

**Oleh SHAMSHUR,**  
*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
of Ukraine to the Republic of France*

## **UKRAINE – FRANCE: CONTEMPORARY COOPERATION**

In 2014, Ukraine made its foreign policy choice by clear pronouncing of its European aspirations. The movement towards such geopolitical direction has been approved not in a top corner office but at the Maidan – it was made by Ukrainian people at the expense of their lives and blood-covered events that has forever been coined in the memory of every Ukrainian. The consciousness and activity of civil society that had been born after the Orange Revolution intensified and reached the unprecedented development during the Revolution of Dignity. It is an extremely important milestone of our contemporary history, however, even after this, we still have to overcome the difficult path of affirming the acquired values, advocating our rights and freedoms, creating and strengthening civil society, building a strong and efficient economics.

This process depends on ourselves a lot. However, the experience and support of recognized European democracies also play an important role. Therefore, the cooperation with France as a founding country of the EU has a strategic value for us. New dynamic and productive interaction has been formed and developed on the long-standing bilateral relations between France and Ukraine.

Relations between our countries go back to the times of Yaroslav the Wise, whose daughter – Anne of Kyiv – was a wife to the French King Henry I of Capet, the Queen of France and mother of the future King Philip I. In the history of France, she will forever remain the great-grandmother of several dozens of French kings.

The son of Hetman Pylyp Orlyk, Hryhorii, was a French diplomat and during his professional activities struggled to arrange the anti-Russian coalition with France, Switzerland, Poland and Turkey, believing that it will help to create Ukrainian state.

The Secretary General for the international affairs of the Central Council of Ukraine and then the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Ukrainian People's Republic in exile, O. Shulhyn, was a member of delegation of the Ukrainian People's Republic at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919–1920. France took a special place in his heart, as he has spent the biggest part of his life in this country, died and was buried in Sarcelles near Paris.

The destiny of many artists is closely connected with France. Many of them came to Paris – the cultural capital of Europe – at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> cen-



*Пам'ятник Анні Ярославні в Санслісі. «Анна Київська, королева Франції»  
Monument to Anna Yaroslavna in Senlis. "Anne of Kyiv, the Queen of France"*

ture to study and create their own masterpieces. Namely, it is the world famous artists Vasyl Kandynskiy and Kazymyr Malevych, Sonia (Terk) Delone, Oleksandra Ekster, Mykhailo Boichuk, sculptor Oleksandr Arkhypenko and many others. Prominent figures of Ukrainian origin lived and worked in France, namely, ballet master Serge Lifar, composers Ihor Stravinsky and Fedir Yakymenko.

In January 2017, Ukraine and France solemnly celebrated 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in the Senate of France, and in March the same year ministers of foreign affairs of both countries, P. A. Klimkin and J.M. Ayrault opened an exhibition of documents from the archives of the Quai d'Orsay dedicated to the anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations and centenary of the establishment of diplomatic service.

The exhibition represented personal telegrams of Oleksandr Shulhyn who was a direct participant of the events and a person who the formation of Ukrainian diplomatic service is associated with.

Another demonstration of a long-standing diplomatic relations between Ukraine and France was also presented at this exhibition, namely the handwritten original of the Diary of Hetman Pylyp Orlyk, dated 1727.

France became the first western country with which independent Ukraine signed the Treaty on Mutual Understanding and Cooperation (December 27, 1991).

On January 23, 1992, French Foreign Minister, R. Dumas visited Ukraine for the first time. During the meeting the Protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and France was signed. In the same year, the Consulate General of France in Ukraine was transformed into the Embassy, and in September 1993, the Embassy of Ukraine was opened in France.

It is symbolic that namely in Paris the first step of Ukraine towards the united Europe was made – the President of Ukraine signed the Paris Charter for a New Europe in the Elyse Palace, which completed the full accession of our state to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

In 1992, a political dialogue on the highest level was also established. Since then it obtained a regular character, however a special dynamics was reached during the last three years. Namely, the bilateral cooperation now has special meaning after the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 when France proclaimed the univocal political support to our country, having condemned the annexation of Crimea and reaffirming the commitment to the sovereignty of our state within its internationally recognized borders. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the heads of Ukraine and France have met almost 20 times in various formats, and 11 times of which – during 2015–2018.



