

## PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF UKRAINE'S PUBLISHING SECTOR

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**Abstract.** *This study explores the role of public organizations in the transformation processes of Ukraine's publishing sector under conditions of martial law and economic instability. The activities of leading civil society institutions are analyzed, including the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine, the National Union of Writers of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Publishers and Booksellers Association, and the NGO "Publishers' Forum." These organizations are shown to perform important functions such as legal advocacy, professional representation, the promotion of national book publishing, the development of library infrastructure, and cultural diplomacy. The study concludes that in the context of limited state funding, the activity of civil society organizations is a key factor in supporting and developing the sector. It also justifies the need to strengthen cooperation between public and state institutions to ensure the sustainable development of Ukraine's publishing industry.*

**Key words:** *publishing sector, public organizations, National Union of Journalists of Ukraine, Ukrainian Publishers Association, Publishers' Forum, cultural policy, transformation, Ukrainian book market.*

### **Main text**

In Ukraine, the implementation of state policy in the publishing sector is carried out by executive authorities. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine determines the state policy in the field of publishing and provides economic, social, and legal guarantees for its implementation. The central executive body involved in the formation and implementation of state policy in the media, information, and publishing spheres is the State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine.

In addition, as a democratic country, Ukraine relies significantly on the influence of public associations in shaping and developing the publishing sector. These associations, represented by entities such as associations, national unions, creative associations, and trade unions, play a key role in drafting and improving legal frameworks, developing state programs, defining their funding mechanisms, and monitoring their implementation.

Today, the Ukrainian publishing sector faces many challenges, including economic instability, insufficient state funding, the consequences of full-scale war, and

issues in legal regulation. Against this background, the role of public organizations becomes increasingly important. Therefore, it is essential to deepen research on the role and influence of public associations in the transformative processes taking place in Ukraine's publishing industry.

One of the most active civil society actors in the publishing field is the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine (NUJU), which "is a national all-Ukrainian creative union that brings together journalists and other media professionals engaged in professional journalistic and publicistic activity" [1, p. 1]. The union's activities are primarily focused on protecting the physical safety of journalists and combating impunity for crimes committed against media workers. In this regard, NUJU cooperates with numerous international organizations, including the European and International Federations of Journalists, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission, the Committee to Protect Journalists, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the U.S. Congressional Press Freedom Caucus.

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In 2018, NUJU recorded 86 cases of physical aggression against media representatives. In response, the European Federation of Journalists supported NUJU's initiative to hold parliamentary hearings on press freedom and urged Ukrainian authorities to ensure transparent investigations. Beyond its legal advocacy, the union works to expand international partnerships, particularly with journalist associations in Japan and China. In 2018, NUJU signed a cooperation agreement with the All-China

Journalists Association [2, pp. 773, 775].

The National Union of Writers of Ukraine (NSWU) is a nationwide creative union that unites professional writers, has fixed membership, and operates local creative branches in most regions of Ukraine [3]. Its current activities focus on supporting writers during wartime, organizing literary awards, holding charitable events, and cooperating with cultural institutions.

NSWU places special emphasis on preserving cultural infrastructure, notably the reconstruction of the Writers' House in Kyiv, which was damaged by shelling. The project is being implemented with support from civic and charitable organizations, while the response from state institutions remains limited [4].

The Ukrainian Publishers and Booksellers Association (UPBA) is a public association “established on the principles of legality, humanity, shared interests and equal rights of its members, voluntariness, self-governance, and transparency, to support publishing and bookselling activities and the dissemination of periodicals and electronic publications in Ukraine” [5].

UPBA has initiated significant amendments to Ukrainian publishing legislation, particularly to the laws “On Publishing,” “On Value Added Tax,” and “On Corporate Profit Tax,” aiming to improve conditions for the industry. The association also contributed to the development of European strategic documents, including during the Warsaw Conference of the Council of Europe, and advocated for a moratorium on the eviction of cultural institutions, including publishers and bookstores.

A major achievement was UPBA's agreement with the International ISBN Agency, which allowed Ukraine to eliminate technological dependence on Russian systems and gain national control over the identification of published works.

The Publishers' Forum NGO is a nonprofit public association founded on principles of voluntariness, self-governance, shared interests, and openness. Its mission is to foster a civilized book market in Ukraine, promote reading, advance Ukrainian literature, and integrate Ukraine's publishing sector into the global cultural and professional context [6].

Over the years, the Publishers' Forum has launched numerous large-scale

initiatives to promote reading, literature, publishing, and libraries. Among its major projects are the International Book Forum in Lviv, which between 1994 and 2010 welcomed over 600,000 visitors, held 2,535 events, and received more than 4,800 media mentions; the International Literary Festival (ongoing since 1997); and the "Best Reader of Ukraine" competition, which involved over 367,000 schoolchildren from all Ukrainian regions, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Kyiv, Lviv, and Sevastopol.

The Literary Festival within the Lviv BookForum remains one of the Forum's flagship events. It has grown from a local gathering into an international platform that has hosted over 2,500 authors from 43 countries and more than 15,000 industry professionals. Each year, thousands of visitors from across Ukraine and abroad attend the event, affirming its role as a tool for cultural diplomacy and literary dialogue.

Another noteworthy initiative is the Forum's support for public libraries. In collaboration with Lviv libraries and with support from the Lviv Department of Culture, the Forum launched a project to update library collections. The initiative includes the purchase of 1,000 new titles of contemporary Ukrainian literature for all 49 branches of the Lviv Municipal Library. This effort promotes equal access to quality reading materials and encourages reading among the general public [7].

In conclusion, the analysis of the activities of key public organizations in the publishing sector, such as the Ukrainian Publishers and Booksellers Association, the National Union of Writers of Ukraine, the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine, and the Publishers' Forum, demonstrates the significant contribution of civil society to the transformation and support of Ukraine's publishing industry. These institutions fulfill roles not only in professional representation but also in legal advocacy, cultural diplomacy, promoting reading, defending freedom of speech, supporting library infrastructure, and stimulating the development of national publishing.

Given the limited public funding and challenges caused by martial law, the role of public organizations becomes especially critical. At the same time, the sustainable development of the publishing sector requires not only civil society efforts but also comprehensive support from the state: strategic, institutional, and financial. Only

coordinated cooperation between civic and governmental actors can ensure the long-term growth of Ukraine's publishing sector, its cultural presence on the international stage, and the fulfillment of society's educational and informational needs.

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