Annual Report 2018

In the spring of 2019 VoxUkraine celebrates its 5th anniversary. How did it all start? In 2014, after the Revolution of Dignity, Ukrainian economists residing and working abroad, Tymofiy Mylovanov, Yuriy Gorodnichenko, Oleksandr Talavera and Volodymyr Bilotkach launched an economic blog called VoxUkraine. They were inspired by a long-term goal: to minimize the number of mistakes in the economic policy of Ukraine that are so costly to every Ukrainian. In a short time dozens of other experts in the field from Ukraine and from abroad joined the founders, and the simple blog on a free domain grew into an authoritative online magazine and a powerful non-governmental organization.

We, the VoxUkraine team, are confident that millions of Ukrainians will benefit from higher quality of decisions in the country. To facilitate this, we explain and analyze economic processes relying on facts and data, closely watch the progress of reforms, check politicians' statements, and draw attention to important economic problems. During five years of our work we have become a powerful platform for discussion of Ukraine's challenges.

We believe in competition, level playing field, inclusiveness, and meritocracy. Our highest priorities are quality of our publications and trust of our readers. Each text is peer-reviewed by two members of the VoxUkraine Editorial Board. We are funded by readers and international organizations and we do not let anyone to influence our editorial policy. We bring together those who think critically, assume responsibility and keep building a new and successful Ukraine every day.

VoxUkraine is the voice of the country expressed in data and analytics.

From the Editor

Ilona Sologoub, VoxUkraine CEO

During the past year we focused on VoxUkraine institutionalization. We formalized our governing bodies, policies and processes — since only institutionally strong organizations are able to sustainably grow and achieve their goals without risking to slip into chaos.

While processes are important, they are not the main element of the organization. Its mission, strategy and other activities are based on values. We work for values and we are guided by them not only in our work but also in our lives. Values enable us not to lose ground and stay on the right course in any difficult situation. VoxUkraine values are

Freedom. Only free people can create new things, grow, develop themselves and the society which they live in. At VoxUkraine, we are free to choose the topics for our research and publications. We have enough time to double check the details of each article, since quality is our priority. And in maintaining quality we rely on

Professionalism. Professionalism is first of all genuine and responsible attitude to work. We think that Ukraine lacks professionalism. Thus we do everything we can to supply more of it. We try to be useful to our readers and to our country.

It is no secret that in many aspects Ukraine is lagging far behind the developed countries. To avoid slipping into the "third world," we need to evolve much faster than the "first world" countries did at the time. Therefore, we value

Changes. Whereas complete stability is only at a cemetery, we welcome changes and development. We stand for progressive changes — those that would allow for a better life of all citizens of our country. Because one of our values is

People. Our work is focused on improving the quality of economic decisions in Ukraine. In their turn, higher quality decisions raise the level of Ukraine's economic development and the welfare of our compatriots. We love our fellow citizens — and so we want them to have a better life. We respect and support one another and can therefore attain significant results with limited resources. While doing this, we rely on

Creativity. We are not afraid to experiment. Freedom and cooperation help us generate new ideas, and professionalism is crucial for their implementation. Creative ideas and their professional implementation allow us not only to capture readers' attention but to also gain their trust.

Trust is scarce in our society compared to developed countries. However, it has been rising recently. We hope to have made a small contribution to this process.

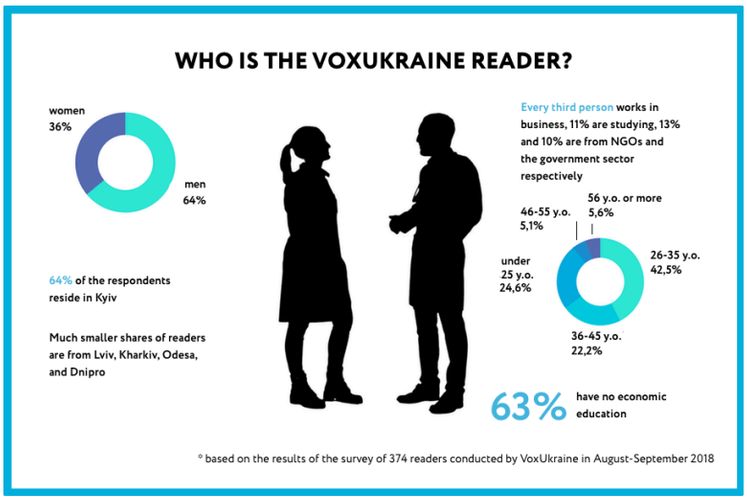
According to survey results Ukrainians trust volunteers more than anyone — and we understand why. For nearly five years, the quality of our articles is maintained by the Editorial Board whose members are all volunteers. And these people would not agree to work under any other conditions. The Editorial Board members are motivated by the desire to do something useful for Ukraine, to help it change for the better. Highly professional Editorial Board and institutionalized editorial process allow us to be honest.

