

DECLARATION OF 21 NOVEMBER

Defending Ukraine is Defending Europe

Political Declaration of Future Slovakia Forum

PROLOGUE: WHAT THE FOURTH WAR WINTER TEACHES US

In late November 2025, as Ukraine entered its fourth winter of war, a conversation took place in Lviv that illuminates what is at stake for all Central Europe. Three voices—Yevheniia Nesterovych, Martin Kroupa, Jan Dobrovský—spoke with unusual clarity about courage, memory, and the price of freedom.

Their words were not addressed to diplomats or academics. They were addressed to us—those who must now decide whether Central Europe will defend its freedom or accommodate its enemies.

In March 2025, our survey *Where Does Slovakia Belong?* showed that 63.5% of Slovaks want a pro-Western orientation—yet also revealed paradoxes in willingness to bear responsibility. The November testimonies from Lviv add a moral dimension to these numbers: if the majority wants the West, Slovakia must stand with those who defend it.

PART I: WHAT LVIV TEACHES US

1. "Nothing About Us Without Us"

"Nothing about us without us—if you abandon that, it is no longer a democratic world."

— Yevheniia Nesterovych, Director of Post Bellum Ukraine

When asked by moderator Jindřich Šídlo whether there exists a solution that would stop the killing without humiliating Ukraine, Yevheniia Nesterovych responded to the fundamental question of principle. When he asked whether she could imagine Ukraine giving up part of its territory in exchange for peace, she replied: "Well, that would be the worst outcome."

Jan Dobrovský put it directly: "Negotiating peace by sacrificing a country that is heroically defending itself is a crime—I would even say a war crime. This is not diplomacy; this is haggling with people's lives."

The conversation discussed a specific peace plan which, according to Reuters, is being pre-negotiated between Americans and Russians. The plan allegedly includes territorial concessions, halving the Ukrainian army, a ban on weapons with a range exceeding 15 km, a constitutional prohibition on NATO membership, and amnesty for all parties to the conflict.



Martin Kroupa added: "At least what is known about this supposedly peaceful plan—to reduce the Ukrainian army by half—is exactly the opposite of what is needed for peace. A strong army is the only thing that will bring peace."

2. Memory as a Moral Weapon

"When we last tried for peace, we had the Holodomor."

— Yevheniia Nesterovych

In the discussion about possible territorial concessions, Yevheniia Nesterovych referenced historical experience: "This won't happen, because when we tried to get peace last time, we had the Holodomor."

Martin Kroupa recalled specific occupation experiences: "In Kherson, a city occupied for nine months, people carry the experience of what occupation means... The Russians opened a concentration camp there—this is not a joke—and people remember."

Jan Dobrovský pointed to the different historical experiences: "The fate of our Czech nation is marked by the experience after Munich—leading to a kind of conformism, bowing one's head, thinking we'll somehow survive. Ukraine has a completely different experience."

He added: "Russia knows no alternative other than hard power by which it can be stopped; everything else is capitulation. And Europe is heading toward capitulation by burying its head in the sand, thinking it doesn't concern them."

3. Civic Courage Under Fire

"Every generation in Ukraine has its own Maidan."

— Yevheniia Nesterovych

In November 2025, amid ongoing Russian attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure, a corruption scandal erupted involving DTEK, Ukraine's largest energy company. A close friend of President Zelensky fled to Poland, and the head of the presidential office was connected to the scandal.

Yevheniia explained the societal response: "In summer, when something like this started, even in wartime, which isn't exactly a safe situation, the people at those protests were so young—from 15 years old. It was called 'Cardboard Protests' because they had very witty slogans on cardboard signs."

Martin Kroupa added a crucial point: "Zhenia said something incredibly important. To realize that this has a connection to those protests in summer, where young people... There was an attempt by the presidential office to bring independent institutions under their own control... When people found out, my phone started buzzing—it looked like people were taking to the streets... What was excellent was how Europe responded,



saying: look, this is important for Europe too and for further assistance. And they managed to save these bodies, and they are functioning—that's a big deal."

4. "This is Our War"

"Putin wants to control Central and Eastern Europe, threatens our NATO membership, wants NATO to collapse—this is our war and Ukrainians are fighting it for us."

