

**Nationalistic Europeanization?**  
**Conceptions of Europe and Transnational Network Structures**  
**of Nationalistic Movements in and around Ukraine**

Susann Worschech\*

*Department of European Studies,  
European University Viadrina,  
Frankfurt (Oder), Germany*

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Abstract

Although Ukraine's Euromaidan was not dominated by right-wing actors, it served as a platform for formerly fragmented nationalistic groups, helping them to become more visible, cooperative and politicized. Based on the Euromaidan's self-organization, however, not only a well-connected pro-democratic and progressive 'new' civil society emerged, but also a strengthened 'uncivil society' came into existence. Notwithstanding the weak results of right-wing parties in the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2014, nationalistic groups have been increasingly assertive in expressing publicly their claims and ideas of a fortified country, including the vision of an ethno-nationalistic Ukrainian identity and the consequent sovereignty of Ukraine within a particular 'Eastern European culture'.

This presents empirical findings on cooperation structures and ideas of nationalist actors in and around Ukraine. A network analysis reveals the roots and recent structures of Ukrainian right-wing actors. In analyzing the case of nationalistic networking related to the Intermarium concept as an alternative model of European supranational cooperation, this paper sheds light both on the transnationalization of ethnocentric societal closure and emerging alternative conceptions of a particular pan-Slavic, sovereignty-based Europeanization in Eastern Europe.

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Email: [worschech@europa-uni.de](mailto:worschech@europa-uni.de)

## 1. Introduction

In spring 2019, Ukraine successfully gave a surprise to the world: Although the country continues to suffer from the war in Donbas, the annexation of Crimea, the remaining status as one of Europe's poorest countries, the persistence of corruption on a high level and the vanishing of those dreams and hopes that Ukrainians articulated at the Euromaidan five years ago, radical positions and extremist parties did not play a relevant role in the presidential elections in March and April 2019. While radical right-wing extremist or populist parties and politicians gained ground in nearly every single European country – in particular, the wealthier ones – and nationalistic, xenophobic or reactionary claims take root not only at the margins, but also at the centers of European societies, right-wing ideology, concepts and politics obviously do not get significant support among Ukrainian voters. Does that mean that nationalism and extremism are on serious decline in Ukraine, or even that these are no relevant issues in the Ukrainian society?

Of course, this assumption stands in sharp contrast to the often heard accusation that Euromaidan would have been dominated by nationalistic and right-wing groups and activists – a myth that remains unchanged even in light of the poor performance of right-wing parties in all of Ukraine's elections since 2014. Compared with the countries' western neighbors, a strong party that resembles the popular so-called “anti-establishment reform parties” (Hanley and Sikk, 2016) with neoconservative, reactionary or nationalist orientations such as PiS or Fidesz did not crystallize in Ukraine so far. However, party politics is not all when talking about nationalism. As all ideologically substantiated politics, nationalist politics evolves in pre-political spheres, including movements, initiatives, organizations, networks and discourses – in short, in the civil society. This “uncivil society” (Kopecký and Mudde, 2003) can be considered an important origin and substructure for the evolution of right-wing political forces in many Eastern European countries (see Pytlas, 2015; Pirro, 2015). Consequently, and given the fact that the political landscape in Ukraine is still largely in transition, Ukraine's uncivil society and nationalist networks as potential pre-political realms for the development of similar parties deserve a closer look.

Furthermore, recent reports and empirical investigations strengthen the perception that nationalistic groups have been increasingly assertive in expressing publicly their claims and ideas of a fortified country, including the vision of an ethno-nationalistic Ukrainian identity (Likhachev, 2015; Melkozerova, 2018; Zimeta, 2017). Their ambitions to influence politics and society got strengthened by the relative weakness of the Ukrainian state during its recent transition phase since 2014, as right-wing groups started to act as militias and street police, thus claiming to ensure law

