

But NATO!

10 popular myths
about Putin's war against Ukraine

Nico Lange

Russia's war against Ukraine: myths and facts

"Warmongers!", "Putin obfuscators!", "NATO is to blame!", "Negotiations now!" - People all over Germany are fiercely debating Russia's war against Ukraine. German military support for the invaded country is upsetting many. Great fear of violence and war is influencing the discussions.

After decades of peace in Europe, politicians and the public in Germany are not experienced in dealing with war, armed conflicts, defence and deterrence. However, the "turning point" caused by the Russian war of aggression and the necessary changes in German foreign and security policy require broad social debates to address these issues.

Myths that do not stand up to historical and factual scrutiny keep cropping up in the emotional discussions.

Populists and extremists in particular use these myths to justify the Russian attack or to reject further support for Ukraine.

Since at least 2014, Russia has been deliberately attacking opinion-forming and democracy in Germany with disinformation and hybrid warfare.

Historical myths and their dissemination and internalisation in Germany play a very important role for Russian President Vladimir Putin and his imperialist thinking.

The Munich Security Conference launched the "Zeitenwende on tour" campaign in 2022. Myths come up again and again during the campaign's town halls and school visits. Committed people often ask for historical facts, counter-arguments and specialised information in order to be able to hold their own in debates at school, vocational college, at work, at the regulars' table or at family celebrations. We have summarised these points on ten of the most frequently repeated myths about the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine in this publication accompanying the "Zeitenwende on tour" campaign.

Nico Lange, Ulrike Strauss

IT IS CLAIMED:

1

"It's only ever about

Weapons spoken,

but there are no efforts

for diplomacy."

THIS CLAIM IS

WRONG

CORRECT IS:

Even before the start of the Russian attack on Ukraine and also during the war there were and are there have been many diplomatic efforts.¹ 2

Ukraine as well as Germany and many other countries are of the opinion that the war must end as quickly as possible. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, French President Emmanuel Macron, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Pope Francis and many others have repeatedly sought dialogue with Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Russian leadership. Unfortunately, the Russian side has so far proved unwilling to engage in serious talks about a peaceful solution. Russia insists on demands that fundamentally call into question the existence of Ukraine as a state and clearly violate the United Nations Charter and international law.¹

In all discussions about negotiations and military aid, it should also be noted that oppression, torture, murder, rape and abductions are commonplace in the Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine. It is wrong to assume that any negotiation or capitulation by Ukraine would put an end to suffering and death. If Germany and other partners did not help Ukraine with weapons, ammunition and equipment, the suffering and destruction in Ukraine would be even greater. The delivery of modern

systems for air defence, for example, Ukraine can fend off hundreds of missiles and drones fired by Russia at civilians in Ukrainian cities.

Ukraine itself launched a peace initiative based on international law, in which more than 80 states are now participating. Switzerland officially declared its willingness to to organise an international peace summit on this basis. However, Russia has so far refused to take part in such peace negotiations.²

” *Successful diplomacy requires a strong negotiating position.*

Germany and the European Union are providing large-scale humanitarian and diplomatic as well as financial and military aid to Ukraine. Support for Ukraine is therefore by no means just about weapons.

Military aid with weapons, ammunition and equipment is not the opposite of diplomacy. A strong negotiating position is necessary for successful diplomacy. Only when Putin comes to the realisation that he cannot achieve his goal of abolishing Ukraine as a state by military means, and when he himself comes under military pressure, will he develop a serious willingness to negotiate. If Ukraine were to be forced into negotiations in a position of weakness, it would be tantamount to capitulating with

1 Diplomacy in the Context of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine - Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (swp-berlin.org)

2 Ukraine's Peace Formula Philosophy 32af8d644e6cae41791548fc82ae2d8e_1691483767.pdf (president.gov.ua)



A group of people take part in the "Zeitenwende on tour" event in Bremerhaven, holding up signs that together form the word "Negotiate!". Photo: MSC / Strangmann

This would have very serious negative consequences for the people there and for security in Germany.

Supporting Ukraine with weapons, ammunition and military equipment while at the same time continuing to pursue new diplomatic efforts on the basis of international law is

in view of the imperialist war of aggression and Russia's violence against the people of Ukraine at present the only promising way to end the war and achieve lasting peace.

IT IS CLAIMED:

2

"The West prevented

Selenskyj
short

after the beginning of the war

of a peace agreement,

that under mediation

Turkey between Russia

and Ukraine

was fully negotiated."

THIS CLAIM IS

WRONG

CORRECT IS:

There was no finalised peace agreement accepted by both sides in March 2022. The West has never prevented Ukraine from negotiating or reaching an agreement with Russia.³

The myth that Ukraine was ready to sign a finalised agreement with Russia at peace talks in Istanbul just a few weeks after the start of the war keeps cropping up. The West, in particular the then British Prime Minister Boris Johnson (2019-2022), had urged Kiev to reject this agreement. This myth is being spread to create the impression that the West was to blame for the war from this point onwards at the latest. This is false.

In fact, in March 2022, Ukraine and Russia negotiated first in Antalya and then in Istanbul with the mediation of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. In these talks, Ukraine was prepared in principle to consider changing the goal of NATO membership in favour of effective security guarantees from Russia and Western states. think. Other points in these negotiations were Russian demands. The Ukrainian government has also called for a reduction in the size of the Ukrainian armed forces and a possible postponement of the clarification of Crimea's affiliation.

Ukraine, for its part, insisted on a withdrawal of the Russian army to the lines before 24 February 2022 and final decisions on the key points of a possible

Agreement reached in a meeting between Presidents Volodymyr Zelensky and Vladimir Putin. There was no final negotiated agreement that both sides would have agreed to after the last meeting in Istanbul on 29 March 2022.

At the same time as the ongoing negotiations in Istanbul, Russian troops north of Kiev were forced to retreat following their failed attack on the Ukrainian capital. Ukraine thus also regained control of the Kiev suburbs of Butsha and Irpin.

In the days from 29 March 2022, Ukraine uncovered Russian atrocities in Butsha. In the streets of the Kiev suburb, the advancing Ukrainian forces found the bodies of civilians with their hands tied behind their backs, Victims of rape and cruel torture. In Butsha alone, the Russian occupying forces tortured and killed more than 450 civilians within a month. The nature of the Russian war against Ukraine thus became visible to Ukrainians and the entire world.

Since the disclosure of the Butsha massacres, President Zelensky and the Ukrainian government have taken the view that the complete withdrawal of the Russian occupying forces from the entire territory of Ukraine and the prosecution and punishment of war crimes committed by Russian soldiers are conditions for peace negotiations.³

3 Yaroslav Trofimov: *Our Enemies Will Vanish: The Russian Invasion and Ukraine's War of Independence*. Penguin Press, 2024.

” Neither the UK nor the USA, France or Germany ever urged Ukraine not to sign an agreement.

