

UBC & Ukraine: Cities at the Table, Not on the Menu

Panel: Key Challenges in Ukraine's EU Accession 2026–27 & the Role of Local Authorities

Grounded in: UBC Resolution on Aggression on Ukraine • Palanga, October 2023

Ukrainian Cities as Associated Members

February 2022

UBC expelled all Russian cities — a principled decision, not a gesture. Grounded in our founding values of democracy, peace and international law.

Spring 2022 onwards

Vilnyansk became the first Ukrainian observer city to join UBC. Followed by Kherson, Kramatorsk, Pokrovsk, Vyshhorod, Zaporizhzhia...

October 2023

UBC General Conference, Palanga — formal Resolution on Russian Aggression on Ukraine adopted.

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Ukrainian Associated Cities in UBC

Direct financial support

"This is solidarity as a structural commitment."

Three Positions. Three Asks.

Our Resolution sets out 8 specific calls. These three are directly relevant to the accession debate — each with a concrete ask.



POSITION 1

**Democratisation
of Ukrainian cities**

OUR ASK:

**Put local government on the
accession scorecard**



POSITION 2

**Empower cities
to reach EU standards**

OUR ASK:

**Direct EU funding window for
Ukrainian municipalities**



POSITION 3

**Reconstruction on
territorial planning**

OUR ASK:

**Formal consultation with city
networks before end 2026**

Democratisation of Ukrainian Cities Is Inseparable from Accession

The accession process is too often discussed as a legislative exercise. Our Resolution calls for something deeper:



Transparency in local decision-making



Fighting corruption at the municipal level



Protecting freedom of local media & advancing e-government



Safeguarding local self-governance — European Charter of Local Self-Government

Recommendation: Put local government on the accession scorecard — democratic governance and local capacity as criteria that are actually assessed, not background context.

These are not soft add-ons. They are the democratic infrastructure without which the acquis cannot function.

Empowering Ukrainian Cities to Reach EU Standards

Our Ukrainian observer member cities are aligning with EU standards under bombardment — managing displacement, reconstruction and continuity of essential services.

The Gap Is Real

The capacity gap will not be closed by good intentions or by funding that flows exclusively through central government. Ukrainian cities need direct, structured support to reach European standards.

We Have the Experience

Baltic Sea cities went through accession. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland — we know what it demands at the local level. Our Resolution calls for a peer-to-peer and twinning programme to transfer that experience. The institutional architecture to do it systematically does not yet exist.

Recommendation: A dedicated municipal window within the Ukraine Facility and post-2027 instruments — for capacity-building, expertise exchange, and reaching EU standards at the local level.

Reconstruction Must Be Built on Democratic Territorial Planning

Sustainable reconstruction and sustainable accession are inherently local. Cities cannot implement what they cannot access.

Build Back Better

Our Resolution calls for a reconstruction strategy founded on thorough territorial planning — comprehensive, sustainable, eco-friendly, technologically advanced and inclusive.

Enable Direct City Access

A streamlined system enabling EU municipalities, regions and associations to directly assist Ukrainian cities — not only through central government channels.

Engage International Partners

UBC calls on EIB, EBRD, OECD and the Council of Europe Development Bank to deepen engagement with Local and Regional Authorities in Ukraine.

Recommendation: Talk to us — formally. UBC, Eurocities, CEMR. Before end 2026, open a structured consultation with city networks on the local government dimension of Ukraine's accession. Put the outcome in writing.

**“We are not asking Europe
to rebuild our city.**

**We are asking Europe to help us
build it the right way —
the European way.”**

— Ukrainian mayor, UBC network

Thank You

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