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# Making Ukrainian Studies Relevant.

## Language, Memory, Resilience and Academic Partnership

3<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> June 2026  
Centro Congressi  
"Luigi Zordan"  
Piazza San Basilio  
L'Aquila



This Erasmus+ Staff Week is designed as a **pilot model for developing Ukrainian Studies cooperation between Ukrainian universities and European partners.**

The programme will focus not only on presenting Ukraine, but also on exploring **how Ukrainian topics can be researched, explained, taught and transformed into relevant educational products for European students.**

The Staff Week will combine:

- expert talks;
- research presentations;
- methodology sessions;
- practical workshops;
- joint curriculum design;
- partnership-building activities.

**Not only presenting Ukraine, but learning how to research, explain and teach Ukraine.**

The programme will explore Ukrainian Studies through five key dimensions:

Ukrainian language and culture;

- memory and identity;
- architectural heritage and preservation of monuments;
- resilience and mental health;
- the role of universities in times of war, crisis and recovery.

The aim of the Staff Week is to support the professional development of academic and administrative staff by strengthening their capacity to integrate Ukrainian Studies into teaching, research, international cooperation and public engagement. The programme will combine training, teaching, expert exchange and partnership-building activities focused on Ukrainian language, culture, memory, resilience and the role of universities in times of war and recovery.



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**3<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

## **Ukrainian Studies Today: Relevance, Soft Power and Research Agenda**

### **Main question of the day**

Why do Ukrainian Studies matter for Europe today, and what can Ukrainian universities offer to make them academically relevant, attractive and sustainable?

**08:30–09:00**

### **Registration**

**09:00–09:15**

### **Opening Session - Welcome and Introduction to the Staff Week**

**09:15–10:30**

### **Interactive Networking & Institutional Mapping Session**

Who Are We and What Can We Build Together?

This interactive session is designed to help participants get to know each other, present their institutions and identify possible areas for future cooperation in Ukrainian Studies, teaching, research and international projects.

**10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break**

**11:00–12:00 (online)**

### **Keynote Talk**

#### **Ukrainian Studies as Cultural Diplomacy: The Role of Scholars, Teachers and Soft Power**

**Possible speaker:** Alim Aliev

#### **Focus:**

Ukrainian Studies as part of cultural diplomacy;

the role of scholars and teachers as academic ambassadors of Ukraine;

soft skills needed for promoting Ukrainian Studies: storytelling, public speaking, intercultural communication, empathy, networking;

how to transform solidarity with Ukraine into long-term academic interest;

how to speak about Ukraine in a way that creates a desire to study its language, culture and history.

**12:00–13:00**

### **Discussion**

#### **How Can Scholars Make Ukraine Visible and Intellectually Attractive?**

Guiding questions:

What do Italian students already know about Ukraine?

What Ukraine-related topics could be most relevant for them?

What formats could work at the University of L'Aquila?

How can Ukrainian universities support this process?

**13:00–14:30**

Lunch break



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**14:30–16:00**

**Panel discussion - What should ukrainian universities offer to make ukrainian studies relevant?**

- how to present ukraine beyond the war;
- how to make ukrainian studies interdisciplinary;
- what ukrainian universities can offer to european partners;
- how to develop courses, guest lectures, case studies, short modules, language clubs and student schools;
- how ukrainian universities can act not only as recipients of support, but as producers of knowledge.

**16:00 – 17:00**

**Interactive reflection session - What are ukrainian studies today?**

This interactive reflection session invites participants to explore how ukrainian studies are understood in different academic, cultural and international contexts, and what associations, themes and meanings are most often connected with ukraine today. The session aims to move beyond traditional or narrow understandings of ukrainian studies and reflect on their contemporary relevance for european universities and international academic dialogue.

**Focus of the session**

- what ukrainian studies mean today;
- what topics and images are most commonly associated with ukraine;
- how perceptions of ukraine have changed in recent years;
- what themes should become central within contemporary ukrainian studies;
- how ukrainian studies can combine language, culture, history, memory, resilience, democracy, identity and future-oriented perspectives.

**17:00–17:15**

**Daily wrap-up and reflection session**

Key insights, ideas and next steps



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**4<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

### **Language, Memory and Heritage: Methods of Studying and Teaching Ukraine**

Main question of the day: How can Ukrainian language, memory and heritage generate deeper academic and student interest in Ukraine?

**08:30-09:00 Registration**

**09:00-10:00**

**online Lecture**

**Why Study Ukrainian? Language as a Key to Culture, Memory and Identity**

**Speaker: Taras Kremin – Language Ombudsman of Ukraine (2020-2025)**

Focus:

- Ukrainian language as access to culture, literature, music, film, archives and testimonies;
- language and identity;
- language and decolonisation;
- language as resistance;
- why Ukrainian language matters beyond philology;
- how to make Ukrainian language attractive for Italian / European students.