and order where the official police is not able to do that (Bennetts, 2018). But Ukraine's far right did not only get empowered by the weak state. Ukraine's opening and European orientation since 2014 promoted closer transnational linkages on institutional and societal levels, and transnational networking is not limited to non-nationalist realms. Quite the contrary, the rise of populism and right-wing extremism in Europe equally led to greater cooperation of right-wing groups across Europe of which Ukraine can be expected to be part of. In particular, Ukrainian right-wing groups became prominent proponents of conservative approaches of a nationalistic idea of Europeanization. During the last years, Ukrainian nationalists build up transnational networks to develop a particular concept of a pan-Slavic Eastern European geopolitical and cultural entity that is called 'Intermarium'. This transnationally established idea of a 'counter-Europe' based on Slavic nationalism appears to be one of the most crucial aspects of contemporary far right activities of ideology development and networking in and around Ukraine.

Taken together, a strengthened landscape of right-wing and nationalistic initiatives and activism in Ukraine evolved during the last years, what – in a longer run – could pave the way for nationalistic parties on the one hand and a stronger integration of Ukrainian nationalistic groups in European transnational right-wing movements and networks on the other hand. It is therefore the main research interest of my paper to figure out who the relevant groups of Ukraine's far right are, which activities they show and how they interact with other far-right movements and actors in Central and Eastern Europe. Which role did the Euromaidan and its subsequent events play for the establishment of a right-wing movement in Ukraine? What are cooperation patterns, networks and ideological frames do these actors build on the national and transnational levels, in particular related to the establishment of alternative concepts of Europe such as the idea of 'Intermarium'? These are questions that will be examined in this paper.

This explorative study will proceed as follows. In the next section, I will present a brief overview on the development of Ukraine's right-wing landscape and its evolution since Euromaidan. Based on this empirical overview, I will present a descriptive analysis of recent central actors – organizations as well as individuals- in Ukraine. I will also show how they build up national and transnational networks, in particular related to the Intermarium idea. I will conclude with an estimation of the uncivil society's potential for the evolution of right-wing parties and institutions in Ukraine and Eastern European pan-Slavic nationalism.

## 2. The new nationalistic movement in Ukraine: Facts and questions

### 2.1. Euromaidan as a take-off point for (un)civil society

Since 2014, the political and pre-political spheres in Ukraine are undergoing a profound process of re-structuring and re-organization. Civil society and the political culture are in a huge transformation process since the revolution of dignity. The impact of Euromaidan on the renewal of Ukraine's civil society had been subject of numerous empirical investigations during the last years, whereby the aspect of revitalization of civic activism during and after the protests was one of the aspects that received the most scientific attention (see, inter alia, Shapovalova et al., 2018). On a closer look, however, Euromaidan can be regarded not only as a catalyst, but equally as a moment of bifurcation for Ukraine's civil society. The Euromaidan wave of mobilization, underpinned solely by civil society itself, constituted a huge development boost for civic activism in various directions:

First, Euromaidan and the subsequent political changes in Ukraine were large windows of opportunity for the empowerment of prodemocratic, political active and often professional civil society organizations, including think tanks, political advisory groups and reform lobbying organizations, advocacy groups, anticorruption organizations and other usually referred to as 'public organizations' (Palyvoda, 2014). As Axyonova and Schöppner (2018) describe, in particular think tanks grew in numbers and scope of the issues they addressed; new forms of horizontal coordination and robust networking as, for instance, the Reanimation Package for Reforms Initiative, emerged and stronger transnational links, in particular to EU policy makers and NGOs, were established (ibid., p. 220ff.).

