

THE IMAGE OF UKRAINE AND UKRAINIANS ON THE MASS MEDIA SCENE OF FRANCE

HAVRYLYUK Inna,

PhD (Social Communications), Associate Professor,

Sumy State University, 2, Rymnsko-Korsakova st., Sumy, 40007, Ukraine, e-mail: gavruluk-inna@yan-dex.ru

The article studies the image formation of Ukraine and Ukrainians on the media scene of France. It was found out that French mass media do not stand aside from the processes, which are taking place in Ukraine. First of all, they publish articles concerning the political aspects conditioned by the war conflict in the East of the country. The image of Ukraine and Ukrainians is generally composed of positive modes. French media support European aspirations of Ukrainians; they admire courage of the Ukrainian military. However, there is not much information about cultural and sport life of Ukrainians. Thus, the image of Ukraine is represented somewhat scrappy.

Key words: *image, Ukraine, mass media, European integration.*

Introduction. European integration under conditions of the political crisis in Ukraine is vital for building an independent democratic state. Identification of the country on the international scene and the possibility of full-fledged dialogue between Ukraine and the EU depend on many factors. The European media play an important role as one of the main compilers of the image of Ukraine. The media gives the opportunity to create or at least give impetus to form a holistic view of Ukraine and its people as an integral part of the European community. The role of media in formation the constructive communication between Ukraine and the EU was studied in research of N. Karpchuk, E. Makarenko, M. Ozhevana, N. Ryzhkov, V. Parfenyuk, A. Shynkaruk and others [3; 5; 9]. As T. Yurchenko rightly noted «on the way of full-fledged dialogue between Ukraine and the EU there are a number of obstacles, the most determinative among them is a lack of formed European communicative discourse in the country» [10, P. 1].

The aim of research is to show the image of Ukraine, formed by French media in 2014.

Results and discussions. 2014 is a landmark period on the way of Ukraine to the EU. That year such events as Euromaidan, the annexation of the Crimea, the beginning of the military conflict in the East of Ukraine, and the presidential elections happened. That year the country was recovering after the great shock and at the same time was on the verge of drastic changes that opened vast prospects.

The electronic versions of three national editions of France: Le Figaro, Le Monde and Liberation were analyzed.

Le Figaro is a French daily newspaper. It began in 1826. Its motto «Where there is no freedom of criticism, any praise cannot be pleasant» as its title is associated with the famous comedy by Pierre Beaumarchais «The Marriage of Figaro». Today the newspaper is controlled by Serge Dassault, the representative of the conservatives, who defined the editorial policy of the edition as following: «Newspapers should promote healthy ideas». The subject content of Le Figaro is diverse. Its main categories are political and economic news, culture and sports news from France and around the world.

The newspaper Le Monde is a daily evening paper of the left liberal direction. It was founded in 1944 by the order of Charles de Gaulle. The content of publication is structured mainly in such headings as politics, society, economy, planet, sport.

The newspaper Liberation has been published since 1973. Unlike Le Figaro and Le Monde three-quarters of its first band is usually occupied by a large color photo. On the front pages there is national news, followed by information about modern discoveries

and international news. In general, the thematic content of the newspaper is diverse. It embraces politics and socio-economic problems as well as the problems of mass media, sports and culture.

Euromaidan in Ukraine is in the center of the first publications in analyzed editions. With great enthusiasm the newspaper *Le Figaro* informed its readers that western diplomats unanimously welcomed the agreement between the government and the opposition in Ukraine. Francois Hollande called Ukrainian leaders to fulfill their obligation to implement the agreement without delay. The White House also welcomed such further developments and at the same time stressed its readiness to introduce sanctions if necessary («President Yanukovych has made concessions to end the crisis», 02.21.2014).

The journalists of *Le Monde* described the situation on the Maidan in Kiev in detail: «The ongoing protests struck Ukraine, the Maidan more and more like a huge paramilitary camp. There where were heard mass performances and concerts, now on the big screen there is a video that extols the glory of the Cossacks» – we read in the correspondence («In Kiev Maidan protesters are waiting for more concrete commitments from Europe», 02.04.2014). The journalists, who objectively covered the information, draw attention to the weaknesses in the actions of the European countries aimed to overcome the political crisis in Ukraine. This also includes sanctions against Russia.