**10:00-10:30 & 11:00-11:45**

**Round Table Discussion**

Why Study Ukrainian Today? Challenges, Motivation and New Approaches to Language Learning

This round table discussion will focus on the role of the Ukrainian language in contemporary European education, culture and international cooperation, as well as on practical ways of making Ukrainian language learning more attractive and accessible for students.

**10:30-11:00**

**Coffee break**

**11:45-13:00**

**Conceptual and Methodological Session. What Is Memory? Individual, Collective and Cultural Dimensions**

Focus:

- individual memory;
- collective memory;
- cultural memory;
- historical memory;
- traumatic memory;
- memory and forgetting;
- memory and politics;
- memory as a space of struggle;
- the difference between history and memory;
- how societies remember trauma.

**13:00-14:30**

**Lunch break**



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**4<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

**14:30–15:30**

### **Research Showcase**

#### **Ukrainian Research and Teaching Topics: What We Study and What We Can Build Together**

This session gives Ukrainian participants an opportunity to briefly present their research, teaching areas or institutional experience.

Format:

Each Ukrainian participant has 5–7 minutes to answer four questions:

- What is my research / teaching topic related to Ukraine?
- Why can it be relevant for European students?
- What sources, methods or cases do I use?
- How can this become a guest lecture, module, course or joint project?

Possible topics:

- Ukrainian language and identity;
- teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language;
- Ukrainian culture and literature;
- memory and cultural heritage;
- universities in wartime;
- digital resilience of education;
- Kharkiv as a case of academic continuity under war;
- mental health and resilience;
- Crimea and Crimean Tatar Studies;
- architecture, monuments and reconstruction.

**15:30–16:00**

#### **Methodological Mini-Lab - From Ukrainian Experience to Academic Knowledge**

Focus:

- how to transform lived wartime experience into academic knowledge;
- how to avoid reducing Ukraine only to trauma and war;
- how to present Ukrainian cases in international classrooms;
- how to combine research, teaching and public communication;
- how to build joint research agendas with European partners.

Practical task:

Participants identify 3–5 Ukraine-related topics that could become part of University of L'Aquila courses or public academic events.



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## 4<sup>th</sup> June 2026

### 16:00–17:00

#### Interactive Reflection and Group Discussion - Ukrainian Identity in International Academic and Cultural Spaces

This interactive session combines expert reflection, participant discussion and collaborative exchange focused on the role of identity in contemporary Ukraine and on the ways Ukrainian identity can be meaningfully discussed in international academic, educational and cultural environments.

- The discussion will focus on:
- what Ukrainian identity means today;
- how war influences national, cultural and personal identity;
- how language, memory, culture and lived experience shape identity;
- challenges of speaking about Ukrainian identity abroad;
- stereotypes and misconceptions about Ukraine and Ukrainians;
- how universities and cultural institutions can create meaningful conversations about identity;
- how to engage international students in discussions about Ukraine beyond headlines and war narratives.

### 17:00–17:15

#### Daily Wrap-Up and Reflection Session

Key Insights, Ideas and Next Steps

## 5<sup>th</sup> June 2026

#### Resilience, Mental Health and Research-to-Teaching Lab

##### Main question of the day

How can Ukrainian wartime experience of resilience, mental health, academic continuity and recovery become a meaningful educational product for European universities?

### 08:30–09:00 Registration

### 09:00–10:30

#### Ukrainian Universities in Wartime: Academic Continuity, Care and Resilience

##### Focus:

- how Ukrainian universities continue to operate during war;
- how they support students and staff;
- digital transformation and academic continuity;
- the changing role of teachers;
- universities as spaces of care, trust and support;
- the experience of Lviv, Kyiv and Kharkiv;
- how wartime university experience can be transformed into academic knowledge.

##### Possible short case inputs:

**Lviv:** international cooperation, Ukrainian Studies, student support, work with veterans.

**Kyiv:** language, culture, academic continuity, teaching Ukraine.

**Kharkiv:** universities under attack, digital resilience, academic survival and transformation.

### 10:30–11:00 Coffe break



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**5<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

**11:00–12:00 Online**

**Guest Speaker Conversation: Identity in Times of War and Global Change: How Can We Speak about Ukrainian Identity Abroad?**

**Invited speaker: Ilona Stankevych – Adviser to the Minister of Youth and Sports of Ukraine**

This interactive conversation will focus on the concept of identity in contemporary Ukraine and on the growing importance of discussing Ukrainian identity in international academic and public spaces.

The session will explore:

- what identity means in the Ukrainian context today;
- how war influences national, cultural and personal identity;
- why the topic of identity has become especially important for young people, education and international dialogue;
- how Ukrainian identity is connected with language, memory, culture, community and resilience;
- how to speak about Ukrainian identity abroad in a meaningful, inclusive and contemporary way;
- the role of universities, youth initiatives and cultural diplomacy in shaping understanding about Ukraine internationally.