Second, another impetus for increased civic activism has to be seen in the excessive demand on the Ukrainian state. The lacking ability of state institutions to manage the wave of internal displacement and to counter the military attack by Russia on the peninsula of Crimea and the Russian-supported fighters in the Donbas region let to a huge mobilization of civic initiatives and volunteer groups who substituted dysfunctional state structures during the first months of the annexation and war (Zarembo, 2017; Worschech, 2017; Minakov, 2015). Activists and staff who were until then working in public organizations located in Crimea or Donbas had to flee themselves and often engaged in newly formed projects and organizations to support other internally displaced persons (IDPs) on cities all over Ukraine. The *House of the free People*, a Kyiv-based project led by activists from Luhansk and Simferopol which provided support, orientation, and advice for IDPs, is one stunning example of this shifted activism. But a huge part of the 'civic upswing' following Euromaidan can be observed in civic initiatives to support the armed forces and Ukraine's defense

capabilities vis-à-vis the conflict in Donbas. Considering the fully dysfunctional armed forces of Ukraine – resources for Ukraine’s defense structures had been cut back to nearly nothing in the years before Euromaidan – the supply of combat units with medical products, first aid trainings, consumables and even hand-made camouflage gear was of enormous relevance (Worschech, 2018). This huge mobilization of civil society is ambivalent: On the one hand, the country-wide volunteer-based civic activism that focused obvious needs and problems of the society is exactly what Ukraine was lacking since its independence. Notwithstanding the exceptional mobilization potential for protests and ‘revolutionary moments’ (Onuch and Onuch, 2011), Ukraine’s civil society has been divided into professionalized NGOs and few marginalized initiatives; the alienation between civic or public organizations and the general public, however, barely could have been larger. Euromaidan changed this polarization with a great empowerment of people across regions, classes, and political orientations. The experience of having an impact could be seen as a motivation for further civic engagement once the need of supporting armed forces or IDPs is decreasing. The problematic aspect is, on the other hand, that this new activism and social responsibility was related to the issues of violence, war, and the defense of ‘the nation’ – thus, to issues that not usually associated with civic activism. It is questionable whether activism that is related to the highly emotionally charged issues of war and conflict may provide a basis for ‘civil’ civic activism in the Tocquevillean sense of civil society.

This leads to the third direction of how civic activism has been fostered following the Euromaidan: Many of the self-defense units that were established to protect the protests against riot police attacks continued their activities after the protests had ended. Some turned into civic organizations or joined cooperations with other initiatives to provide support to the armed forces – for instance, *MedAutoMaidan* or *The Volunteer’s Hundred* (see Worschech, 2017). But it is well known that numerous groups of fighters were formed out of the Euromaidan defense groups – the Azov regiment is probably the most prominent one. Based on their relative prominence and (admittedly) importance in the first months of the war in Donbas, these groups became an important mainstay for the further development of the right-wing scene in Ukraine. As I have argued in my review on the development of military support groups (Worschech 2017, 2018), these groups were linked to the political sphere of party politics and administration, to volunteer initiatives and other groups and organizations in the pre-political sphere via multifold ways. Further, nationalistic claims and actors enjoyed an increasing legitimacy as the basic tenor of Euromaidan and the subsequent events had a nationalistic component in the way that the Ukrainian society strived for autonomy and national self-determination, national integrity and independence, and not at least, for a new national identity

evolving from the collective effort of the protest.

In brief, the volunteer and civic mobilization comprised a broad range of pre-political actors, including left, democratic and western oriented parts as well as the nationalistic part of the spectrum. The development boost that Euromaidan signified for civil society equally targeted the ‘uncivil’ society.

The focus of this study therefore tries to close a gap in post-Euromaidan civil society research by analyzing who the actors of this ‘uncivil society’ are, how their roots and development path are related to Euromaidan, how they are interconnected and which networks and cooperation structures they build, and which ideas they promote. These aspects will be analyzed in the national and transnational context as for any civic actor in Ukraine, transnational support and networking are relevant and important aspects, and therefore, this aspect should not be ignored for the nationalistic spectrum of civil society.

## ***2.2. Procedure and methods of the empirical study***

As this study is an explorative and empirical attempt to gather information on the right-wing scene in Ukraine, a document analysis of newspaper articles and descriptions of the subject represents the starting point as Ukraine’s right-wing scene has been of growing interest to journalistic coverage during the last years. On the basis of that data and a subsequent further research via a snowballing system, relevant network patterns are analyzed and visualized in a social network analysis. Finally, ideas and transnational political claims of the relevant groups will be presented using the example of the Intermarium concept.