We are honest with our readers, but above all with ourselves. Sometimes we make mistakes. But we always admit them and improve our processes in such a way as to avoid similar errors in the future. With **honesty** I conclude the list of VoxUkraine values. It comes last, but it is certainly not the least. None of our values are more or less important. They form an integrated system and support one another — and our team. And we support them.

VoxUkraine у 2018

In the course of 2018, we actively followed economic developments, trends and events, trying to look behind the scene, to understand more, to provide better coverage. VoxUkraine is a unique platform bringing together the best economists and lawyers committed to supporting the quality of publications. We raise important issues that are often disregarded by other media, implement educational projects, explain how economic processes operate and how to improve them for the better life of every Ukrainian. We strive to set the agenda in the economic sphere and to provide more access to quality information needed to make informed choices.

We work for our readers. In 2018, we conducted a large survey, of readers to find out what you think of us. We are grateful to all who participated in the survey or provided feedback to us in some other way.

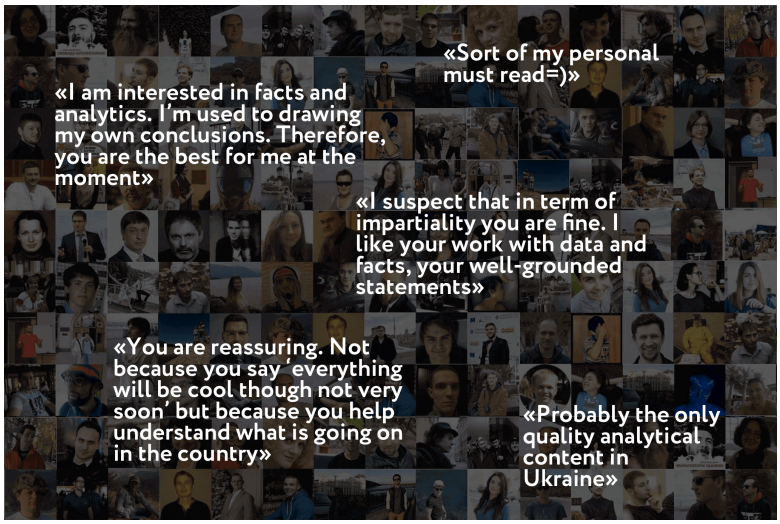


- **80,8%** of the respondents gave more than 8 points on a 10-point scale to VoxUkraine content quality.

- **83,1%** are satisfied with content relevance.
- **75%** like the way we present our materials.
- **77%** recommend reading us to their friends and acquaintances.

We are proud of simple but very important things: that people read our materials, come to us and listen to us, criticize and support us, help us grow. Read more on this below. Thank you for being with us in 2018 and today.

Reading our materials



Facts only:

- 455 articles published on the VoxUkraine website, 161 more than in 2017
- 885 references in Ukrainian media to VoxUkraine research and articles
- A total of more than 1.7 million outreach of VoxUkraine content
- 39,961 subscribers to VoxUkraine in social media, including 2,783 in Telegram
- 98 new authors wrote articles for VoxUkraine during 2018
- 3,002 statements fact-checked by the VoxUkraine team
- 109 normative acts analyzed and assessed by iMoRe experts
- 14 large data-driven research projects written by the VoxUkraine team

VoxUkraine was created and continues to be an open platform for discussions. Everyone can publish his/her article if it passes a peer review by two editors (two independent editors check the quality of the material).

An overwhelming majority of our articles were reprinted by the leading Ukrainian media. The articles dealt with a great variety of subjects. However, there were a number of topics that in our view are worth particular attention.