The then British Prime Minister Boris Johnson only visited Kiev on During this visit, Johnson said that the security guarantees provided for in the draft agreement in Istanbul by the UK and other Western states would not be feasible in his view. Such security guarantees would have a direct

This would result in the Western partners becoming involved in the war if the conflict flares up again. This corresponds to the position that Germany, France and the USA also hold.

Neither the UK nor the USA, France or Germany ever pressurised Ukraine not to sign an agreement or to break off negotiations. Since the beginning of the war, the governments of these states have consistently taken the stance that it is only

It is up to Ukraine to decide whether, how and about what peace negotiations are conducted.



Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu (centre) gives a speech during the peace negotiations in Istanbul on 29 March 2022. The delegations from Russia and Ukraine sit opposite each other. The talks did not lead to any results. Photo: Cem Ozdel / Anadolu Agency / dpa / picture alliance

IT IS CLAIMED:

3

"Ukraine has

the Donbass from
an area with Russia-friendly
2014.

people in eastern Ukraine,

fired upon.

There were thousands of
victims there

among civilians."

THIS CLAIM IS

WRONG

CORRECT IS:

This claim is being deliberately spread by the Russian side as a pretext for the war of aggression. There was no bombing of the Donbass by Ukraine before the Russian invasion.^{41 5}

It is repeatedly claimed that Ukraine is responsible for "15,000 deaths in the Donbass" since 2014 and has bombed "its own people", so that Russia "had to intervene to protect". This is a pretext for war deliberately constructed by Vladimir Putin and Russia. Russia is spreading this false information as part of hybrid warfare, especially in Germany.

The figure of "15,000" comes from rounding up the United Nations' estimates. However, these are not victims of alleged Ukrainian attacks. The United Nations figures are based on around 3,500 civilians killed and around 4,000 Ukrainian soldiers, about 5500 dead among the armed separatists led by Russia.⁴

In the case of the approximately 3,500 civilian victims in the Donbass in 2014 and 2015, it is not possible to say exactly whether they were on one side of the conflict or the other.

whether these people are "pro-Ukrainian" or were "pro-Russian". The figure also includes the 298 passengers of the downed flight MH17. It is particularly cynical to attribute the deaths to Ukraine in view of the fact that the passenger plane was shot down by separatists controlled by Russia.

was shot down with Russian anti-aircraft missiles.

” Ukraine had no plans whatsoever to attack the Donbass militarily.

After 2014 and 2015, the number of victims in Donbass fell. According to the latest report by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), 161 civilians were killed in the period from January 2017 to mid-September 2020 - roughly the same number on both sides. Around half of these victims died as a result of accidents involving mines and unexploded ordnance. There were no "bombings" of the civilian population in the Donbass by Ukraine before the start of the Russian large-scale attack on Ukraine on 24 February 2022, nor were there any plans by Ukraine to attack the Donbass militarily.⁵

Neither the OSCE observer mission, which has been monitoring the situation with Russia's consent since 2014, nor the United Nations report from September 2021 see any signs of genocide or targeted action by Ukraine against the "pro-Russian civilian population". A report by the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) from July 2016 summarises: "The armed conflict, fuelled by the influx of foreign fighters and weapons from the Russian Federation, is responsible for most violations of the right to life in Ukraine over the past two years."

4 Conflict-related civilian casualties as of 31 December 2021 (rev 27 January 2022) (un.org) <https://ukraine.un.org>

5 OSCE Report: CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN THE CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGIONS OF EASTERN UKRAINE (osce.org) <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/f/b/469734.pdf>



Members of the OSCE observer mission in Donbass commemorate the victims of the Malaysian Boeing 777 (flight MH17) shot down by Russian anti-aircraft missiles near the village of Grabovo. Photo: dpa / picture alliance / Russian Look | Alexander Rekun

Russian propaganda has rounded up the official total number to "15,000" according to the United Nations and, contrary to the facts, propagandistically turned it into "victims of the Ukrainian attacks on the Donbass".

To this day, this propaganda is constantly repeated in discussions about the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and Ukrainian self-defence. It is not backed up by facts.

IT IS CLAIMED:

4

"We take care of so many

Wars in the world do not,

also the war

against Ukraine

does not affect

us."

THIS CLAIM IS FALSE.

CORRECT IS:

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is taking place in the immediate neighbourhood of and also jeopardises security

in Germany and throughout
Europe.6

Why is this war so important to us when we are concerned about so many other wars and violations of human rights at home and abroad?
of the world?

Germany would do well to take a self-critical look at its own behaviour time and again. It is true that there are many injustices in the world that Germany does not always take action against. However, this should not be an argument for simply allowing the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine to happen.

Especially the countries of the so-called "global South", countries from Latin America, Africa and South-East Asia, rightly criticise the fact that Germany has not always stood by those under attack in recent history and has not always worked to end wars quickly. We must accept this criticism.

German foreign and security policy based on international law should become more consistent here in the future.

” *The threat to European security from Russia affects us directly.*

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, however, is seen for good reason as a labelled a "turning point". Putin began

the biggest war in Europe since the Second World War. The fighting is taking place in the immediate neighbourhood of the EU and NATO. The threat to European security posed by a Russia that wants to assert its interests and imperialist claims by force of arms affects us directly. Flight and expulsion from Ukraine and the territories occupied by Russia also have a direct impact on the Federal Republic of Germany.

It is therefore justified and even necessary for Germany to become much more involved in the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine than in other wars and armed conflicts. The "turning point" caused by this war even requires fundamental changes to German foreign, security and defence policy. Since the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany, the principle of not supplying weapons to active crisis and conflict areas has applied. After the Russian invasion, Germany rightly cancelled this principle in order to support Ukraine. This serves to uphold and restore international law and German security at the same time.⁶

As the largest and economically strongest country among the Europeans in NATO and the EU, we have a responsibility for security and stability in our immediate neighbourhood. We cannot expect others to permanently ensure that people in Germany can live safely.

6 Turning point speech by the Federal Chancellor on 27 February 2022 (bundesregierung.de) <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/regierungs-erklaerung-von-bundestkanzler-olaf-scholz-am-27-februar-2022-2008356>

Germany also learnt lessons from flight and expulsion during the war in Syria, when many people sought refuge in our country within a short space of time. People only stay in their home country if they see the chance of a peaceful and good future there. Germany can only help to create such conditions in Ukraine with a great deal of military, financial and humanitarian aid.



Refugees from Ukraine stand on a railway platform after their arrival. The suffering and trauma of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine are also present in Germany. Photo: picture alliance / dpa | Michael Matthey

IT IS CLAIMED:

5

"There is a danger

an escalation

up to and including attacks on
us,

if we help Ukraine."

THIS CLAIM IS

WRONG

CORRECT IS:

This claim is part of Russia's psychological warfare. The risk of a Russian attack on us does not increase if we help Ukraine. The risk for us will be higher if we let Russia have its way in Ukraine.^{71 8}

The large-scale Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2022 and the associated German decision to help Ukraine with weapons present German policymakers with a new situation. There was no experience of such a war or of German arms deliveries in February 2022. Against this background, there is much to be said in favour of approaching all questions of military aid for Ukraine with great caution and prudence.