— Martin Kroupa, Chairman of the Post Bellum Board

Martin Kroupa formulated the key theme of the conversation: "I thank them, because this is our war. Putin wants to control Central-Eastern Europe, wants to threaten our NATO membership, wants NATO to collapse—this is our war and Ukrainians are fighting it for us."

He added: "It's always terribly embarrassing for me when we give them some cars, ambulances, drones—basically trifles—and they are actually bleeding... I'm ashamed before the Danes, ashamed before the Dutch and the British, who give many times more."

Jan Dobrovský concluded: "Russia doesn't know where its borders are until someone else establishes them. The Ukrainians are trying to do that, and Europe, which doesn't pay the price in blood like Ukrainians, can't even bring itself to give up one hot shower a day to be able to stop Russia—and it would be enough, by the way."

On the nature of the Russian threat, he said: "Putin is an image of that nation; he is not the one who creates that imperial desire in the Russian nation - it's not only about him. So even when he's replaced by someone else, Russia will not be different. Russia is always the same, and its leaders are formed from that common nationalism."

5. The Capitulation Formula: American Betrayal of Ukrainian Resistance

In November 2025, reports began circulating about a planned American "peace plan" for Ukraine. The alleged 28-point document—prepared for possible negotiations between the Trump administration and Putin's regime—is an image of betrayal of democratic principles.

This so-called "peace plan" does not correspond to the principles of a just peace. Its structure resembles the compromises of Munich 1938, which proved to be unsustainable and dangerous.

It is a document that assumes great powers have the right to negotiate the fate of small nations without their consent—precisely the principle the West claimed to have abandoned after World War II.

The United States, which in Budapest in 1994 undertook to protect Ukraine's territorial integrity in exchange for its nuclear disarmament, is now considering approaches that would exclude Ukraine from deciding its own fate and allow Moscow to dictate the terms of any future agreement.



This goes beyond the framework of legitimate diplomacy and represents a fundamental violation of democratic principles and international commitments.

Every point of this plan—territorial concessions, reduction of military capacity, prohibition of NATO membership, amnesty for war crimes—violates the fundamental democratic principle: ***Nothing about us without us.***

If the United States allows negotiating Ukraine's fate without its consent, then no small democracy can trust US security commitments. Not Taiwan. Not South Korea. Not the Baltic states. And certainly not Slovakia.

The historical lessons are clear: Accommodation in 1938 did not prevent war. It guaranteed a worse one.

PART II: SLOVAKIA BETRAYED

Fundamental Hypocrisy

Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico publicly declares: "Not a cent for military aid to Ukraine. Not a single round from our warehouses."

Yet in 2024, Slovak private defense companies exported \$1.25 billion in weapons to Ukraine—a tenfold increase from pre-war levels, representing approximately 1% of the entire Slovak economy.

This approach creates a fundamental contradiction between declared policy and economic reality, undermining the moral credibility of Slovakia's position.

The government profits from Ukrainian resistance while rhetorically supporting Ukraine's subjugation. It blocks EU sanctions against Russia while Slovak factories produce artillery shells that Ukrainian soldiers fire at Russian forces.

Result: Slovakia earns billions from Ukraine's defense while Fico's government legitimizes Russian aggression.

The question of moral coherence is not technical. It is existential.

How can a democratic government justify simultaneously selling weapons to a state defending itself against genocidal aggression while publicly supporting the aggressor?
Answer: It cannot. It can only pretend.

Energy Dependence as a Strategic Choice

In 2022, Russian oil accounted for 65% of Slovak imports. By the end of 2026, it will be 87%.

Slovakia reduced its dependence on Russian gas from 85% in 2021 to approximately 50% in 2024. After the transit through Ukraine ended on January 1, 2025, Russian gas represents approximately 22% of Slovakia's total consumption.



Decisive is not technical limitation, but a political choice: Slovakia owns infrastructure exceeding 15 times its annual consumption (65 billion cubic meters capacity versus 4.3 billion consumption), enabling complete diversification. Despite this, Fico's government plans to maximize Russian imports for a price advantage (€70-90 million annually)—not out of technical necessity.

Realistic projection for 2026: 50-70% dependence on Russian gas, based on economic factors and government political preferences, not infrastructure limitations.