The main topics

Populism: an explanation of why populism is spreading across Europe and Ukraine and what it is leading to

Migration: how many Ukrainians work abroad and why no one can give the exact number of labour migrants

МІГРАЦІЯ

2,5 млн, або кожен десятий дорослий українець, працюють за кордоном. Це багато, але не катастрофа

Автор: **Борис Давиденко**

МІГРАЦІЯ

Велика міграція: чому ніхто в Україні не знає, скільки наших громадян виїхало за кордон

Автор: **Тетяна Тищук**

МІГРАЦІЯ

Всі на вихід. Чи справді українці масово лишають батьківщину? Фактчек

Автори: **Максим Скубенко, Олена Шкарпова**

Macroeconomic stability: what lessons must be learned by Ukraine from the crises in Turkey and Argentina and how it can avoid their negative experience

ЕКОНОМІКА

Макроекономічні ризики зростають і потребують термінових дій. Editorial

Автори: **Редакційна колегія VoxUkraine та команда Київської школи економіки**

ЕКОНОМІКА

Нескінченне танго: причини валютної кризи в Аргентині та її уроки для України

Автор: **Ростислав Аверчук**

ЕКОНОМІКА

Знов у ту ж саму пастку: чотири уроки, які повинна вивчити Україна з кризи в Туреччині. Editorial

Автори: **Редколегія VoxUkraine**

We also discussed such topics as private entrepreneurs, IT specialists, the Scientific Committee of Ukraine, relations between FB and mass media, the ideology of presidential candidates. We assessed the implementation of Presidential Strategy-2020; we studied how the Russian "troll factory" impacted the worldwide discussion around Ukraine, looked at the real estate market in Ukraine, and which Government and parliament were the most effective when working on the State Budget

Interviews

Professors from the world's best universities shared their vision of the most urgent problems of Ukraine and the world:

- **Professor of University of California at Berkeley Alan Auerbach** focused on the population aging, capital mobility and tax evasion;
- **Professor of Political Science of Stanford University Anna Grzymala-Busse** expressed her view on the reasons behind populists' electoral success;
- **The world's best young economist Roman Sheremeta** talked about experimental economics and stimuli influencing human behavior;
- **Professor of Stockholm School of Economics Lars Svensson** told us how Central Bank's independence should be combined with its accountability to society;
- **Professor of Law of Stanford University Erik Jensen** discussed justice, equity, and implementation of laws.

Explanatory articles

Some topics are very fundamental and at the same time associated with multiple myths and manipulations. Thus they require a separate in-depth explanation. This motivated our explainers focused on the State Budget, government debt, and the government structure in Ukraine.

ДЕРЖАВА

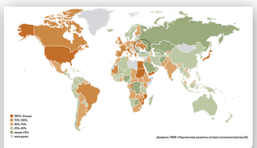
Експлейнер про найважливіше: пояснюємо, що не так із формою правління в Україні

Автор: **Ростислав Аверчук**

ЕКОНОМІКА

130 000 000 000 неочевидних проблем українського бюджету. Що коїться у державних фінансах? Експлейнер

Автор: **Олена Білан**



ЕКОНОМІКА

Держборг України — проблема на $76 000 000 000 або $1800 на кожного. Що варто знати? Перший аналітичний експлейнер

Автор: **Сергій Дробот**

Indices, monitorings and rankings

For four years already experts of the project “Index for Monitoring of Reforms” have been evaluating on a bi-weekly basis normative acts which impact the “rules of the game” in economics. In January 2019, we issued the 100th release of the Index!

For those who do not watch the progress of reforms so frequently we prepare quarterly reform reviews.

One can use iMoRe data to assess how actively the Government, the MPs, and the President initiate reforms and how supportive the MPs are of them. Our publications on the subject include:

Since most of the reform-related decisions must be approved by the Verkhovna Rada, the quality of its work is very important. The Vox Rada project reviewed activities of the parliament from many angles and drew the following conclusions: current parliament is the biggest legislative spammer in the entire history of our parliamentarism; the real composition of the coalition differs essentially from the official one; the more co-authors a bill has, the higher are its chances for approval; each MP is a member of four deputy associations on average (spoiler: the group with the highest number of members is the Interfactional Deputy Association “For the Sober Future of Ukraine”).

In the course of the year, we monitored speeches by potential presidential candidates and checked the facts in their statements **(the VoxCheck project)**. As a result, we released three quarterly rankings (one, two, three) and an annual one, which was published in the magazine Novoye Vremya.