As this paper is a very first collection of empirical and in particular network data of nationalistic groups and actors in Ukraine, theories on and definitions of nationalism, fascism, neo-conservatism are not discussed here. An overview of ideological directions and concepts for differentiation of these actors can be found in Andreas Umlands’ (2015) and Anton Shekhovtsov’s (2013, 2015) writings on nationalism in post-Soviet societies. In this paper, however, groups expressing nationalistic and radical visions of conservatism are considered to be part of the post-Euromaidan far-right / nationalistic uncivil society in Ukraine.

## **3. Ukrainian nationalism and the European context: Structures and Ideas**

### ***3.1. Nationalist groups, movements and actors in Ukraine: Who is who?***

Ukraine’s far right today consists of a plurality of individuals and organizations, including political parties, party organizations, non-governmental or civic organizations (NGOs), informal initiatives,

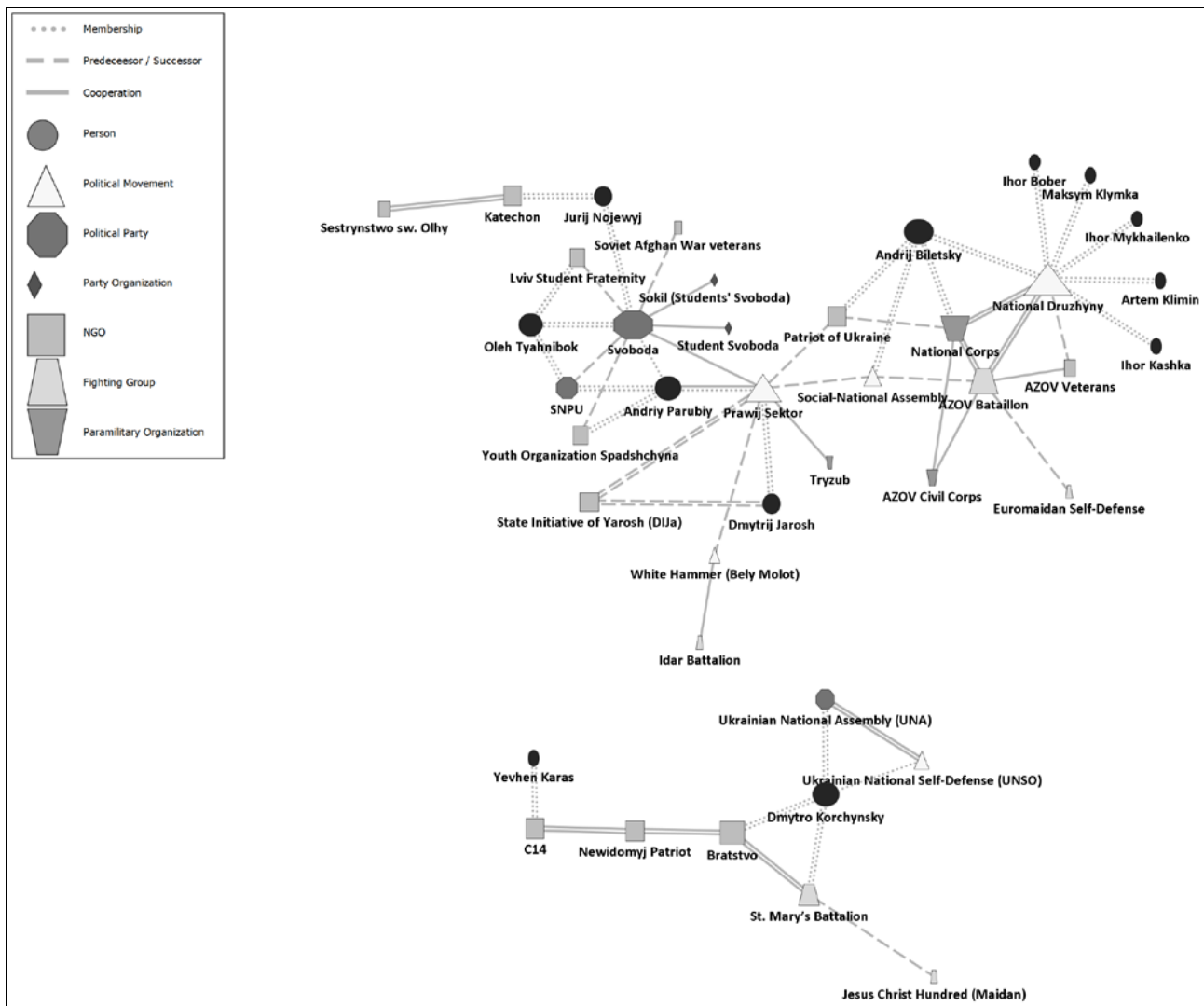
defense groups, civil guards and paramilitary organizations, inter alia. In particular since 2014, the far right finds itself in permanent transition so that parties and organizations evolve and disappear, persons create and leave movements, and parties merge or break (Likhachev, 2013; Likhachev, 2015; Likhachev, 2016).<sup>1</sup> Based on a social network analysis, it is possible to trace the transformations, cooperation and recent foci of development of Ukraine's far right.