Together with the USA and other partners, the German government therefore rightly decided to first supply certain types of weapons in order to be able to carefully analyse the effects of the war and possible reactions on the part of the Russian aggressor. After more than two years of war, however, it can be said that the feared escalations caused by the delivery of certain weapons or the attacking of certain targets have not materialised.

Contrary to some initial fears, the war has not escalated due to the delivery of German infantry fighting vehicles, battle tanks, artillery systems and rocket artillery to support Ukraine. The headquarters of the Russian Black

The Russian naval fleet in Crimea was countered by the Ukrainian armed forces with British and French cruise missiles, without the previously assumed escalations or even the use of nuclear weapons by Russia.

None of the German arms deliveries to Ukraine led to attacks on Germany or to attacks on German aid shipments to Ukraine.⁷

Since the beginning of the large-scale attack, Russia has repeatedly threatened with missiles and nuclear weapons in particular. There is a broad consensus among experts that these threats are an important part of Russia's psychological warfare. There is no real danger of a Russian missile attack on targets in Germany because Germany is providing military aid to Ukraine. Russia wants to trigger fears with such threats and appear stronger than it really is.⁸

” *Russia is attempting to use threats and insinuations to possible "escalation" to influence the discussions in Germany.*

The possibility of Russia using nuclear weapons continues to be prevented by NATO's nuclear deterrent, which has been in place for decades, and by concrete deterrence on the part of the USA. China and other major nuclear states have also spoken out very clearly to Russia against the use of nuclear weapons and are deterring Russia with the threat of drastic consequences.

7 Jörg Lau: Escalation looms, International Politics, <https://internationalepolitik.de/de/it-threatens-an-escalation>

8 Rose McDermott, Reid Pauly, Paul Slovic: Putin and the Psychology of Nuclear Brinkmanship, Foreign Affairs, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/putin-and-psychology-nuclear-brinkmanship>

Russia is trying to influence discussions in Germany with threats and hints of a possible "escalation". From the Russian perspective

This is a cheap and so far often effective means of weakening support for Ukraine. From a historical and scientific perspective

It is perfectly clear that if Germany were to give in to Russian threats and attempts at blackmail, the Russian side would immediately make new and more far-reaching demands. Once you make yourself vulnerable to blackmail, you have to live permanently under the rule of a blackmailer.



Annalena Baerbock and Anthony Blinken, the Foreign Ministers of Germany and the USA, are united in their support for Ukraine. Photo: MSC / Kuhlmann

IT IS CLAIMED:

6

"We pay too much

for Ukraine

and the Ukrainians with us.

This makes it

German worse."

THIS CLAIM IS FALSE.

CORRECT IS:

The aid for Ukraine did not lead to a reduction in social spending in Germany. Not supporting Ukraine now would be detrimental to Germany later.

much more expensive.9| 10| 11

Of the 22 billion euros from Germany for Ukraine, around three billion euros is humanitarian aid, around 1.4 billion euros is financial aid and around 17.6 billion euros is military aid (as of May 2024).⁹

With aid totalling 22 billion euros in more than two years, Germany is Ukraine's second-largest supporter in absolute terms. In terms of gross domestic product, Germany is However, with just under 0.6 per cent, it ranks tenth among Ukraine's supporters. In addition to humanitarian, financial and military aid, the costs for refugees from Ukraine in Germany amount to around 21 billion euros after two years of war. Poland has also spent around 20 billion euros on refugees from Ukraine.

The sums for supporting Ukraine and for housing and caring for refugees can be better categorised by comparison. The entire federal budget of the Federal Republic of Germany will amount to around 477 billion euros in 2024. The expenditure of the Federal Ministry for

Labour and social affairs amount to 175.7 billion euros per year. In 2024, the German government did not reduce spending in this area in order to finance aid for Ukraine.¹⁰

To compare the orders of magnitude: While the German government spent around 22 billion euros on aid for Ukraine in more than two years, the German state spent around 440 billion euros on coronavirus aid and around 200 billion euros on the so-called "defence shield" against the coronavirus crisis. Increase in energy prices. It would therefore be wrong to claim that supporting Ukraine means less money would have been available "for Germans".

” *The aid for Ukraine is a sensible investment.*

Spending money to support Ukraine is in Germany's interests. If we did not help Ukraine, the security situation there would quickly deteriorate. A collapse of the Ukrainian state budget and a worsening of the humanitarian situation would also very likely trigger new, very large refugee movements.

Experts anticipate a further six to eight million refugees from Ukraine if the situation there takes a dramatic turn for the worse.

If Germany did not spend any money to support Ukraine now, the Federal Republic would have to reduce its spending.

9 Ukraine Support Tracker | Kiel Institute (ifw-kiel.de) <https://www.ifw-kiel.de/topics/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-support-tracker/>

10 Federal Ministry of Finance - Federal Budget 2024, https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Web/DE/Themen/Oeffentliche_Finzen/Bundeshaushalt/Bundeshaushalt-2024/bundeshaushalt-2024.html

11 Nico Lange, Carlo Masala: War in Ukraine: What happens if Russia wins | <https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2023-11/krieg-ukraine-russland-wladimir-putin-sieg-europa>



Germany has been supporting Ukraine with humanitarian aid since the beginning of the war. The vast majority of the population is in favour of these measures. In the picture: Relief supplies from the German Red Cross (DRK). Photo: picture alliance / dpa | Annette Riedl

for security and defence to an even greater extent in the future. There would also be costs for the accommodation and care of millions more refugees.¹¹

Against this background, aid for Ukraine is a sensible investment for all taxpayers in Germany.

IT IS CLAIMED:

7

"Ukraine is

a totally corrupt
country.

It is therefore not
correct,

to help her."

THIS CLAIM IS

WRONG

CORRECT IS:

Ukraine is making significant progress in the fight against corruption. The EU and Germany are making their aid dependent on this, that Ukraine continues to curb corruption.¹² 13

Corruption was and still is a major problem in Ukraine. The country has suffered from corruption in many areas of life for decades, in particular from systematic large-scale corruption and the capture of the state by oligarchs. However, since the Orange Revolution in 2004 and especially since the Revolution of Dignity in 2013/2014, self-conscious Ukrainian civil society has been fighting to ensure that corruption in Ukraine is an exception and not the rule.

According to Transparency International, Ukraine is the second most corrupt country in Europe - behind Russia. Since 2014, however, Ukraine has been steadily improving and systematically reducing corruption. In contrast to Russia, Ukraine has an independent anti-corruption authority with extensive powers, free and investigative journalism and an active civil society. Numerous corruption scandals have been uncovered since 2014.¹²

The rules for disclosing the property and income of Ukrainian parliamentarians and key officials are now among the strictest in Europe. In electronic declarations, which can be viewed by all citizens, all office holders and elected officials must declare their property and income in detail.

declare. This means that in Ukraine it is now easy to spot when expensive cars, property and watches do not match the declared income. The United Nations sees this as a ground-breaking system for preventing corruption. Government contracts are now awarded using a digital system that makes the entire process public and transparent. This systematically reduces corruption.¹³

Unfortunately, the authorities in Ukraine also uncovered new, major cases of corruption during the war. This led to anger and a push for change in Ukrainian society.