*Підписання міжурядового протоколу про встановлення дипломатичних відносин між Україною та Францією. 23 січня 1992 року. © www.diplomatie.gouv.fr*

*Signing of the intergovernmental protocol on establishment of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and France. January 23, 1992. © www.diplomatie.gouv.fr*



*Міністр закордонних справ України Павло Клімкін та міністр у справах Європи і закордонних справ Ж.-І. Ле Дріан під час візиту до Києва. 22.04.2018. © www.diplomatie.gouv.fr*

*Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Pavlo Klimkin and Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian during the visit to Kyiv. 22.04.2018. © www.diplomatie.gouv.fr*

France, together with Germany, has made the major scope of diplomatic efforts in resolving the situation in eastern Ukraine, becoming the initiators of the negotiation process in the so-called Normandy format.

French Senator Hervé Maurey recently emphasized, “France supports Ukraine. There is no ambiguity here, no matter who the president of our country is – whether François Hollande or Emmanuel Macron, who is in the opposition, and who is in the majority. Belonging to different political trends does not prevent us from supporting Ukraine in its aspiration to protect the inviolability of its borders.”

Simultaneously it is worth noting that new leadership of France headed by E. Macron, who was the first among modern Western European leaders to publicly acknowledge Russia’s responsibility for the situation in eastern Ukraine, continues to take a favourable position for us to counter Russian aggression. The Minister for European and Foreign Affairs J.-I. Le Driane while staying in the country on March 22–23, 2018 confirmed the thesis on Russia’s direct responsibility for carrying out aggression against Ukraine.

France consistently supports the territorial integrity of Ukraine, categorically does not recognize the annexation of Crimea and the results of regional and presidential elections held in the ARC. The position of France regarding the further deterioration of the human rights situation in Crimea is toughened against Russia.



Голова Верховної Ради України А. Парубій та представники групи дружби Україна-Франція під час офіційного візиту до Французької республіки провели зустріч із Головою Національних зборів Франції Франсуа де Ружі. 11.06.2018

*Head of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine A. Parubii and representatives of the France-Ukraine Friendship Group held the meeting with François de Rugy, President of the National Assembly of France, during the official visit to the French Republic. 11.06.2018*

The interparliamentary cooperation at the level of friendship groups and specialized structures of both parliaments hold the prominent position in political dialogue. Sixteen exchanges have been made on the parliament level during only 2015–2018. A group of friendship “France-Ukraine” was formed within the new composition of the National Assembly of the French Republic and headed by Valéria Faure-Muntian. She was born in Ukraine and she is a member of the Pro-Presidential Party called “Republic in Movement”. In 2018, the friendship group carried out a visit to Ukraine. In January 2018, the updated composition of the Senate of the French Republic re-approved the composition of the “France-Ukraine” friendship group, which was headed by Senator H. Maurey, who preserved his position. On August 23, 2017, H. Maurey and R. Pauvros, the former chairman of the “France-Ukraine” friendship group of the National Assembly of the French Republic, were awarded the Orders of Merit of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree “for a significant personal contribution to the strengthening of the international authority of Ukraine”.

Apart the political cooperation, economic ties are also gaining new dynamics, as evidenced by the Ukrainian-French business forum held in 2016 with participation of Ukrainian Prime Minister V. Hroisman and the Minister for Economy

and Finance of France M. Sapin, which became the main event in the field of trade and investment cooperation development over the past 7 years. During the forum, two framework agreements on the transportation and storage of natural gas have been signed between the Ukrainian operator “Ukrtransgaz”, PJSC and ENGIE (France) and its subsidiary company in Ukraine Engie Energy Management Ukraine, LLC. The forum, which was attended by more than 200 business representatives from France, showed, first of all, that the French business circles positively assess the stabilization of the political situation in Ukraine and the improvement of the business climate: they began to intensify cooperation with Ukrainian partners in the field of export and import operations, and in the field of investment in production.



*Підписання угоди між урядами України та Франції про купівлю вертольотів Airbus. 14.07.2018*

*Signing of the agreement between governments of Ukraine and France on purchasing of Airbus helicopters. 14.07.2018*

With great interest, Ukraine studies modern initiatives of France in various fields, including ecology, energy efficiency, etc. For their part, French companies are also trying to actively use the potential of Ukraine in these areas, engaging in ambitious Ukrainian environmental and energy projects. Perhaps the most well-known example is the implementation of the construction project of the Shelter-2 at Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant called “Arka” with the involvement of leading French engineering experience, which, according to its innovation and technological complexity, may be compared with the study of space. In addition, the French company EGIS develops a feasibility reasoning of the construction of solid waste recycling in Lviv, on the basis of which ENGIE will carry out the construction of the plant. This French energy company expressed its interest in implementing a project to build a solar power plant in the Chornobyl Exclusion Zone and has already completed the initial feasibility study.

