological care, treating patients with complex injuries, including high-level amputations and facial trauma.

OR describes the challenges faced by patients due to long evacuation times, inadequate field conditions, and targeted attacks on medical personnel, resulting in severe injuries and increased rates of amputation. Infection control remains a significant issue, with antibiotic-resistant infections prevalent due to the lack of safe surgical environments near the front lines. Currently, Superhumans Center has installed 700 prosthetics and performed over 250 reconstructive surgeries, yet there is a long waiting list, with around 800 individuals awaiting prosthetics.

OR highlights the Center's efforts to provide holistic care, including psychological evaluation, physical therapy, and social reintegration. Many patients are young—often

around 35 years old—and eager to return to active lives, underscoring the need for high-quality prosthetic components that support an active lifestyle.

Looking ahead, OR outlines plans to establish a vocational reintegration facility for veterans to help them find new roles post-injury. She mentions ongoing partnerships with the Ukrainian Ministry of Health and the need for further support, especially medical expertise in reconstructive surgery and prosthetic components, to meet the escalating demand. OR closes with a call for international assistance, emphasising that Ukraine’s resilience depends on sustained external support.

AOB

Peter David Kormylo extends an invitation to all attendees and CPG members to visit the Ukrainian POW Chapel and Museum in Lockerbie.

Closing Remarks

CB MSP concludes the meeting by thanking participants.