Fico's government deliberately rejected the use of supply diversification available through Polish, Czech, and Austrian routes. Instead, it signed long-term contracts with Gazprom until 2029.

Consequence: Not technical necessity but political cynicism—Slovakia has infrastructure capacity for complete independence but consciously chooses dependence on Russia for short-term gain.

The Silence of the Churches

When churches mobilize against imaginary cultural threats but remain silent about real crimes—bombardment of civilians, systematic violence, genocidal aggression—they have ceased to fulfill the Gospel.

- When Fico visited Moscow (December 22, 2024): no public moral objections from bishops
- When Russia bombed Ukrainian cities during Christmas 2024: no pastoral letters about solidarity
- When Fico's government blocked EU sanctions: no organized prayers for just peace

The contrast with mobilization around the LGBTI constitutional amendment is "too striking to be coincidental."

This approach contradicts the Christian tradition of social responsibility and confirms Bonhoeffer's critique of "cheap grace"—faith without cost.

Churches that do not voice moral objection to Moscow visits during active attacks on civilians are distancing themselves from the prophetic-critical role entrusted to them by the Gospel. This is not a critique of faith. It is a critique of its misuse by those who claim to speak in its name.

Media Capture and Democratic Information Deficit

Systematic destruction of independent media:

- Transformation of RTVS (independent public broadcaster) into STVR (state-controlled television) in March-July 2024
- Automatic dismissal of Director-General elected until 2027



- Funding cut from €186 million to €131 million
- State Media Monitor reclassification from "Captured Public" to "State-Controlled"—the least independent category
- 50% increase in attacks on journalists during 2024
- Five Council of Europe alerts since July 2023

Without independent media, citizens cannot hold the government accountable, make informed decisions, or resist authoritarian narratives. Slovakia has eliminated an important balanced information source, especially outside Bratislava.

Without light, there is no sight - and what citizens cannot see, they cannot resist.

PART III: THE MORAL IMPERATIVE

What Must Be Said Clearly

Truth One: Any peace plan without Ukrainian consent is betrayal.

Any peace plan implemented without full Ukrainian consent violates the fundamental principle of democratic sovereignty and could create a precedent threatening the security order on which all Central European security depends.

Third countries—whether the United States, France, Germany, or Slovakia—if they were to consider such approaches, have no moral or other right to trade in Ukraine's sovereignty in exchange for gas prices, electoral advantage, or geopolitical "stability."

"Nothing about us without us" is not a diplomatic cliché. It is a democratic foundation. If we abandon it for Ukraine, it is no longer a democratic world.

Truth Two: Historical memory is not optional.

Munich 1938 taught us that accommodating aggressors does not prevent war—it guarantees a worse one. The Holodomor taught us that Russian promises of peace historically meant Ukrainian death. The 1994 Budapest Memorandum taught us that security guarantees are meaningless unless honored.

Truth Three: Slovak collaboration has a price.

Fico's government creates an unsustainable contradiction: profiting from Ukraine's defense (\$1.25 billion) while blocking EU sanctions and legitimizing Russian aggression. This pattern represents a serious disruption of European solidarity and common security architecture. **Slovakia has not become neutral. It has become complicit.**

Truth Four: Silence is complicity.



When churches mobilize against imaginary cultural threats but remain silent about real crimes—bombardment of civilians, systematic violence, genocidal aggression—they have ceased to fulfill the Gospel.

When faith serves power instead of truth, it ceases to be faith.

Truth Five: Without independent media, there is no democratic accountability.

When the government controls public broadcasting, privatizes the judiciary, and criminalizes journalism, citizens lose the ability to resist. **Without independent media, there is no democratic accountability.**

Truth Six: The freedom of small nations is indivisible.

If Ukraine falls, the front moves westward. Slovakia faces the same imperial pressure—not militarily (yet), but geopolitically, economically, and informationally. Ukrainian resistance is not a Ukrainian problem. It is the defense of Europe.

PART IV: What Slovakia Must Do

1. Unconditionally support Ukraine's right to self-determination

Slovakia must reject all "peace plans" that include:

- Territorial concessions
- Military restrictions
- Removal of NATO prospects
- Amnesty for war crimes

Such plans are not peace. They are surrender conditions by another name.