The journalists of *Le Figaro*, objectively describing the military conflict in Ukraine, condemned the intervention of Russia and supported Ukraine. They proved the intention of the Ukrainians to integrate to Europe, citing Arseniy Yatsenyuk: «Ukraine sees its future in Europe as a member of the European Union» («Ukrainian Prime Minister Yatsenyuk worries about the crisis in the Crimea», 02.07.2014).

Commenting upon the signing the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine newspaper *Le Monde* quotes Herman Van Rompuy, the President of the European Council: «This is a great day for Europe. The European Union is on your side, now more than ever». This confirms the importance of the agreement for Europe and for Ukraine, which is considered as an integral part of Europe («Ukraine signed the Association Agreement with the EU», 27.06.2014).

The newspaper *Le Monde* also describes the attitude of different countries, Canada, for instance, to the internal conflict in Ukraine. The Minister of Defense of Canada Rob Nicholson during his visit to Kyiv said that the West should «keep the pressure on Russia to force it to respect the independence of Ukraine» («The week has a crucial meaning for peace process in Ukraine», «The IMF in Kiev», 08.12.2014). In general, the newspapers during the stated period focused their attention on the role of the international community to overcome the political crisis in Ukraine.

The journalists of *Liberation* focus on the support for Ukraine from Europe and the desire of Ukraine to raise to a new level of development and enter the Community of the European Union: «They [the newly formed government of Ukraine] should quickly agree on a coalition and begin to reform the country to bring it to the European Union and try to pull the country out of a deep economic and financial crisis, which was intensified as a result of the conflict in the East» («The Premier's positional power», 10.28.2014).

The President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko appears as a leader who is trying to stop the aggression and overcome the political crisis in the country. This is stated in several publications of the newspaper *Le Monde* («The week has a crucial meaning for peace process in Ukraine», 08.12.2014; «Ukraine: truce seems to be holding, Poroshenko calls for the withdrawal of Russian troops», 11.12.2014).

The mood of the residents of Donbas, the role of Russian mercenaries, military equipment and military support under the guise of humanitarian aid are covered in *Le Figaro*: «In Sloviansk (the east of Ukraine) hundreds of residents triumphantly cheered six tanks and the soldiers that came to reinforce pro-Russian camp». This confirms the

objectivity in covering the events in Eastern Ukraine («Kyiv is helpless against the pro-Russian militias in Eastern Ukraine» 16.04.2014r.)

One of the main topics that concerns Ukraine in the newspaper *Le Figaro* is a notice to Russia about sanctions made by the heads of various European countries and the USA: «Any Russian intervention in the Ukrainian state affairs is unacceptable, it contradicts to international law and leads to additional sanctions» – said in the article «In the east of Ukraine pro-Russian separatists say that they are ready for a cease-fire» (08.09.2014).

The newspaper *Le Monde* also writes about the sanctions against Russia: «The EU and the US imposed high fines on Moscow. These sanctions, combined with oil price fall, led to the fall of the ruble. From the beginning of the year the ruble fell by 47 % against the euro and more than two-thirds (63 %) against the dollar («Ukraine: everything ended near the Donetsk airport, verbal escalation», 02.12.2014).

Joining Ukraine to NATO is an urgent question on the pages of the newspaper *Liberation*. It is considered as a guarantee of territorial integrity of Ukraine. Referring to the news agency *Agence France-Presse*, the newspaper reports the determination and steadfastness of the intentions of Ukrainian people: «The number of Ukrainians who want their country to join NATO has increased this year to 51%, which took central place in the election campaign of several pro-Western parties» («Ukraine condemns presence of 7,500 Russian troops in the eastern part of the country», 09.22.2014).