Special attention will be given to:

- identity and belonging;
- decolonisation and reclaiming Ukrainian narratives;
- identity in multicultural and international environments;
- challenges of representing Ukraine abroad during wartime;
- how academic and educational institutions can support conversations about identity without reducing Ukraine only to war and trauma.

**12:00–13:00 Online**

**Expert / Training Session**

**Mental Health and Resilience: How to Teach Ukraine without Reducing It to Trauma**

**Speaker: Lesia Lymar – professor at Bogomolets National Medical University**

Focus:

- how to speak about war, loss and trauma in academic settings;
- trauma-informed teaching;
- wellbeing of students and staff;
- mental health as part of Ukrainian Studies;
- how language, culture and memory can become resources for recovery;
- how to show not only suffering, but also agency, dignity, care and future-oriented resilience.
- Key message:
- Ukrainian Studies should include the human experience of war, but should not reduce Ukraine to suffering. They should show resilience, agency, care, creativity and the capacity to build the future.

**13:00–14:30**

**Lunch break**



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**5<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

**14:30–16:00**

### **Research-to-Teaching Lab**

#### **Transforming Ukrainian Research into Courses, Modules and Student Engagement Formats**

This is the main practical output session of the Staff Week.

Participants work in mixed Ukrainian-Italian groups and transform research topics into educational products. Each group develops:

- title of the module / lecture / workshop;
- short description;
- target audience;
- 3 learning outcomes;
- 3 key topics or sessions;
- one practical student activity;
- possible Ukrainian and Italian contributors;
- first step after the Staff Week.

#### **Suggested working groups**

##### **Group 1. Ukrainian Language and Culture**

Possible outputs:

Ukrainian Language Starter Pack;  
Ukrainian through Culture;  
Ukrainian conversation club;  
short language-and-culture module;  
Ukrainian through films, songs and literature.

##### **Group 2. Ukrainian Studies Curriculum**

Possible outputs:

guest lecture series;  
short Ukrainian Studies module;  
blended course;  
digital learning materials;  
Ukrainian Studies for European students.

##### **Group 3. Memory, Heritage and Architecture**

Possible outputs:

seminar on memory and architectural heritage;  
Ukraine–L'Aquila comparative workshop;  
digital exhibition;  
student project on cities as memory spaces;  
module on heritage, monuments and reconstruction.

##### **Group 4. Resilience and Mental Health**

Possible outputs:

short module on resilience and mental health;  
trauma-informed teaching guidelines;  
student wellbeing toolkit;  
seminar on universities as spaces of care;  
comparative discussion: L'Aquila and Ukraine — recovery after collective trauma.

##### **Group 5. Research and Academic Partnership**

Possible outputs:

joint research ideas;  
comparative Ukraine–L'Aquila research agenda;  
Erasmus+ mobility roadmap;  
future student winter/summer school;  
joint publication / policy brief / conference panel.



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**5<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

**16:00–17:00**

### **Presentation of Group Results**

#### **From Research to Cooperation Roadmap**

Each group presents:

- proposed educational product;
- relevance for Italian students;
- Ukrainian contribution;
- University of L'Aquila contribution;
- possible format;
- first realistic step after the Staff Week.

**17:00–18:00**

### **Closing Session**

#### **Pilot Model for Future Ukrainian Studies Staff Weeks**

##### **Focus:**

- what worked in this Staff Week model;
- how this format can be repeated in other European universities;
- how to adapt the model to different national and institutional contexts;
- how Ukrainian universities can prepare similar staff mobility programmes;
- next steps for University of L'Aquila, Ukrainian partners and the Global Coalition of Ukrainian Studies.

##### **Final output:**

#### **Draft Cooperation Roadmap and Pilot Model for Ukrainian Studies Staff Weeks**

**8<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

### **Final Reflection and Presentation Session**

**Duration:** 2.5 hours

**08:30-10:00 Registration**

**10:00-11:00**

Welcome remarks by the Rector of the University of L'Aquila and Speech by the Ambassador of Ukraine to Italy  
Online address by Svitlana Shytikova, National Erasmus+ Office in Ukraine

**11:00-11:30 Coffee break**

**11:30-12:30**

Presentation by Olha Oseredchuk on the Global Coalition of Ukrainian Studies and opportunities for international academic cooperation

Presentation of workshop outcomes and ideas developed by participants during the Staff Week (3–5 June)

##### **Focus:**

- reflecting on key insights and experiences from the Staff Week;
- presenting educational and cooperation ideas developed during group work;
- discussing future Ukrainian Studies initiatives and partnerships;
- strengthening connections between Ukrainian and international universities.

**12:30-14:00 Lunch break**