As a result, the perpetrators were punished, personnel changes were initiated at the top of state institutions and a broad social debate was initiated. Ukraine made

Ukraine made some important progress in the fight against the corruption, most recently during the war, which was recognised internationally. It was also because of this progress that the EU decided to grant Ukraine candidate status.

” It would be cynical and a breach of international law, Not helping people in an invaded country because there are problems with corruption there.

Countries that provide aid to Ukraine during the war attach tough conditions to their assistance. They demand transparency, control and the prevention of corruption.

12 Ukraine - Transparency.org, <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/ukraine>

13 NABU - REPORT FIRST HALF 2023, <https://reports.nabu.gov.ua/en/>

Since Ukraine has been a candidate for accession to the European Union, EU rules and criteria for combating corruption have applied. The EU supports Ukraine in the fight against corruption. With the EU accession process, Ukraine's partners for aid and reconstruction now have instruments to make financial aid for Ukraine and progress in EU approximation dependent on Ukrainian improvements in the fight against corruption.

Ukraine still has a long way to go to combat and prevent corruption. Irrespective of this, however, it would be cynical and a breach of international law not to help people in an invaded country because there are problems with corruption there. Germany and the EU are now using powerful instruments to attach conditions to EU membership and reconstruction aid. They are exerting pressure on Ukraine to take further steps to combat corruption.



Ukraine is taking the fight against corruption seriously. Here, the former judge of the Supreme Court of Ukraine, Vsevolod Knyasevich (in the blue jumper), is being heard by the Supreme Anti-Corruption Court of Ukraine. He was arrested in May 2023. He is accused of accepting bribes totalling 2.7 million US dollars.
Photo: Viacheslav Ratynskiy / Anadolu Agency / picture alliance / dpa

IT IS CLAIMED:

8

"Ukraine is not a

independent

country,

but a part

Russia."

THIS CLAIM IS FALSE.

CORRECT IS:

Ukraine is not Russia and the
Ukrainians
and Ukrainians had already
joined forces in 1991
Majority in favour of
independence.14

The history of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is long. The Russian motives for this war can only be understood if one takes seriously Putin's words that, in his view, there is no Ukraine and no Ukrainians.

Russian President Vladimir Putin considers Russia and Ukraine to be "one people", thus denying the Ukrainian nation the right to exist in a centuries-old tradition of Russian imperialism.

Since a referendum in December 1991, 90 per cent of Ukrainians have wanted to live independently and autonomously from Russia. Since then, however, Russia has repeatedly tried to restrict Ukraine's independence. The second Ukrainian president, Leonid Kuchma, who ruled the country from 1994 to 2004, coined the phrase in 2003: "Ukraine is not Russia."

In 2004, Putin campaigned for the election of pro-Russian politician Viktor Yanukovich, who tried to win through by rigging the election. Putin's aim was to install a government in Ukraine that was dependent on and controlled by Russia.

During the election campaign in 2004, stories of a supposed division of Ukraine into two parts emerged for the first time.

East and West and the alleged oppression of Russian-speaking people in Ukraine. Until then, such issues had not played a relevant role for Ukrainians. There were many Russian-speaking Ukrainians in Ukraine who were orientated towards Europe. In the capital Kiev and in many other Ukrainian cities, a lot of Russian was spoken without this meaning that these people considered themselves to be Russian or wanted to belong to Russia.

” *Since the referendum, the Ukrainians have wanted to in December 1991 with 90 per cent approval to live autonomously and independently of Russia.*

The falsified elections and Russia's open interference in the 2004 Ukrainian presidential elections ultimately led to the protests of the Orange Revolution. Large sections of Ukrainian civil society demonstrated in favour of free elections and independence for Ukraine from Russia. They forced a third round of voting, in which the actual winner, Viktor Yushchenko (term of office 2005-2010), whose victory was to be prevented by the falsifications of the second round, won again.

Following corruption scandals and ongoing disputes in Ukrainian politics, Viktor Yanukovich was elected president after all in 2010, partly because he presented himself as pro-European. In autumn 2013

14 Marci Shore, *Ukrainian Night: An Intimate History of Revolution*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.



Ukrainians celebrate their autonomy on 25 August 1991. Ukraine had formally declared its independence from the central government in Moscow the day before. In the subsequent referendum on 1 December 1991, 90.3 percent of people voted in favour of independence. Photo: picture-alliance / dpa | afp

However, following a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Yanukovich suddenly refused to sign a finalised association agreement between Ukraine and the EU. The major Euromaidan protests then began, which grew into a revolution of dignity.¹⁴

Viktor Yanukovich's regime had 100 demonstrators shot before Yanukovich fled to Russia to escape the ongoing protests. In February

In 2014, the Ukrainian parliament declared him deposed. The revolution of dignity had won. Russia thus lost all political influence over Ukraine and immediately resorted to military means. Putin gave the order for the annexation of Crimea in violation of international law.

Shortly afterwards, the war in Donbass began with the occupation of administrative buildings in Kramatorsk and Sloviansk under the direction of Russian intelligence officers.

IT IS CLAIMED:

9

"NATO

and the West

contribute through the
expansion

of NATO

a share of the blame for this
war."

THIS CLAIM IS FALSE.

CORRECT IS:

Vladimir Putin is to blame for this war. There was never a commitment from the West not to expand NATO eastwards. NATO is a purely defensive alliance and Russia has acknowledged that it has no veto power over the NATO membership of other countries.¹⁵ 16

One of the most frequently repeated claims in connection with Russia's war against Ukraine is that the West promised Russia that NATO would not expand eastwards.

With this narrative, Russia is trying to cast itself in the role of a victim of NATO policy. In reality, there were never any such assurances.

The content of the Two Plus Four Treaty of 1990 on the final settlement regarding German reunification shows that the negotiations focussed exclusively on the future of a reunified Germany. The NATO membership of East Germany was regulated in the treaty. Other Eastern European countries were not mentioned at all in the treaty. The Warsaw Pact, a military alliance led by the Soviet Union, of which many Eastern European countries were members, continued to exist until 1991.¹⁵

Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) from 1985-1991 and the last President of the Soviet Union from March 1990 to December 1991, himself declared in an interview in 2014: "The topic of NATO enlargement

was not discussed at all, nor was it addressed in those years. I say that with full responsibility. Not a single Eastern European country raised the issue, not even after the end of the Warsaw Pact in 1991. Western heads of state and government didn't bring it up either."

NATO enlargements do not come from NATO, but from the countries that want to become members. One NATO membership is a sovereign and democratic decision of the countries wishing to join the Alliance and the Allies.

" The topic of NATO enlargement was not discussed at all. [...] Not a single Eastern European country has addressed the issue, not even after the end of the Warsaw Pact in 1991. Heads of state and government did not bring it up.