Each year, working groups on agriculture, transport, and the environment are created that bring together Ukrainian and French experts to find solutions to current problems and new areas of cooperation.

More than 120 French companies operate in 32 different sectors in the Ukrainian market. Successfully implementing their projects in Ukraine are leading companies Auchan and Leroy Merlin in the distribution sector, Lactalis, Louis Dreyfus, Limagrain and Maisadour in the agrarian industry, BNP Paribas, Credit Agricole and AXA in the financial sector, etc. Today, France is the largest foreign employer in Ukraine.

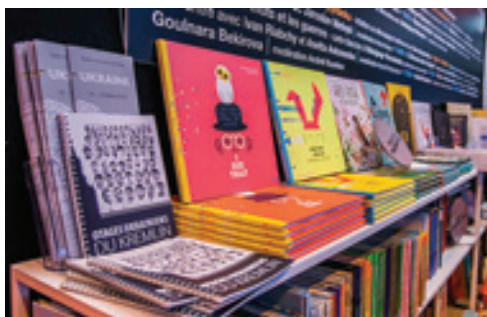
The refusal from raw materials export from Ukraine and the transition to exports of high-level processed products will significantly improve the situation for further development of economic relations.

The activation of interaction in the educational sphere is of particular importance, especially in the context of the reform of the civil service in Ukraine, which France pays special attention to. In this direction, the main driver should be the signing of the Agreement on Mutual Recognition between Ukraine and France regarding the diplomas on secondary and higher education, as well as the implementation of a project for cooperation with the National School of Administration of France for the training of Ukrainian civil servants of the highest category.

Thus, on July 7, 2015, a new Agreement on cooperation between the National Academy of Public Administration under the President of Ukraine and the National School of Administration of France was concluded during the visit of the Academy delegation to France within the framework of the expansion of international cooperation. Within the scope of this Agreement, conducted on the basis of the national Academy with the participation of representatives of the National School of Administration of France were scientific meetings regarding the problematic topics of the reforming process of the public service in Ukraine, decentralization of power in Ukraine and training of specialists of public administrative bodies. In addition, the National School of Administration of France participated actively in the events regarding the reforming of the public service in Ukraine. Thus, in 2016 ten members of the civil society social platform called “Package of Reanimation Reforms” trained there.

Within the framework of cooperation under the SIGMA Program developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a plan for the preparation of Ukrainian public secretaries has been developed. Thus, under the scope of this program in 2017 a relevant seminar was organized with the participation of Jerome Guillaume, Deputy Director of the Department of International Affairs of the National School of Administration of France, and Erik Luka, former State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice of France.

Moreover, the National School of Administration together with the Directorate General for the Public Service of France, in consortium with designated organizations of Estonia, Italy, and Sweden, with participation of the School for the Public Service of Poland were winners in the selection process for the EU project “Support to Comprehensive Reform of Public Administration in Ukraine”, within the framework of which Ukraine will obtain the technical assistance in the reforming of the civil service (policy planning, sector reforming, training and recruitment of civil servants, etc.). The total value of the project for today comprises 5.3 million euros. The official announcement of the results of the competition and the following start of the project is scheduled for the second half of 2018.



*Український стенд на міжнародній книжковій виставці "Livre Paris-2018". 19.03.2018*  
*Ukrainian stand at the international book exhibition Livre Paris-2018. 19.03.2018*

Within the framework of cooperation in the field of education and culture, it was recently announced that on September 1, 2018 the Year of the French Language to be started.

Intercultural contacts develop actively too. Since 1992, the French Cultural Center operates in Kyiv that was officially opened in 1994. This main network consists of four regional centres, located in Kharkiv, Dnipro, Lviv and Odesa.

Since 2004, the Cultural and Information Center operates within the Embassy of Ukraine in France, where artistic, informational and cultural events take place.

Recently, many interesting projects demonstrating the best examples of modern Ukrainian art have been represented in France. Ukrainian Movie Week and festival of documentaries "See Ukraine: Docudays on tour" were held in Paris. Ukrainian object designers succeed on catwalks of Paris Design Week. Stylists, namely talented young designer A. Berlinskyi, participated in Paris Fashion Week. The works of the masters of Ukrainian fine art, namely Oleksandr Dubovyk and Liubomyr Medvid, works of well-known photographers, laureates of numerous international awards M. Dondiuk, O. Hliadielov, O. Maslov were represented. Within the framework of the activity of the Ukrainian Literary Club, there were literary evenings, meetings with well-known Ukrainian writers whose works were translated into French: O. Zabuzhko, S. Zhadan, A. Kurkov, M. Matios and others.