Slovakia must publicly declare: Ukraine decides its own fate. Third countries have no right to negotiate Ukrainian sovereignty without Ukrainian consent.

2. Express disagreement with the United States approach

If the United States administration continues preparing a "peace plan" that violates the principle of "Nothing about us without us," Slovakia—as a NATO and EU member—should publicly express disagreement with this approach that undermines the alliance's fundamental principles.

Not as hostility toward the United States, but as defense of democratic principles. Small democracies must speak when great powers betray the values on which the Western alliance is founded.

3. Expose Fico's hypocrisy

Slovak civil society and opposition must systematically document and publicize:



- \$1.25 billion arms export to Ukraine + sanctions blockade = moral chimera
- 87% oil from Russia + plan to maximize gas to 50-70% (despite infrastructure enabling 0% dependence) = energy dependence as political choice
- Fico's trips to Moscow + silence on bombing civilians = moral collapse

Facts are weapons. Truth is defense.

4. Demand church accountability

The Slovak Christian community must demand from its leaders:

- Public condemnation of Russian aggression against Ukraine
- Pastoral letters on responsibility for just peace (not capitulation)
- Moral leadership based on the Gospel (not nationalist ideology)

Christianity without the cross is not Christianity. It is cheap religious propaganda. Many believers know this—and wait for their leaders to act accordingly.

5. Defend democratic institutions

Slovak civil society must:

- Mobilize against media capture (STVR reform)
- Protect judicial independence (against political appointments)
- Support independent journalism (financially, publicly, politically)
- Organize protests (when the government violates democratic norms)

Without defense of institutions, there is no democracy.

AFFIRMATIONS

We insist that any peace plan negotiated without Ukrainian consent is not diplomacy, but betrayal.

We insist that silence in the face of aggression is complicity—whether from governments, churches, or citizens.

We insist that defending Ukraine is also defending Slovakia—morally, geopolitically, historically.

We insist that the European Union is a community of values, not a marketplace of advantages.

We insist that the moral health of a nation is the first line of defense of freedom.

We insist that historical memory is not optional—it is our vaccination against repetition.

We insist that the freedom of small nations is indivisible. Always.



EPILOGUE

The choice facing Slovakia today is not technical. It is civilizational.

- Truth or disinformation.
- Courage or resignation.
- Solidarity or isolation.

These are not abstract values. They are decisions that accumulate in everyday life:

- A priest preparing a Sunday sermon—deciding whether to speak the truth or stay silent.
- A journalist weighing whether to publish a story that could cost them their job.
- A student deciding whether to go to a protest or bow their head.
- A mother struggling with healthcare costs, choosing which political message to believe.

Decisions accumulate. Every voice multiplies. Every person becomes part of the answer.

Ukraine bleeds.

Europe wavers between courage and caution.

The United States prepares plans that would violate fundamental principles of common security.

Slovakia, through its policies, undermines European solidarity.

This transcends the framework of ordinary politics: it touches the fundamental moral principles that define our civilizational identity.

Future Slovakia Forum stands unequivocally for Ukraine's right to decide its own fate.

We fundamentally reject all "peace plans" that arise without full Ukrainian consent, and we call on governments—including the government of the United States—to respect the principle of democratic sovereignty and not to trade it away for their own geopolitical convenience.

Freedom begins with truth and truth begins with the courage
to reject a lie - no matter who speaks it.

**Future Slovakia Forum
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This declaration was created in response to recently published proposals for a so-called American "peace plan" for Ukraine, which—contrary to fundamental democratic principles—presupposes negotiating the fate of a defending country without its consent.

It is based on conversations with civil society representatives Yevheniia Nesterovych and Martin Kroupa (Post Bellum) in Lviv (November 20-21, 2025), broadcast on the Dobrovský & Šídlo podcast. It builds on Future



Slovakia Forum's March 2025 survey "Where Does Slovakia Belong?", which revealed the paradox of Slovak society—majority support for pro-Western orientation alongside resistance to responsible investment in security.

This declaration represents the interpretation and political conclusions of Future Slovakia Forum from these testimonies and data. All factual claims are documented in source materials available at www.future-slovakia.eu.

