

HROMADA Conference
Strengthening Ukraine:
Sharing Knowledge for a Sustainable Future
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Summary of the panel debates

Panel I: Building Back Better.

How Nordic and Baltic countries can support Ukraine's sustainable rebuilding

Ulf Bojö (NEFCO); **Olena Maslyukivska**, (University of Vaasa and NaUKMA); **Jiayi Zhou** (SIPRI); **Giedrė Dailidėnaitė** (Ukrainian-Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce); **Alina Zubkovych** (HROMADA and Nordic Ukraine Forum); **Karina Shyrokykh** (HROMADA and Stockholm University)

1. The war damages the environment and climate; it destroys the unique ecosystem in Ukraine pushing some of the species to the brink of extinction. But the process of rebuilding can also be damaging to the environment and climate. Therefore, **long-term green planning has to be an integral part of economic recovery.**
2. Ukraine has a unique ecosystem tightly linked with other European countries. **Rebuilding must include reforestation, restoration, and conservation** projects to redo at least some degree of harm caused by the war.
3. A **post-war environmental assessment** must be conducted to estimate the war's damage and hold Russia responsible for the environmental damage it inflicted.
4. Short- and long-term rebuilding priorities have to be distinguished. For long-term rebuilding, **local ownership and capacity building** must be prioritized.
5. **Climate change mitigation and adaptation have to be mainstreamed** in all policies including procurement, agriculture, transportation, housing, city planning, etc.
6. Sustainable rebuilding should prioritize **partnerships and cooperation with Hromadas** (communities). Rebuilding should take place with the involvement of local stakeholders including civil society and educational institutions who should contribute to the process but also benefit from capacity building.

Panel II: Ukrainian refugees in the Nordic and Baltic countries. Integration dilemmas

Halwan Ibrahim (Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity); **Karolis Zibas** (UNHCR Representation for the Nordic and Baltic countries); **Oksana Shmulyar Gréen** (University of Gothenburg); **Olga Biesha** ('Svenska med baby'); **Vilde Hernes** (OsloMet); **Aadne Aasland** (HROMADA and OsloMet)

Despite the presence of the EU's Temporary Protection Directive and comparable national legislation, the panelists identified **significant variations** among the countries in the region in their treatment of Ukrainian refugees. Notably, each of the **Baltic countries**, historically receiving fewer refugees, has, after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, taken in more refugees from Ukraine per capita than any of the Nordic countries.

The panelists underscored the **dilemma of striking a balance between short-term (temporary) and potential long-term perspectives** on the stay of Ukrainians in the region. They provided examples of how various stakeholders at different levels—ranging from European and regional (Nordic-Baltic) to national states, local authorities, and the refugees themselves—navigate these integration challenges. The panel drew attention to the **interests of Ukraine**, emphasizing the **risk of a significant loss of population** crucial for the country's post-war reconstruction efforts.

The discussion highlighted the importance of **learning from successful practices** implemented across the region and maintaining a close Nordic-Baltic dialogue with Ukrainian authorities to shape future policies towards refugees. Given the risk of the war in Ukraine becoming protracted, the panelists stressed the **need for continuous cooperation and proactive measures** to address the evolving situation.

Panel III: War crimes. How securing justice for Ukraine contributes to the rebuilding process

Evhen Tsybulenko (Tallin University of Technology); **Kateryna Latysh** (Vilnius University), **Gaiane Nuridzhanian** (UiT - The Arctic University of Norway), **Roman Nekoliak** (Centre for Civil Liberties); **Maryna Rabinovych** (HROMADA and University of Agder).

1. In legal terms, there is a considerable **difference between pursuing justice / holding Russia as a state accountable for its crime of aggression against Ukraine and ensuring individual war criminals' accountability** for the crimes they committed against Ukrainians (e.g. killings, rape, forced deportation and non-selective targeting of civilian infrastructure).

2. The former issue is a challenge in both conceptual legal and institutional terms, and there is no agreement between international actors so far as to how the trial of Russia for its crime of aggression should be organized. Solving this legal issue requires **concerted international effort**, as it will constitute a crucial precedent, as e.g. tribunals established after the Balkan Wars do.

3. Trying individual war criminals is, in turn, possible both in Ukraine and by law enforcement agencies of other countries (universal jurisdiction). **Developing practices of applying universal jurisdiction and exchanging information** about such cases is crucial to ensure legal certainty for individuals being tried.

4. There are thus three levels **Nordic and Baltic governments and agencies can contribute** to securing justice for Ukraine:

a. Develop measures to **strengthen the capacity of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies and courts** to investigate individual war crimes and bring perpetrators to justice.

b. **Coordinate at the regional level and internationally to develop guidelines** for the application of universal jurisdiction and related information exchange, in particular, focusing on legal certainty and non bis ibidem principle (right not to be punished twice for the same crime).

c. **Contribute to global discussions** on conceptualizing the crime of aggression and an institutional solution to bring Russian top officials accountable for it.