Ukrainian music bands like Dakh Daughters, Dakha Brakha and Okean Elzy forever won the affection among the French.

Only during 2017 and the beginning of 2018 the cultural and informational centre of the Embassy held 14 exhibitions (photo, drawings, graphics), 11 music concerts, many film representations, presentations, literary meetings, catwalk shows. The most prominent among them were photo exhibition of Ukrainian artists winners of international contests, namely the photo salon Paris Photo/Polycopies (also the «RAW» project dedicated to the fight of Ukrainians with Russian aggression); concert of famous duet Telniuk Sisters; presentations of translations of books written by A. Kurkov, A. Kokotukha, Ya. Melnyk, O. Sentsov; meeting with the famous actress and writer of Ukrainian origin Mylène Demongeot on the occasion of the release of her graphic novel “Adieu Kharkov!”; thematic evening “From Anne of Kyiv to Sheptytskyi” with the participation of V. Troitskyi and others. In addition, a new format for cultural diplomacy was also launched – the evenings and master classes of Ukrainian cuisine within the framework of the volunteer project of the Association “A travers l’Europe”, which organizes holiday for war orphans from eastern part of Ukraine in France. French public, who is curious about culinary arts, liked the event of such format.

In November 2017, together with the French partner organization, a multidisciplinary festival “Week-End a l’Est – Kyiv” was held in Paris. Parisians and guests of city were introduced with Ukrainian capital, its artistic, intellectual and literature life. Meetings with famous writers and philosophers (O. Zabuzhko, A. Kurkov, S. Zhadan, V. Yermolenko, T. Oharkova) were held. Within the framework of the festival photographs of O. Chekmenov and collages of the artistic duet “Brothers” were represented. At the National High School of Fine Arts in Paris, T. Filevska and D. Horbachov held a lecture “Kyiv Period of Malevich”, once again reminding how often the artist showed his Ukrainian identity. Director of Mystetskyi Arsenal museum L. Ostrovska-Liuta presented a project about young artists and new names that can be discovered among forced migrants from eastern Ukraine and Crimea. O. Balashova, director of the National Art Museum, told about the artists of the Ukrainian Parisian School and traces of Kyiv in the context of world contemporary art. In “Odeon” theatre the iconic Ukrainian director V. Troitskyi presented Ukrainian contemporary theatrical art. The real opening for the French aesthetes were performances of M. Sadovska – a singer, actress, ethnographer and arranger, who voiced the shows of the silent Ukrainian classics, namely Dovzhenko’s movies “Zemlia” and “Arsenal”. French philosopher M. Yelchaninov, director R. Hupil, writer and scriptwriter A. Kurkov, philosopher and writer V. Yermolenko, attended the philosophical debate dedicated to the European freedom of speech. The issue of a false accusation of O. Sentsov, R. Sushchenko and illegal detention of other



*Співробітники посольства України у Франції відзначили День вишиванки. 18.05.2018*  
*Employees of the Embassy of Ukraine in France celebrated the Vyshyvanka Day. 18.05.2018*

political prisoners in Russian prisons was at the centre of a rather emotional debate. In the framework of the festival a concert of composer V. Sylvestrov was held on the occasion of his 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. The articles about the festival were published in the French editions “Le Monde”, “Figaro”, “Liberation”, “l’Obs”, “Transfuge”, “Telerama”, and also presented in live broadcasts on radio and TV, namely “TV5Monde”, “France Culture”, “France Inter”.

In 2018, the Cultural and Information Center launched the work of a political discussion club, where meetings with representatives of Ukrainian journalistic, expert and scientific environment were held. In particular, the guests of the club were Y. Makarov, V. Yermolenko, A. Paskhaver.

Recently the Nouvelle Ukraine web platform, dedicated to Ukraine, has just been launched. It was developed by a group of young Ukrainian activists along with members of the Association of Ukrainian Students in France. Its purpose is to popularize Ukraine in France, to promote the creation of a positive image of our country, to establish new economic and cultural contacts between Ukraine and France.

Ukraine and France, as one of the largest states in Europe, whose peoples have the same values and committed to common ideals, were predestined to close cooperation the potential of which is inexhaustible and only gains momentum.