Figure 1 shows the network of the main far-right organizations. In a broad perspective, three sub-networks or clusters are obvious: On the left side of the network map, several organizations and individuals are arranged around one central node which is the party Svoboda. This central actor and the surrounding network of organizations and actors form the rather party-based component of the spectrum. On the right side of the graph, we find a conglomerate of paramilitary groups, organizations, one younger party and several important individuals – this is a more movement-oriented component of Ukraine's far right, where Andriy Biletsky, a Member of Parliament, former commander of the Azov-battalion, and leader of the party National Corps, is a central figure. The actor that connects both components of the network – the party- and the movement-style parts – is the Right Sector – both a party, umbrella organization, movement and probably the epitome for Ukraine's far right.

However, one organization that shows a high level of continuity is Svoboda, a far-right but today rather neoconservative than radical or extremist party. Svoboda had been founded in 2004 based on the nationalist party SNPU (founded in the 1990s), the veteran organization of Soviet Afghan War Veterans, and two far-right youth and student organizations. In the years before Euromaidan, Svoboda was already successful in Ukraine's parliamentary elections, gaining about 11% of the votes. Likhachev (2015: 260) underlines that many leading figures of Svoboda from that time left no doubt about their right-wing extremist orientation so that the party has to be seen, at least during their first decade, as the most prominent proponent of Ukraine's far right. Today's most important figures – Oleh Tyahnybok and Andriy Parubiy – had been active members of the SNPU and the student organizations as well. Around Svoboda, activists established a broad network of political and pre-political organizations, mainly party youth organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> An encompassing overview of Ukraine's far right before and in particular at and after Euromaidan is provided by Likhachev (2015), including a detailed description of activities and structuring processes of single groups. In this paper, the focus lies on network structures, but for anyone who is interested in details on a particular group, this study is highly recommended. Another – much less detailed – compilation of relevant right-wing actors in Ukraine is provided in German by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (2019).



**Figure 1: Network of nationalist actors in Ukraine.** Distances are not scaled. Visualization by the author using *visone*.

It is obvious that Svoboda forms one central node that links several recent and former organizations as well as individuals. Among them, Andriy Parubiy is of particular interest as he is one person linking the Svoboda environment to the Right Sector, a conglomerate of political party and paramilitary organization founded in 2014 by Dmytro Jarosh. Originally “an ad-hoc union of a number of small radical right groups that had been formed at the Maidan” (Likhachev, 2015: 258), During the first days of the Euromaidan protests, the Right Sector was an umbrella for a few dozens of activists, nationalists, hooligans and others who was it as their task to defend the Euromaidan against the regime’s police forces, but who also attacked left-wing and feminist activists on Euromaidan. When the attacks of the Yanukovych regime towards the protests increased, the self-defense forces at Euromaidan grew equally and came to be the most prominent group of activists during the last days of the protests in February 2014. As Likhachev (2015: 266) notes, by that time,



the Right Sector was the most organized of all defense groups and so-called “hundreds” of Euromaidan, what laid a basis for their continued relevance for Ukraine’s far right.

