

CHARTER OF THE UKRAINIAN COSMOPOLIS

I. Preamble

Ukrainian Cosmopolis is an independent, non-governmental, charitable organisation rooted in Odessa and open to the world.

We exist to protect and develop Odessa's plural, European, polyglot civic culture; to strengthen Ukraine as an open, humane, democratic state; and to cultivate a public sphere grounded in reasoned debate, historical understanding and cultural freedom.

We bring together writers, scholars, artists, journalists, musicians, and citizens who share this vision and work, in their own ways, toward a city and a country that live in light rather than in fear.

Our motto is "**civil conversation for uncivil times.**"

II. Values & Manifesto

Members of the Ukrainian Cosmopolis endorse and uphold the following shared values:

1. Humanism over tribalism

We see humanity as one shared project. Odessa's strength has always been its diversity; we defend pluralism and reject all forms of ethnic chauvinism.

2. Civic nationalism

We support Ukraine as a democratic state of equal citizens, rooted in rights, freedoms and responsibilities.

3. Artistic and intellectual freedom

Culture is not a weapon of politics. It is a sphere of imagination, critique, and human depth. We protect the autonomy of literature, scholarship, and the arts.

4. Historical literacy

Odessa's history is complex, layered, and trans-imperial. We reject erasure in all

directions and advocate for contextualisation, education, and open public discussion.

5. Cosmopolitan Odessa as a European city

Odessa's vocation is to be a port of ideas, languages, and cultures. We work to realise this vocation in contemporary Ukraine.

6. Dialogue over dogma

We foster serious, open, reasoned argument — and resist ideological intimidation, purity tests, and culture-war theatrics.

III. Purposes & Activities

The Ukrainian Cosmopolis advances its mission through:

1. Literary and artistic work

- Residencies for writers, journalists, artists, scholars
- The Babel Prize and other literary initiatives
- Public readings, salons, workshops, festivals

2. Cultural and heritage stewardship

- Research and advocacy to preserve Odessa's built heritage and multilingual traditions
- Collaboration with local and international institutions, museums, archives, and UNESCO networks

3. Scholarly and intellectual life

- Lectures, discussions, debates, educational programmes
- Support for research on history, anthropology, literature, memory, identity, urban life

4. Civic engagement

- Public interventions, open letters, statements, public education

- Defence of pluralism, linguistic rights, and democratic civic culture

Members support these aims to the extent they are able — through thought, presence, advice, writing, creativity, or public voice. No financial obligation is expected.

IV. Membership

Membership in the Ukrainian Cosmopolis is open to individuals who:

1. **Adhere to the core values** described above.
2. **Support, in spirit and to the degree possible, the Cosmopolis mission and activities.**
3. **Respect our code of communication and conduct** (below).

There are **no other requirements or demands**.

Members are free to hold and express diverse political, cultural, and scholarly views. Disagreement is welcome. Serious debate is central to our ethos.

V. Communication & Conduct Code

Because Cosmopolis is committed to strengthening the culture of civil conversation in Ukraine, we ask all members to uphold the following standards **in all public spaces** (including social media), especially when commenting on Ukraine, Odessa, culture, and issues close to our mission:

1. **No personal insults.**

Disagree fiercely, but do not demean or attack individuals.

2. **No incivility.**

No mockery, humiliation, ad hominem, or aggression.

3. **No chauvinistic or divisive language.**

In particular, members must not divide Ukrainians into categories of “front vs rear,” “inside vs outside the country,” or any hierarchy of legitimacy based on occupation, ethnicity, language or location.

4. No ranking of human worth.

Cosmopolis rejects all hierarchies of value among this world’s citizens.

5. Commitment to factual accuracy and intellectual honesty.

We do not spread unverified rumours or inflammatory speculation.

6. Freedom of expression within the bounds of respect.

Members may express any view — including minority, unpopular, or critical views — provided it does not violate the principles above.

VI. Non-Compliance

The Cosmopolis community is built on trust.

If a member repeatedly violates the communication code — especially through personal attacks, chauvinistic slurs, or behaviour that contradicts our mission — the organising committee may suspend or remove their membership.

This is a measure of last resort.

Our goal is to cultivate a community that raises the standard of public conversation in Ukraine, not to police speech.

VII. Closing

Ukrainian Cosmopolis is a civic, cultural, intellectual platform.

We are not a party, faction, or ideological camp. We are a *place* — a port, a kitchen table — where thought, art, history, and argument meet. Our ambition is simple and radical: to help build a country in which culture breathes freely and citizens speak with dignity.

By joining the Cosmopolis, members affirm their commitment to this spirit and to the future of Odessa as a truly European city in a truly modern Ukraine.