The journalists of the newspaper *Le Monde* pays attention to the parliamentary elections in Ukraine, including their legitimacy in the East («Ukraine: the West condemns the separatist elections», 10.29.2014).

The invasion of Russian troops on the territory of the neighboring state, influence of Russia on the separatist organizations in Eastern Ukraine, support for the terrorist groups, the supply of all weapons to militias – this is the way the newspaper *Le Monde* commented Russia's role in the political crisis in Ukraine («Ukraine: main reinforcement, heavy weapons will arrive in Donetsk», 09.11. 2014).

The newspaper *Liberation* repeatedly informs about the entering of Russian troops the territory of Ukraine and support for the separatists given by Russian government. It is covered in such publications as «In Eastern Ukraine Russia gives support for the separatists», 09.11.2014; «Ukraine condemns the presence of Russian soldiers in 7500 in the east of the country», 22.11.2014; «Moscow is demonstrating its support for the separatist elections in Ukraine», 28.11.2014.

Publications devoted to Ukraine are different in scope and genre. The reports about the events in Donbass are particularly noteworthy because they confirm the objectivity of information. All the reports are always accompanied by pictures which enable the readers to witness what is happening in Ukraine and assess the situation. The items of the news are mostly based on the data given by news agencies, mainly the *Agence France-Presse*. For a better perception of the great texts they are divided into the internal sections.

Le Monde describes the negotiations in Minsk on December 24th and 26th 2014, when the contact groups consisting of representatives of Ukraine, Russia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, were in session («Ukraine: important peace talks of Wednesday and Friday in Minsk», 17.12.2014).

The newspaper *Liberation* calls the Russian leader Vladimir Putin the main culprit of military conflict in Ukraine; he actively pursues a policy of territorial division of Ukraine. This is stated in the article «Kyiv claims to foreign referee, Moscow prefers to play at home» (19.11.2014), which quotes Putin: «The central government in Kiev wants to destroy all its political opponents. We will not allow this to happen».

However, all three editions within a year informed its readers about cultural events in Ukraine, particularly in the areas of music, art, national traditions and publishing. For example, *Le Figaro* tells about various events held by Ukrainian cultural foundations

and participation of Ukrainians in international events, festivals and fairs. It should be noted that the information presented in ten publications does not give a complete picture of the features of Ukrainian culture and identity of its national traditions, although reminiscent of a French reader of such state as Ukraine and leads to the search for more information about it and its people.

The newspaper *Le Figaro* in rubric «Sport» among the information about French and international sports news placed 16 articles devoted to Ukrainian athletes, although these publications did not pass the political situation in Ukraine. It is said in the *Sport of Ukraine* issued 25.09.2014 that «because of the war in Donbass Ukraine had to refuse to hold the Euro-2015 on basketball». At the same time the journalists of *Le Figaro* are confident that with the improvement of security the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) in Europe can consider organizing FIBA-2017. Ukrainians have priority in this regard. Sports materials belong to news and represent information about the winners of competitions of different levels, about team games, including the results of football matches with participation of such Ukrainian teams as «Shakhtar» and «Dynamo» on the international arena.

The newspaper *Le Monde* represented Ukrainian culture by a small amount of sports materials. It is basically small review articles on art, religion, language, national cuisine that give the reader a superficial understanding of Ukrainian lifestyle. Even fewer publications on culture and sport of Ukraine are in the newspaper *Liberation*.

So, we have discovered only 138 publications devoted to Ukraine in three editions such as *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde*, and *Liberation*. All of them are different in scope, genres and themes. The most of them (58) are in the *Le Monde*. 42 publications are devoted to social and political processes in the country, including the situation in the ATO, 7 articles concerns sports subjects, and 9 are about the problems affecting Ukrainian culture. It should be noted that a specific section was formed to inform about Ukraine in the newspaper *Le Monde* in connection with the events in Eastern Ukraine.

The newspaper *Le Figaro* devoted 43 materials to Ukraine: 18 of them are political publications, the rest are about problems of culture and sports.

The newspaper *Liberation* published 37 publications concerning Ukraine. 29 of this quantity had to do with social and political events, including problems in the East, 5 materials covered cultural events, and 3 were about sport.