Mikhail Gorbachev
Last President of the Soviet Union until 1991

In May 1997, the members of NATO and Russia signed the NATO-Russia Founding Act. In it, both sides pledge to respect the sovereignty of all states to be respected. Russia recognises in the NATO-Russia Founding Act that it has no right of veto over the NATO membership of other countries.¹⁶

Russian President Vladimir Putin is trying to justify the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine,

15 Two-plus-four treaty on the final settlement in relation to Germany | bpb.de
<https://www.bpb.de/themen/deutsche-einheit/zwei-plus-vier-vertrag/>

16 NATO - Official text: Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation signed in Paris, France, 27-May-1997, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm?selectedLocale=en Paris, France, 27-May-1997

to pre-empt Ukraine's NATO membership. In fact, Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration was already an official goal of Ukrainian policy from 2002 onwards. At the NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008, NATO decided not to submit an action plan to Ukraine.

for NATO membership (MAP), as "there are still questions regarding [Ukraine's] MAP application".

NATO therefore did not try to pressure Ukraine into membership, but Ukraine approached NATO.

During a visit to Ukraine in February 2011, the then NATO Secretary General emphasised that the

Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen (term of office 2009-2014) that NATO does not pressure Ukraine and respects the country's status as a non-aligned partner. NATO is a defence alliance.

It poses no threat to Russia. Russia is geographically the largest country in the world. With Finland's accession to NATO in April 2023, NATO's land border with Russia has more than doubled. However, even after Finland's accession, the share of Russia's land border with NATO countries is only 11 per cent. There can be no question of Russia being surrounded or cornered by NATO.



President Mikhail Gorbachev (centre) congratulates the six foreign ministers after signing the agreement on the conclusion of the 2+4 Conference, which formed the framework for German reunification, in Moscow on 12 September 1990.

According to Gorbachev, NATO membership for Eastern European countries was not an issue. From left to right: French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, US Secretary of State James Baker, West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, East German Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Lothar de Maiziere and British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd. Photo: picture alliance / AP | Liu Heung Shin

IT IS CLAIMED:

10

"The area

Ukraine is

the origin

Russia.

Crimea belongs to Russia."

THIS CLAIM IS

WRONG

CORRECT IS:

Kievan Rus was a multi-ethnic empire and the centre of the common Identity of several East Slavic peoples. The affiliation Crimea to Russia is not historically documented.171

Ukraine's current territory has been part of 14 different states over the course of history. The Kingdom of Poland-Lithuania, the Habsburg Monarchy, the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union have historically shaped Ukraine.

In the late 9th century, originally Norman warriors and merchants, who were called "Rus", founded a state-like entity on the middle Dnipro with Kyiv as its centre, which was named "Kievan Rus" after them. At the end of the 10th century, Prince Volodymyr adopted Christianity there, and from then on Rus belonged to the world of the Byzantine Empire and the Orthodox Church.

” *The history of Ukraine as a whole is strongly characterised by the oppression of Ukrainians, the Ukrainian language and culture by the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.*

Kievan Rus was a multi-ethnic empire and is historically not the origin of a national Russian state. Rus can be described as the core of a common culture, religion and identity of several East Slavic peoples. A reduction to the "root of Russia"

is historically incorrect. Moscow only rose to supremacy as a principality in the area of the former Rus in the 14th and 15th centuries. Putin's Russia is therefore deliberately reinterpreting history and instrumentalising it in order to derive current Russian claims from this falsified historiography.

The history of Ukraine as a whole is strongly characterised by the oppression of Ukrainians, the Ukrainian language and culture by the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Putin is building on these imperialist Russian traditions. According to this Russian imperialist idea, Ukrainians are an inferior form of Russians as so-called "Little Russians", the Ukrainian language is considered a primitive and uneducated dialect of the Russian language and Ukrainian culture is reduced to simple folklore.¹⁷

However, even at the beginning of the Soviet Union, the Soviet leadership recognised the actual existence of a Ukrainian nation and assigned it its own Ukrainian Soviet Republic. During a brief phase in the 1920s, the Soviet Union even promoted the Ukrainian language and culture. Historians see the emergence of a Ukrainian nation as early as the early modern period, which continued in a Ukrainian national movement. Revolutions at the beginning of the 20th century led to the proclamation of an independent Ukrainian People's Republic in 1917 and a phase of Ukrainian independence in 1918 until 1920.

17 Andreas Kappeler, A Brief History of Ukraine, C.H. Beck, 2019.

18 Crimean history - Current conflict - Ukraine or Russia? Who does Crimea historically belong to? Will the Ukraine war only end once the Crimea issue has been decided? (lpb-bw.de), <https://www.lpb-bw.de/ukraine-krim>



The monument to Prince Volodymyr I, who baptised the medieval empire of Kievan Rus in 988, overlooks the Dnipro River in Kiev. Photo: picture alliance / dpa | Friedemann Kohler

Myths that are often spread about Crimea belonging to Russia also do not stand up to historical scrutiny. In fact, Crimea belonged to the Ottoman Empire for centuries, was characterised by Islam and was the seat of the Crimean Khan. It was not until the end of the 18th century that Crimea was annexed by the Russian Tsarist Empire. From 1921, Crimea was an autonomous republic within the Soviet Union and was incorporated into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic as Crimea Oblast in 1954. The handover of Crimea from the Russian Socialist Federal

Soviet Republic to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic did not come about on a whim as "gift" by a drunken Nikita Khrushchev (First Secretary of the CPSU from 1953 to 1964), but specifically on the 300th anniversary of the Treaty of Pereyaslav in 1654 due to the common economy, territorial proximity and close cultural ties between Crimea and Ukraine. From 1992, Crimea was once again a "Republic of Crimea", and from 1994 an autonomous republic within Ukraine.¹⁸

Glossary - Abbreviations, dates and terms

24 February 2022

On this day, Russian President Vladimir Putin gave the order for a major attack by the Russian armed forces against Ukraine, which he labelled a "special military operation". An alleged threat to the areas near the cities of Donetsk and Luhansk, which had been seized from the control of the Ukrainian government with Russian help since 2014, served as the pretext for the Russian attack.

Sources:

Süddeutsche Zeitung online, news overview on the morning of 24 February 2022, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik> Federal Agency for Civic Education: Chronicle: 24 February to 1 March 2022, Ukraine Analysis No. 265 <https://www.bpb.de/themen/europa/ukraine-analysen>

Butscha

From the first day of the Russian attack on Ukraine until the recapture of the territories by Ukrainian forces on 1 April 2022, countless massive war crimes were committed against the civilian population in the suburbs of Kiev by Russian fighters and soldiers. The Butsha massacre is considered one of the worst in the course of the war to date. Hundreds of bodies were recovered in Butsha, some of the victims had been tortured and shot with their hands tied. In neighbouring Irpin, it is estimated that up to 300 people were killed in the atrocities

numerous people were raped and tortured.