We also published a number of vividly discussed fact-checks, e.g.:

VOXCHECK

Десять звинувачень Ольги Богомолець на адресу МОЗ та Уляни Супрун. VoxCheck

Автори: **Ярослав Кудлацький, Олена Шкарпова, Юлія Жага**

VOXCHECK

Як сліпий з глухим: як влада й опозиція ведуть публічний діалог із важливих для України питань

Автори: **VoxCheck**

VOXCHECK

Альтернативна економіка Ігоря Коломойського. VoxCheck інтерв'ю Соні Кошкіній

Автори: **Олена Шкарпова, Аліна Елєвтерова**

And of course we cared about people reading quality analytics in regional media. It's easy to guess the topics of the most popular expert commentaries within the VoxConnector project:

VOXCONNECTOR

Сакральна формула пального: з чого складається ціна бензину в Україні

Автор: **Василь Поворозник**

VOXCONNECTOR

Земельний мораторій: скільки втрачають українці

Автор: **Денис Нізалов**

VOXCONNECTOR

10 головних нововведень у бюджеті-2019

Автор: **Галина Калачова**

We invite and we are invited

Facts only:

- 2 VoxClub meetings
- 22 lectures on fact-checking and critical thinking
- 4 expert meetings
- 5 meetings of the discussion club - jointly with the Centre for Excellence in Economic Journalism
- 1 meeting of the VoxConnector Editors' Club
- 764 participants of events
- 3 offline education marathons

2018 was filled not only with articles and posts in social media. People need to meet in person to discuss important issues and work our optimal solutions. In 2018 we brought together representatives of the authorities, experts and journalists to find out:

- what the state is planning to do with the state banks;
- how the State Statistics Committee calculates the GDP and inflation;
- whether the budget will be expanded before the elections;
- how many Ukrainians are really working abroad.

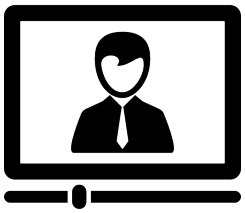
We presented the results of our research at the UN Committee meeting and at Atlantic Council, odiscussed reforms and the role of think tanks at the Ukraine Reforms Conference in Copenhagen and at the Seminar of Think Tanks in Vienna, shared our experience at an international conference of fact-checkers, the Ukrainian Media Congress, and the conference "Constructive Journalism".

In 2018 we decided that it we could do more than just creating quality content for local media: we need to develop the capacity of regional media to to write interesting, professional and readable materials about reforms. Today we do this via **the Vox Ukraine Editors' Club** a community of the best journalists and editors of local media involved in developing economic journalism in Ukraine. From over 60 applications, we selected 25 editors from 18 regions of Ukraine. The participants include "Konkurent" from Lutsk, "Nakipelo" from Kharkiv, "Pasazhyr" from Odessa, Hromadske from Zaporizhzhia. At the Club, editors and journalists study, meet leaders of reforms, work on their own projects and also receive exclusive content from VoxConnector. Within this educational program, the Club members will study all the nuances of four crucial areas: healthcare, energy industry, land market, international trade and agreements with the EU.

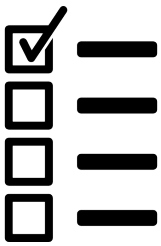
Moreover, together with the KSE Center for Excellence in Economic Journalism we organized five meetings of the discussion club, ran two book club meetings and four offline marathons of online course viewing. We strive to provide access to the best educational materials in economics, reforms, certain industries, fact-checking and more. This is our contribution to sustainable development and a better future of Ukrainian society. In 2018, we created an online course "Fact-check: Trust but Check". Its goal is to develop skills of checking facts, data and critical assessment of the information received. It's a free course. If for some reason you haven't completed it yet – please waste no time and register for it!

As of January 16, 2019

2940
persons registered



1076
began studying



505
passed the final test

The previous course "How to Write about Economics without Errors" and the new course "Transparent Energy Sector" are also available and relevant!

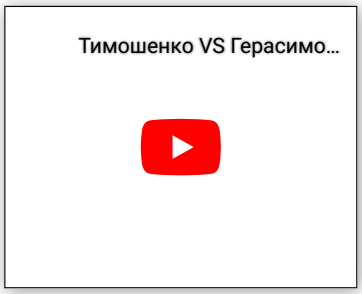
Besides, we delivered over 20 lectures on fact-checking and critical thinking for different audiences, from students to corporate sector.

But most importantly, this year we have initiated regular meetings of VoxClub – a community of people sharing our values and making the country better every day. You can support us too:

Donate

We are criticized

Our articles and rankings evoked some criticisms. The most discussed material was "Not a 'New' Economic Course", with rankings and checks from VoxCheck in second, third, and fourth places.