The Right Sector was equally linked to an organization that had been founded in 2005 and can be seen as one of the most successful and influential right-wing extremist groups until Euromaidan: the “Patriot of Ukraine”, founded and run by Andriy Biletsky. In the same time, Biletsky created another right-wing movement called the “Social-National Assembly” whose members were, together with “Patriot of Ukraine, in 2013/14 also members of the Right Sector. After the protests had ended in February 2014, out of this movement the prominent Azov-Battalion, a paramilitary organization and defense unit that had later been integrated in the regular armed forces of Ukraine, was established. In 2016, the NGO “Patriot of Ukraine” were transformed into a political party. The “National Corps” is clearly more far-right than Svoboda – if not neo-fascist. Again, Biletsky is the central figure of the party until now and can therefore be seen as one of the most prominent and central figures of recent far-right activism in Ukraine.

Azov, the National Corps and the paramilitary sub-organization of the National Corps, the “National Druzhyny” (founded in 2017), are seen in recent publications as central parts of what can be called the Azov movement – the largest right-wing extremist group of Ukraine, counting up to 20.000 members and, among them, at least 1.500 active fighters (Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2019). But as Fig. 1 shows, the Azov Battalion itself is embedded in a much broader environment of veteran organizations and paramilitary groups. The National Druzhyny, in particular, recently gained broader attendance as they regularly act as street militia and even enter parliamentary or council meetings in order to secure what they perceive as a functioning state (Bennetts, 2018). According to the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation’s study (see above, 2019), they are also known for their attacks on left-wing activists and Roma villages, for example. Further, as can be seen in Figure 1, the National Druzhyny forms a hub for connecting prominent right-wing activists and educating them as future leaders.

Another important cluster of Ukraine’s far right is made up of the “Brotherhood/Bratstvo” movements. The core of this movement is formed by the hooligan groups Bratstvo whose leader, Dmytro Korchynsky, was one of the central figures to found the first nationalist party of independent Ukraine, the Ukrainian National Assembly (UNA) in 1990. Based on one of the Euromaidan’s Hundreds – the “Jesus Christ Hundred” – the Bratstvo movement established a forced unit, the St. Mary’s Battalion, and cooperates with other ultra-nationalist groups. The interesting aspect is the strong clerical-conservative ideology of the Bratstvo movement that links Ukrainian

nationalism to radical Christianity: Bratstvo called itself a “Christian Hezbollah”, and the St. Mary’s Battalion got the name “Christian Taliban” who implemented a “Ukrainian jihad against the Russians” (Mamon, 2015).

Apart from their religious- or non-religious justification of nationalism, the most central groupings or movements – Bratstvo and the AZOV movement with their political core National Corps share the dilemma that ideologically, they are sandwiched in their strong rejection of an affiliation with the EU on the one side and with Russia on the other. But both develop ideas on transnational activism and transnational political right-wing activism in Europe that conceptualizes Slavic culture, traditions and values as the core of an alternative structure of European cooperation: the Intermarium which will be discussed in the next section.

### *3.2. Nationalistic internationalism: the Intermarium concept*

It might be surprising that a security concept for Central and Eastern European Countries has not only become an idea of identity politics, but equally contributes to the internationalization of nationalism. However, the Intermarium concept turned from a hypothesis of how security demands of central and eastern European countries could be better addressed into an alternative conception of European integration based on conservative if not right-wing values.