Sources:

Süddeutsche Zeitung online: Florian Hassel: Torture and murder on command, 04.02.2022 www.sueddeutsche.de/politik
Süddeutsche Zeitung online: Stefan Kornelius: Schaut auf Butscha, 03.04.2022 www.sueddeutsche.de/meinung
Redaktionsnetzwerk Deutschland: RND/dpa: Kriegsverbrechen in Irpin, 07.04.2022 www.rnd.de/politik
Federal Agency for Civic Education: Documentation, Ukraine-Analysen No. 272, 21.07.2022 www.bpb.de/themen/europa/ukraine-analysen

Gross domestic product (GDP)

Gross domestic product is an economic indicator of a country's economic strength. It comprises the total value of all goods and services produced in a year, minus intermediate consumption (value added).

Source:

Destatis, Federal Statistical Office: National Accounts - Gross Domestic Product (GDP) www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Wirtschaft

Dnipro

The 2201 km long Dnipro River flows through Russia, Belarus and Ukraine into the Black Sea at Kherson. It is the third longest river in Europe (after the Volga and the Danube) and is around 1700 km long. The Dnipro also passes through Kiev and is considered a national symbol of Ukraine.

Sources:

Deutschlandfunk Kultur: Ricarda Vulpius:
U k r a i n e is Europe in miniature: Dnipro -
Industrial city in transition, 16/03/2022
www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de
Encyclopaedia Britannica: Dnieper River
www.britannica.com/place/Dnieper-River

Donbass and the People's Republics

Donetsk and L u h a n s k

The Donbass (also known as the Donets Basin) is an industrial and coal-mining region on Ukrainian and Russian territory. In Ukraine, Donbass includes the northern and central parts of Donetsk Oblast, the south of Luhansk Oblast and the east of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast; on the Russian side, it includes the west of Rostov Oblast. The war in Ukraine's Donbass region began in spring 2014, almost simultaneously with the Russian occupation of Crimea.

Under the leadership of former Russian officer Igor Girkin, armed groups occupied administrative buildings in the Ukrainian cities of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk. Russia later intervened with regular armed forces in the war, which could not be ended by the two ceasefire agreements Minsk I and Minsk II. Immediately after signing, the Russian-separatist side broke the agreements.

Sources:

German Institute for International and Security Affairs:
The Donbas conflict. Conflicting narratives and interests, difficult peace process. SWP study, 08.02.2019 www.swp-berlin.org
Federal Agency for Civic Education: The Donbas. Video glossary - What you should know about Ukraine www.bpb.de/mediathek
Redaktionsnetzwerk Deutschland: RND/dpa:
Ukraine under Russian fire. Putin attacks Ukraine: Invasion has begun, 24.02.2022 www.rnd.de/politik

E U

The European Union (EU) is a union of 27 states, 20 of which form an economic and monetary union.

Their common principles and values are freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law, as well as the promotion of peace and stability. A total of around 450 million people live in the EU. The EU dates back to the European Economic Community (EEC) of 1958, which originally consisted of six countries: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Since then, 22 other countries have joined. However, the United Kingdom is the The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020 (Brexit). The large single market and freedom of movement in the EU are a driver of economic development. In 2012, the EU was honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize for its commitment to peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe. According to Art. 49 of the EU Treaty, any European state that respects the values of the EU can apply for EU membership.

Sources:

Website of the European Union:
A short guide to the EU [op.europa.eu/webpub/
com/short-guide-eu/en/](http://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/short-guide-eu/en/)
Federal Agency for Civic Education:
Dossier European Union [www.bpb.de/themen/
european-union](http://www.bpb.de/themen/european-union)

Euromaidan - Revolution of d i g n i t y

The Euromaidan in Ukraine is also being Called the "revolution of dignity". On 21 November 2013, the pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich refused to sign the promised agreement.

Ukraine's association agreement with the EU. As a result, up to 800,000 people demonstrated on Kiev's Maidan Independence Square in the following months. They demanded Yanukovich's resignation and reforms. The police repeatedly took massive action against the protesters and in February 2014 shot and killed around 100 people.

Sources:

Neue Zürcher Zeitung: Christian Weisflog and Ivo Mijnsen: Chronologie der Maidan-Revolution, 22.04.2022 [www.nzz.ch/international/ukraine-chronologie-der-maidan-revolution](http://www.nzz.ch/international/ukraine-chronologie-der-maidan-revolution-Deutschlandfunk) Deutschlandfunk: Natascha Freundel: Fünf Jahre Euromaidan in der Ukraine: "Was ist nur los mit diesem Land?", 21.11.2018 www.deutschlandfunk.de

Flight M H 1 7

Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 crashed en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur on 17 July 2014 at an altitude of 10,000 metres, around 50 kilometres from the Russian border in the Donetsk Oblast in eastern Ukraine. All 298 occupants were killed. The aircraft was hit by a Russian Buk M1 air defence missile. On 17 November 2022, the District Court in The Hague in the Netherlands sentenced the Russian officers Girkin, Kharchenko and Dubinsky to life imprisonment for the downing of flight MH17 and the deaths of the 298 passengers.

Source:

Federal Agency for Civic Education: Documentation: Chronology: The shooting down of flight MH-17, 05.03.2020 www.bpb.de/themen/europa/ukraine-analysen

Hybrid warfare

Hybrid warfare refers to the combination of classic and covert warfare methods.

Military operations with a mix of propaganda, misinformation, espionage attacks and cyber attacks to destabilise the opponent. By manipulating the population, economic and political pressure is exerted, societies are undermined and democracy and its institutions are weakened. The true intentions and backgrounds are deliberately concealed and attempts are made to legitimise their own goals with constructed narratives and staged events.

Sources:

tagesschau: Analysis - Putin's hybrid warfare, 22.02.2022 www.tagesschau.de/ausland/europa Website of the Federal Ministry of Defence: What are hybrid threats? www.bmvg.de/de/themen/sicherheitspolitik/hybride-bedrohungen

Crimea

Crimea is a peninsula in the south of Ukraine between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. It comprises the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the independent city of Sevastopol.

Sources:

Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg: Die Krim - Wechselvolle Geschichte und aktuelle Situation www.lpb-bw.de/ukraine-krim zdf heute: Nina Niebergall: Jahrestag der Annexion: Umkämpfte Krim: Geschlossen hinter Putin?, 18.03.2023 www.zdf.de/nachrichten/politik

NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded on 4 April 1949 as a political and military defence alliance. The North Atlantic Treaty regulates the legal framework of NATO as well as the rights and obligations of the member states. Germany was admitted in 1955. NATO was in the Cold War

counterpart to the Warsaw Pact of the Eastern Bloc countries, above all the Soviet Union. While the Warsaw Pact dissolved after the fall of the Iron Curtain, NATO remained in existence. Former Warsaw Pact countries also joined on their own initiative. NATO currently has 32 members.