Mostly the newspapers get their information from information agencies worldwide, including AFP (the Agence France-Presse), one of the largest and oldest sources of information in the world. As an additional type of information the screenshots of Facebook pages with comments and quotes of influential people on issues that affect the interests of Ukraine are used.

For example, among of the selected materials about Ukraine in *Le Figaro* 20 are anonymous. They are the reprints of Ukrainian sources with reference to the originals. 25 journalistic materials involved pictures. Of course a number of visuals improve the perception of information content. In most cases the photos are not original, but the reprint of Ukrainian or foreign periodicals with reference to the source.

Taking into account the political situation in Ukraine, especially in the East, it is logical that political materials dominate. The French journalists mostly focus on how the politicians and the heads of foreign states, including the US, Canada and Germany, respond to the conflict in Ukraine. The political news remains resonant. The journalists pay much attention to the situation in Eastern Ukraine, the ways of resolving the conflict, and the role of the EU.

The composition structure of journalistic materials is classic. The information is presented objectively and balanced. The facts are confirmed by arguments and comments of foreign independent experts.

Conclusions. The readers of three editions mainly form their opinion of Ukraine under the influence of political information, information about the military conflict in

the East, and world leaders' attitude to Ukraine. The image of the country is generally positive, although only the government and its actions as to the conflict in Donbass and to the territorial integrity of the country appear mostly in the articles. It should also be noted that positive images of the President of Ukraine and the Prime Minister were created. Ukraine appears as a state-warrior. It struggles for national independence and integrity of the territory, which belongs to it by right. The image of Ukraine is the image of a hero, destined to defeat the enemy with the help of support from friendly countries which are the countries of the European Union. The Ukrainians are patriotic, and of strong spirit. Thus, the image of Ukraine causes the feeling of compassion in recipients, because against the backdrop of all those public processes taking place in the country, it is difficult to remain indifferent to human suffering.

However, in the European cultural environment the image of Ukraine is somewhat blurred and fuzzy, but Ukrainians firmly declare about their European integration and self-sufficiency of Ukrainian culture and national traditions as parts of European culture.

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Образ України й українців у французькому мас-медійному просторі

Гаврилук Інна, канд. наук із соц. комунік., доц.,

Сумський державний університет, вул. Римського-Корсакова, 2, Суми, 40007, Україна, e-mail: gavriluk-inna@yandex.ru.

У статті досліджується тема формування образу України та українців в інформаційному просторі Франції. З'ясовується, що французькі медіа не стоять осторонь тих процесів, які відбуваються в Україні. У першу чергу вони подають матеріали, які стосуються політичних аспектів, що зумовлено воєнним конфліктом на Сході України. У цілому образ України й українців складається із позитивних модусів. Французькі медіа підтримують європейські прагнення українського народу, вони із захопленням говорять про мужність українських військових. Проте в інформаційному просторі Франції дуже мало матеріалів, де йдеться про культурне та спортивне життя українців. Відтак образ України постає дещо не повним, уривчастим.

Ключові слова: образ, імідж, Україна, мас-медіа, засоби масової інформації, євроінтеграція.

Образ Украины и украинцев во французском мас-медийном пространстве Гаврилюк Інна

В статье исследуется тема формирования образа Украины и украинцев в информационном пространстве Франции. Выясняется, что французские СМИ не стоят в стороне от тех процессов, которые происходят в Украине. В первую очередь они подают материалы, касающиеся политических аспектов, что обусловлено военным конфликтом на Востоке Украины. В целом образ Украины и украинцев состоит из положительных модусов. Французские медиа поддерживают европейские стремления украинского народа, они с восторгом говорят о мужестве украинских военных. Однако в информационном пространстве Франции очень мало материалов, где говорится о культурной и спортивной жизни украинцев. Поэтому образ Украины выступает несколько отрывочным.

Ключевые слова: образ, имидж, Украина, масс-медиа, средства массовой информации, евроинтеграция.

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