**Figure 2: The Intermarium region in the smaller version of the concept, excluding the Balkan states.**

(Retrieved from <https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Intermarium-469x300.jpg>)

The idea of establishing a security alliance among those countries that are located between Western

Europa and Russia is not quite new but dates back to a proposal made by the Polish interwar statesman Josef Pilsudski. Back in the 1920s, Pilsudski argued that a Slavic confederation would be in need, in his vision based on the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and – no question – under Polish leadership. This regional union called “Międzymorze“ included the countries between the two seas – Baltic and Black Sea – starting with Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus; later, it was broadened to the Baltic states, the Balkan and other Central European countries. But with the end of the interwar period and the occupation and division of Central Europe by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, the idea vanished (Starzyk and Tomaszewska, 2017; Kott, 2017).

The basic idea of Intermarium / Międzymorze as an alternative international security architecture for Central Europe became, however, an issue of recent debates even among liberal thinkers (see, for example, Umland, 2016). The concept obviously came back to the agenda in 2014 when not only Ukraine, but many countries in Central and Eastern Europe feared the renaissance of Russian dominance. The Russian attack on Ukraine was clearly interpreted as failure of the Budapest memorandum and of Ukraine’s western partners in general. Consequently, Intermarium is perceived as a ‘third way’ for Central Europe not only by nationalists, but also by Poland’s president Andrzej Duda, for instance. As Starzyk and Tomaszewska (2017) show, the basic idea of Intermarium – a strengthened cooperation and security policy of the countries located between the three seas (Baltic, Black and Adrian Sea) – has even been an implicit angle of Polish foreign policy during the last two decades and was discussed as the ‘Three Seas Initiative’ in Poland and beyond.

For nationalists, the Intermarium concept provides an attempt of saving the (Christian) ‘heartland’ of Europe as ‘the true Europe’, and it is seen as a bulwark both against the (perceived) liberal, secular and ‘decadent’ European Union and against the Russian Idea of Neo-Eurasianism (Kott, 2017). In that way, it appears to be a nearly perfect ideology for the Ukrainian far-right scene which is more or less sandwiched in the strong rejection of an affiliation with the EU on the one side and with Russia on the other. Intermarium is an anti-liberal, anti-individualistic and anti-pluralistic ideology that does no longer draw on nation-based nationalism, but on a supremacy based on ethnic exclusivity and culture. The inherent idea of “Ethnofuturism” (Wishard, 2018) stresses the superiority a particular white ethnicity related to East European descent of “blood and soil”(ibid.), combined with Christian Orthodox or Catholic religious tradition.

In Ukraine, the National Corpus, together with the Azov movement, actively promotes the idea of building an alliance not only in terms of security cooperation, but also with the aim of establishing a Slavic identity and ethnicity. In July 2016, an international conference was held in Kyiv, organized

by Andriy Biletsky and designed as the Inaugural Conference of the Intermarium Development Assistance Group (see figure 3). Azov members were among the most prominent speakers, as Biletsky opened the conference with a welcoming address and Mykola Kravchenko, deputy head of the Staff of the “Azov” Civil Corps, presented models of military cooperation in a future Baltic-Black Sea Union. Azov also provided its headquarters as the location of the conference on the second conference day. Therefore, Biletsky, his party National Corps and the Azov movement can be regarded the driving forces of the internationalization of Ukraine’s nationalists.



**Figure 3: Poster of the Intermarium conference, 2.-3.7.2016**

Participants of this conference came from various countries of the Intermarium region, first and foremost from Poland, but also from the Baltic States, Croatia, Slovakia, but also from Georgia and Russia and even from Russia. A conference report on the far-right internet platform Nova Europa / L'imperium<sup>2</sup> cheers the spirit and commitment of the participants, maintaining that volunteer organizations and government representatives from the whole region about the idea and the

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.neuropaimperium.com/>

meeting.<sup>3</sup>

The conference elaborated cooperation models and ideas in several sections and political fields; pivotal were the issues of military cooperation and defense; economics and energy; geopolitics, science, education and culture.

