



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on September 17, 2023

U.S. Offers to Finance Polish Media for Ukraine Coverage

In an attempt to get Polish news outlets to write stories about Ukrainian refugees “returning and rebuilding,” the U.S. Consulate General in Krakow offered \$50,000 for the year-long endeavor.

Details of the campaign, which were published on the [website](#) of the U.S. embassy in Poland under the designation WAW-NOFO-FY23-05, reveal that the project hopes “to promote coverage in Poland by local and regional media representatives of stories in Ukraine.” The deadline for submissions was September 15.



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The post added that the campaign’s goal was to “promote in-depth reporting by local and regional Polish media of the return of Ukrainian families from Poland to Ukraine and their social and physical rebuilding efforts, particularly those built on partnerships between Poles and Ukrainians.”

Journalists’ articles should encourage “public understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by Ukrainians,” as well as interest in Ukrainian “efforts to return and rebuild” and the “enduring impact of support provided by Polish society to Ukrainian refugees.”

The website hints that the project would be granted to a Polish NGO, with U.S. embassy staff having “substantial involvement in the grant implementation, including reviewing and approving selection of participants, trainers, and award decisions within the project.”

The NGO would obtain a grant of \$50,000 and then have Polish journalists compete for parts of the money. Subsequently, the embassy would assess the journalists via the “quality and reach of reports generated.”

The funding opportunity entails at least one workshop teaching the reporters “culturally sensitive and trauma-informed manner and how to create compelling human-interest stories in this context,” taught by “experts in the intersection between mental health and journalism in war zones” and others with suitable backgrounds.

The project is poised to last for an entire year, although Washington reserves the right to prolong the time frame if it evaluates the project to be “in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.”

Presently, there are around one million Ukrainian refugees in Poland. According to various surveys of Ukrainians settled in EU countries, over 40 percent do not plan to return even if the Russo-Ukrainian conflict ends. While Warsaw has supposedly sent men of military age back, other EU members have not done so on the pretext of human rights.

Meanwhile, on September 13, Polish President Andrzej Duda declared at the Krynica Forum in southern Poland that Ukraine cannot join the NATO military alliance insofar as it continues its conflict with Russia. Duda’s statements came as he alluded to a meeting with Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky to discuss Kyiv’s membership bid in NATO in the months prior to the group’s summit in July this year.



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"From the beginning, we were of course aware that this was a very difficult issue. In particular, it's difficult simply because there's a war going on and we're all well aware that a direct admission of Ukraine as a full member of NATO is out of the question at this point," Duda said, as quoted by PAP news agency.

The Polish leader elaborated that owing to Article 5 of the NATO treaty, which dictates that an attack on one member state would require that other alliance members respond to the attack, NATO would have to join the conflict in Ukraine and combat Russia if Kyiv joins its ranks now.

"It was obvious that NATO countries wouldn't agree" to such a scenario during the high-profile meeting in the Lithuanian capital, Duda stated.

The Polish leader posited that the goal of the summit in Vilnius was only "to open the door to NATO for Ukraine ... so that Russia couldn't hold this door with its foot." He refused to assert when Kyiv would be able to go through this "door," but pledged that Warsaw will back Kyiv in its NATO bid "with all our strength."

When the Vilnius meeting ended, Zelensky blasted the bloc for its hesitancy to stipulate a time frame for Ukraine's eventual accession. Writing on social media, the Ukrainian leader slammed this omission as "unprecedented and absurd," and indicated that "indecisiveness" on the matter was a display of "weakness" in the alliance. He ultimately toned down on his words, though, portraying the overall outcome of the summit as "positive."

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg hitherto told the European Parliament that "Ukraine has never been closer to a membership in NATO than now" owing to the establishment of the NATO-Ukraine Council and the exemption for a Membership Action Plan for Kyiv, as decided in Vilnius. Nevertheless, the NATO leader failed to provide details for Ukraine's ultimate accession.

For its part, Moscow, which regards NATO as an adversarial bloc and staunchly opposes its eastward enlargement, emphasized Kyiv's designs of becoming a NATO member as one of the key reasons for its military operation in Ukraine in February 2022.

Russia has maintained that, while it is open to peace talks, Kyiv has to admit "realities on the ground" and create conducive conditions for such talks.

"The Kyiv regime will have to start this conversation by recognizing the reality that has come into being since Kyiv ... rejected the resolution of issues through peaceful means," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

On its end, Kyiv has demanded that Moscow agree to the 10-step "Zelensky peace formula," which urges the total withdrawal of Russian troops from former Ukrainian territories and demands reparations from Moscow.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres acknowledged in a statement made during a press conference on September 13 that peace talks between Kyiv and Moscow were not in the cards in the near future. "I would be happy to become a mediator between Russia and Ukraine to reach peace negotiations, but this is still a long way off," he admitted.

During the press conference, Guterres also revealed that he would be doing "everything possible" to re-establish the Black Sea grain deal, which was meant to enable the export of Ukrainian grain amid the present conflict between Russia and Ukraine. In mid-July this year, Russia pulled out of the treaty, explaining that the West had not adhered to its obligations under the agreement.



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