Source:

NATO: What is NATO?

www.nato.int/nato-welcome

NATO membership, a c t i o n plan in favour of NATO membership (MAP)

The Membership Action Plan (MAP) is a NATO programme of advice, assistance and practical support introduced in 1999 and tailored to the individual needs of countries wishing to join the Alliance. Participation in the MAP does not prejudice the Alliance's decision on future membership. NATO's "open door policy" is based on Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, which states that membership is open to any "European State capable of promoting the principles of this Treaty and of contributing to the security of the North Atlantic area".

Source:

NATO: Topics - Membership Action Plan (MAP)

www.nato.int

NATO enlargement

Since NATO was founded in 1949, the number of members has increased from the twelve founding members (USA and Canada as well as the Western European countries Belgium, Denmark, France, Great Britain,

Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Portugal) to the current 32 members through ten rounds of enlargement in 1952 (Greece, Turkey), 1955 (Federal Republic of Germany), 1982 (Spain), 1999 (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland), 2004 (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia), 2009 (Albania, Croatia), 2017 (Montenegro), 2020 (North Macedonia), 2023 (Finland) and 2024 (Sweden). The admission of new members to NATO poses no threat to non-NATO countries. At the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, the alliance partners agreed t h a t Georgia and Ukraine should become members of NATO in the future. No timetable was agreed. Bosnia and Herzegovina was invited to join the Membership Action Plan (MAP) in April 2010. Due to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, 83 per cent of Ukrainians were also in favour of NATO membership in 2022.

Source:

NATO: Topics - Enlargement and Article 10 www.nato.int

NATO-Russia F o u n d i n g Act

The Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation of 1997 sets out the will of the parties involved to "jointly establish a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Euro-Atlantic area based on the principles of democracy and cooperative security". Among other things, it also includes the renunciation of force, respect for sovereignty

and territorial integrity of other states, arms control, but also the declaration of intent to continue the democratisation process in Russia.

Source:

NATO: Founding Act, official text www.nato.int

Nuclear d e t e r r e n c e

The principle of nuclear deterrence is based on the fear of a counter-strike. Whoever uses nuclear bombs (first strike) must immediately reckon with the destructive use of the opponent's nuclear weapons (second strike). The main purpose of NATO's nuclear capabilities, according to Jessica Cox, Director of NATO's nuclear policy, "the preservation of peace, protection against coercive measures and the deterrence of aggression". Although the goal is "a world without nuclear weapons", NATO will remain a nuclear alliance as long as nuclear weapons exist.

Sources:

NATO: Jessica Cox: Nuclear deterrence today, 08.06.2020 www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/BR_24_Knowledge/Nuclear_weapons/
"Unpredictability is part of deterrence", 22.07.2023 www.br.de/nachrichten/wissen

O b l a s t

Translated, oblast means "region". It is an administrative unit, comparable to an administrative district or a federal state in Germany. However, Ukraine is a centralised state, so oblasts are directly subordinate to the government in Kiev. Oblasts already existed in the Russian Empire and are still called districts in Russia, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Slovakia. In the

Ukraine, they are usually named after the largest city in the oblast.

Source:

Süddeutsche Zeitung online: Thomas Balbierer: Current Lexicon - Oblast, 02.03.2022 www.sueddeutsche.de

O l i g a r c h

The term oligarchy comes from the Greek and means the rule of a few. According to the Digital Dictionary of the German Language (DWDS), an oligarch is a "person who has achieved a dominant market position through the ruthless purchase of companies in an economic sector, has extreme wealth and often considerable political influence".

Sources:

Digital Dictionary of the German Language: Oligarch www.dwds.de/wb/Oligarch
Focus online: Oliver März: Practical tip - What is an oligarch?, 02.03.2023 praxistipps.focus.de

Orange Revolution 2 0 0 4

A series of mass protests and strikes were the people's reaction to the falsifications in the 2004 presidential elections in Ukraine, which were denounced by the opposition. The revolution was named after the colour of the election campaign of the presidential candidate from the pro-Western camp, Viktor Yushchenko. The Orange Revolution lasted about two months and was bloodless.

Sources:

Encyclopaedia Britannica online: The Orange Revolution and the Yushchenko presidency www.britannica.com
Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg: Infoportal östliches Europa - Orange Revolution Ukraine 2004 osteuropa.lpb-bw.de/orange-revolution-ukraine

OSCE / OSCE, OSCE observer mission

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is the world's largest regional security organisation with 57 participating states in North America, Europe and Asia. The OSCE is committed to stability, peace and democracy through political dialogue on shared values and sustainable practical work. It helps with issues of conflict prevention, crisis management and conflict resolution, as well as with reducing differences and building trust between states. This also includes the OSCE observer missions, for example in Donbass. The OSCE security approach combines the politico-military dimension, the economic and environmental dimension and the human dimension. The OSCE is based in Vienna and dates back to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), which began its work in 1973 and sealed with the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. In 1994 it was decided to establish the CSCE as a permanent institution; in 1995 it was renamed the OSCE.

Source:

Homepage of the OSCE: Who we are www.osce.org/de

Russian Federation

The Russian Federation (also Russian Federation) is the official name of Russia. The federation consists of entities that are called subjects of the federation and are largely dependent on Moscow. The annexation of the Ukraini-

Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by Russia in 2024 is contrary to international law and is not recognised internationally. This also applies to the incorporation of the Ukrainian territories of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhia on 30 September 2022.

The Russian Federation is a so-called A "successor state" to the Soviet Union (USSR), which collapsed in 1991. As the former central and largest Soviet republic - the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFS) - it became the legal successor to the USSR.

Sources:

Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg: Infoportal östliches Europa: Länderprofil Russland [lpb-bw.de/russland-laenderprofil](http://osteuropa.lpb-bw.de/russland-laenderprofil)

Federal Agency for Civic Education: From Politics and Contemporary History: Thomas Vogel and Thomas Kunze: From the Soviet Union to Independence, 30 November 2011 www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/apuz

Sovereignty

Sovereignty means having the power and the right to decide freely at one's own discretion. It encompasses the right of a nation with regard to its self-determination and the supreme sovereignty of a state over its internal and external affairs.

Sources:

Schubert, Klaus/Martina Klein: Das Politiklexikon, Federal Agency for Civic Education
Digital dictionary of the German language: Souveränität www.dwds.de

Soviet Union

The Soviet Union existed from 1922 to 1991 and was the communist-ruled predecessor state of a number of today's independent states in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The abbreviation USSR stands for Union of Socialist Republics.

Soviet republics, including Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The national territory stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean. The Soviet Union succeeded the Russian Tsarist Empire. The smouldering nationality issue and a strengthening of the tendencies towards independence of the republics, together with Gorbachev's policy of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring), led to the end of the Soviet Union. On 25 December 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev resigned as President of the old Soviet Union. The following day, the Supreme Soviet decided to dissolve the USSR.