In the debates focusing military cooperation, the failure of international security guarantees for peace and integral sovereignty in Europe were central narratives for justification of an alternative model. Discussion with experts in military cooperation would have shown that “potential partner countries of the Intermarium are really worthy of this title, unlike Western partner ‘peacekeepers’.” ( see FN 2) – this perception mirrors the huge mistrust and disappointment related to existing geopolitical security structures which Ukraine’s and Europe’s far right now may successfully exploit to promote their own security architecture. Again, the Azov movement speakers were among those who set the agenda with substantiated ideas of military cooperation. Speakers and discussants from Georgia, Poland and Belarus promoted future projects in the fields of joint military education, energy infrastructure and military-industrial cooperation.

Besides these issues, geopolitical and culture- and identity-related issues were discussed, focusing Croatia as an example of national resistance to protect its cultural identity in spite of the disdained ‘globalization trends in the EU’. In several section, the report makes clear that the Intermarium or Baltic-Black Sea Commonwealth would be an alternative and broadly accepted model of cultural resistance of Central European societies and culture.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.neuropaimperium.com/8718-2/>



**Figure 4: Banner at the Intermarium Conference, 2.-3.7.2016.**

Picture retrieved from <http://www.neuropaimperium.com/8718-2/>

It should be noted that the internationalization of nationalists yields some surprising coalitions which would be called reconciliation in democracy promotion programs. The conference brought together nationalists from Ukraine and Poland, Poland and Lithuania, as well as from Russian and Ukraine. Historical and political tensions are obviously no longer an issue at stake when a broader right-wing concept of an alternative European Union is to be discussed. Representatives of Russian nationalistic organizations such as the 'Russian Insurgent Army (RPA)' and The Russian Center' – a coordination platform of Russian nationalists in exile in Kyiv – enjoyed particular sympathy at the conference. The Russian Center itself connects groups like the organization M8L8TH which stands on strong anti-Putin positions and advocates pan-European unity instead of 'Eurasian assimilation'. As the conference report notes, the Intermarium concept reveals too much effort and energy would have been wasted on discussions about the past while now it would be time to enhance the cultural, educational, academic and scientific cooperation and overcoming ethnic tensions among the countries of the region (see FN 2). This interpretation is astonishing and shows that the international cooperation potential of European nationalists should not be underestimated. The particular situation in Ukraine, lacking European solidarity and effective policies to restore international law and peace in Ukraine, can be seen as a catalytic force of this transnational alliance of nationalists.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The aim of the research presented in this paper is to show how the Ukrainian far right scene, which



has been on the rise since Euromaidan, is developing new structures of cooperation, movements and transnational embeddedness. The diffuse and multi-faceted scene of Ukrainian nationalistic actors is comprised of more and less radical and extremist parties, organizations, and – what signifies a difference to other Central European Countries – quite a number of paramilitary organizations and combat units, as well as their surrounding networks. With regard to the network analysis, it appears that the recent far right scene is more or less divided in a rather moderate, party-oriented component which is not too present in political debates and contentions at the moment, a second component of combat units and organizations that are based on militant Christianity, and – as the most powerful and agenda driving component – the movement sector around the Azov organizations. The related political party, the National Corps, is not a strong actor in the sense of party politics, but it is, like a spider in the web, the key platform for coordination and furthering ideology as well as transnational cooperation.

The Intermarium or Baltic-Black Sea Commonwealth is one of the ideas that obviously gives new power and ideological foundation not only to nationalists from Ukraine but also from many Central European countries. Moreover, it provides a political-practical necessity and thereby, a pattern of legitimization for establishing an internationalization of nationalists. The cooperation patterns that are to be established around the Intermarium issue can be springboard for a broader nationalistic movement in Central and Eastern Europe that elaborates and promotes alternative conceptions of European integration. Considering the increasing Euroscepticism all over Europe, this idea may fall on fertile ground in several European countries and could probably attract the interest of moderate conservative parties, political leaders and organizations as well. Consequently, transnational nationalistic networking activities and the Intermarium idea should be given further scientific attention.

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