



Фонд
Демократичні ініціативи
імені Ілька Кучеріва

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Democratic Initiatives
Foundation

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Statement of Complaint

Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation Refutes Fake News Disseminated by Democracy House

On April 3, 2020, NGO “Democracy House” (<http://www.democracyhouse.com.ua/ua/#focus>) disseminated bulletin «WEEK AT GLANCE. Key trends in Ukraine. Weekly overview. 3 April 2020, #13/20» which included DISINFORMATION and BLUNT LIES HURTING IMAGE AND REPUTATION OF ILKO KUCHERIV DEMOCRATIC INITIATIVES FOUNDATION (DIF).

Incredibly, before releasing these fake news “Democracy House” team did not bother itself to contact DIF directly and double check whether it is true or not.

Unfortunately, DIF found out that it was under attack only on April 22, 2020. Since fake news were circulating for many days during quarantine DIF decided to react as loudly as it is possible.

We state that all information, disseminated by “Democracy House” (in italics), is completely untrue:

The leadership of the President's Office wants to buy or finance one of the most respectable sociological centres - the Democratic Initiatives Foundation. After the head of the Democratic Initiatives Foundation Iryna Bekeshkina died in March, the President's Office began looking for the founders of the foundation to offer them co-operation and financial support. It is very important for the Office of President Zelenskyi to have a controlled sociological company that would draw normal ratings for the authorities, professionally conduct focus groups, and serve as a tool for using party funds received by the “Servant of the People” within the state funding. In addition, the President's Office knows that the Democratic Initiatives Foundation is in serious financial difficulties, as are most non-governmental organizations in Ukraine.

First of all, we are **outraged by the fact that sudden death of our respected Director and prominent Ukrainian sociologist Dr. Iryna Bekeshkina was cynically utilized as a pretext for dissemination of gossips and lies about DIF.** We consider this immoral action done by “Democracy House” as an evidence of their low moral standing and absence of civic solidarity and goodwill which are common features for people who work for development of civil society and democracy in Ukraine. This is why we decided to publicly condemn insidious action of “Democracy House”.

Secondly, **we make it absolutely clear that in case of official or unofficial proposal from any political party, business or government agent, representative of foreign government to subject our activity to partisan interests for material or political benefits we will definitely turn it down.**

Neither DIF founders nor DIF team will sacrifice our independence and professionalism for the sake of such covert cooperation.

Thirdly, **DIF is a well-respected and established non-governmental think tank capable of conducting various sociological research and political analysis independently and in good cooperation with other Ukrainian independent think tanks.** Our goal has always been development of the Ukrainian state, civil society and democracy. Our standing has been known to all presidents of Ukraine since 1992. **We were always open for cooperation and assistance to Ukrainian government when we were approached openly and on the conditions that did not compromise our objectivity and professionalism. We always refused to work with administrations that humiliated citizens' dignity or tended to destroy rule of law and national sovereignty.**

Fourthly, **DIF works transparently, achieves its research and program goals and has complete understanding and support of our key partners and donors.** All information which proves our financial and institutional sustainability will be released in our Annual report which was delayed due to quarantine.

Therefore, **Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation addresses to all our current and potential partners** – think tanks, civil society organizations, academic institutions, international donors, government agencies and foreign embassies, mass media and active Ukrainian citizens, all who were disinformed by the lies of “Democratic House”, **with request to take into consideration our official statement of complaint and make all necessary and relevant conclusions about moral and professional standing of the NGO “Democratic House”.**

We are seriously concerned that such actions of the NGO “Democratic House” undermine not only DIF reputation but also discredit credentials of the Ukrainian democracy, civil society and basic values of the civic cooperation: transparency, honesty, responsibility and cooperation founded on mutual trust and respect. In essence, “Democratic House” has failed its key test as a civil society organization and think tank.

On behalf of DIF team

Svitlana Barbeliuk
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Foundation