Sources:

Encyclopaedia Britannica: Soviet Union www.britannica.com/place/Soviet-Union
Deutschlandfunk: Norbert Seitz: Hintergrund: UdSSR vor 100 Jahren gegründet - Zentralismus und Zerreißkräfte in der Sowjetunion, 29.12.2022 www.deutschlandfunk.de

Transparency International

Transparency International is a global movement working in over 100 countries to end corruption. Transparency International works to expose the systems and networks that allow corruption to flourish and calls for greater transparency, integrity and accountability in all areas of public life to protect civil society.

Source:

Website of Transparency International www.transparency.org/en/about

Ukraine Support Tracker

The Ukraine Support Tracker systematically records the value of support that the governments of 41 Western countries have pledged to Ukraine since February 2022. It lists military, financial and humanitarian aid that is publicly known.

Source:

Kiel Institute for the World Economy: Ukraine Support Tracker www.ifw-kiel.de/de/themendossiers/krieg-gegen-die-ukraine/ukraine-support-tracker/

UN Charter, Charter of the United Nations

The UN Charter is the founding document of the United Nations Organisation (UNO), i.e. the United Nations; it came into force in 1945.

in force. The Charter formulates goals and tasks and regulates UN institutions such as the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly.

Its objectives include the maintenance of international peace and security, respect for human rights, peaceful conflict resolution and the renunciation of violence, the promotion of international co-operation with a view to solving economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, and respect for the equality and national sovereignty of all states.

Source:

United Nations: About us - United Nations Charter www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter Federal Agency for Civic Education: "The Legal Dictionary - UN Charter" www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/lexika

UN, United Nations

After the Second World War, the world lay in ruins. With the founding of the United Nations Organisation (UNO) as the successor to the League of Nations, the world was in ruins.

50 nations (Poland joined shortly afterwards as the 51st founding member) formed an alliance to maintain world peace and prevent another world war. At the founding conference in San Francisco, California, they drafted and signed the UN Charter. Headquarters of the UN (United Nations) is based in New York and currently has 193 member states. António Guterres has been UN Secretary-General since 2017.

Sources:

United Nations: "About us" www.un.org/en/about-us
Federal Agency for Civic Education: Das Rechtslexikon - United Nations Organisation (UNO) <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/lexika>

UNHCR

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been held by the Italian Filippo Grandi since 2016. The UN Refugee Agency reports to him. The organisation, which is based in Geneva, is a subsidiary body of the United Nations. accountable to the General Assembly. The UN Refugee Agency is mandated to protect and uphold the rights of refugees. It also supports former refugees who have returned to their home country, people who have been displaced within their own country and people who have been displaced from their home country.

are stateless or whose nationality is disputed. The work of the UNHCR is based on the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.

Sources:

UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe: About us www.uno-fluechtlingshilfe.de
UNHCR: What we do www.unhcr.org/what-we-do

Treaty of Pereyaslav of 1654

The Cossacks took an oath of allegiance to the Russian Tsar Alexei I at the Cossack Rada (assembly) in Pereyaslav in 1654. This event is considered one of the most important in the history of Russian-Ukrainian relations. The agreement triggered a war between Poland and Russia (1654-67), as the unification of Ukraine with Russia was unacceptable to Poland. It ended with the division of Ukraine between Poland and Russia.

Source:

Encyclopaedia Britannica: Pereyaslav Agreement www.britannica.com/event/Pereyaslav-Agreement

Right of veto

"Veto" comes from the Latin and means "I forbid". In Germany, the Bundesrat has the right in certain cases to object to a law passed by the Bundestag. This veto can be overruled by the Bundestag. There are two types of veto. With the suspensive veto, resolutions are only postponed. With an absolute veto, a decision can be definitively prevented. In the UN, all permanent members of the Security Council have an absolute veto right. This means that they can veto resolutions,

that were passed by the majority of the Security Council.

Source:

Gerd Schneider / Christiane Toyka-Seid:
The young political lexicon from
www.hanisauland.de, Bonn: Federal Agency for
Civic Education

Warsaw Pact

The Warsaw Pact is an abbreviation for the military alliance of European communist states agreed in the "Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance". The alliance originally consisted of the Soviet Union and Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany (GDR), Hungary, Poland and Romania. The Warsaw Pact was formed as a result of the Paris Agreement between the Western powers, which allowed West Germany to join NATO. Albania left in 1968 and the GDR in 1990. With the end of the Eastern Bloc, the alliance was also dissolved in 1991.

Sources:

Schubert, Klaus/Martina Klein: Das Politiklexikon. 7th, updated and expanded edition. Bonn: Dietz 2020. licensed edition Bonn: Federal Agency for Civic Education
mdr History: Warsaw Pact: Defence alliance or instrument of control of the Soviet Union?, 10.07.2022 www.mdr.de/geschichte
Encyclopaedia Britannica: Warsaw Pact, Europe (1955-1991) www.britannica.com/event/Warsaw-Pact

Tsarist Empire - Russian Empire

Russian Tsardom, Tsarist Russia, Russian Empire - these are all names for the Russian Empire in the period from 1721 to 1917. Tsar Peter the Great officially replaced the title of tsar with that of emperor when the empire was founded in 1721. The Russian Empire was ruled autocratically. At the beginning of the

In the 19th century, Russia was at the height of its power due to its territorial size and economic strength. The defeat in the Crimean War (1853-1856) shook the empire, and Russia found itself increasingly in economic and political difficulties. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 and the First World War of 1914-1918 fuelled the decline of the backward tsarist empire, which was in need of reform. The people starved and revolted out of sheer necessity. The Russian Revolution of 1917 sealed the end of the Tsarist Empire.

Sources:

Encyclopaedia Britannica: Russian Empire www.britannica.com/place/Russian-Empire
Hans-Henning Schröder: From the Kiev Empire to the collapse of the USSR, in: Russia (Information zur politischen Bildung, Heft 281), Federal Agency for Civic Education, Bonn 2003, updated 2018

Two-plus-four treaty

The "Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany" was concluded between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic - the "Two" stands for the two German states - and the four victorious powers of the Second World War, France, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States of America, as an international treaty. It was signed on 12 September 1990 in Moscow and entered into force on 15 March 1991.

The Two Plus Four Treaty paved the way for German reunification and finally sealed peace between Germany and the four powers 45 years after the end of the war.

Germany received full sovereignty

including the right to join alliances.

Source:

Federal Agency for Civic Education: Topics:
Two-plus-four treaty on the final settlement
concerning Germany [www.bpb.de/
themen/deutsche-einheit/zwei-plus-vier-vertrag](http://www.bpb.de/themen/deutsche-einheit/zwei-plus-vier-vertrag)

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of conflicts by facilitating a sustained, curated and informal dialogue within the international security community. Today, the MSC is the world's leading forum for debate on international security policy. The MSC understands its conferences as an independent

"Marketplace of ideas", where proposals and solutions are developed and opinions are exchanged. The MSC gives a special place to informal meetings between officials in order to promote peace through dialogue, in line with its original motto. In addition to the main annual conference, the MSC regularly organises high-level events on specific topics and regions and publishes Munich Security Report, an annual compendium of the most relevant figures, maps and analyses on key challenges in international security.

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