Sometimes we made mistakes we always corrected them. We are very grateful to those readers who pointed at our mistakes.

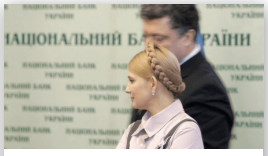
VOXCHECK

Військовий фактчек. Відповідь VoxCheck на лист Анатолія Гриценка щодо перевірки його слів

Автор: Яр Батог

ВІДПОВІДЬ

Как рейтинги украинских «брехунів» создают теплую ванну власти



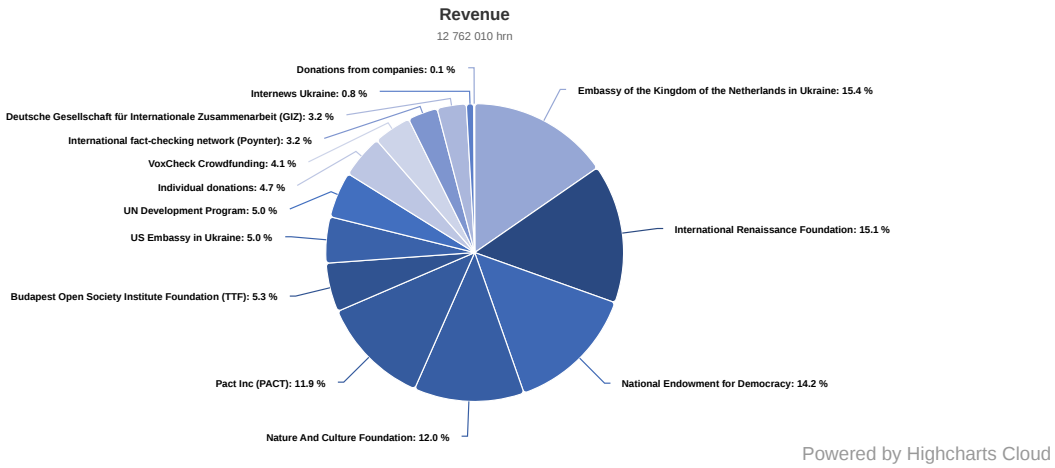
ВІДПОВІДЬ

Кто больше врет в украинской политике и что не так с «рейтингом лжецов»

We received support for growth

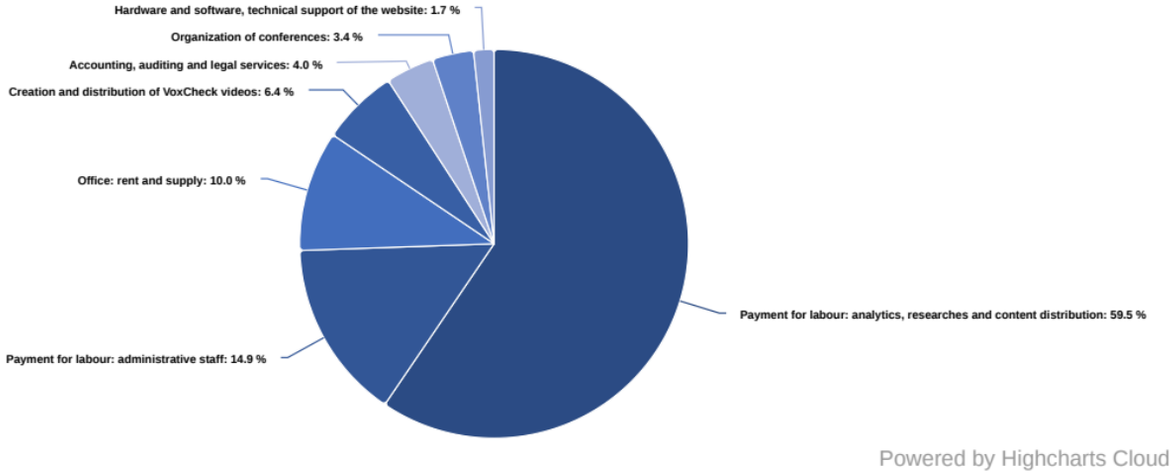
Trust of readers and quality of materials are the most important things for us. Everything we listed above is possible due to support from hundreds of readers. Last year we proved once again that Ukrainians need quality analytics based on data and facts rather than on emotions. In June 2018 we completed a crowdfunding campaign for the VoxCheck project "One Year before the Elections. Let's Get Ready Together!", raising 582,500 UAH.

We were also supported by large international foundations: OSI (Think Tank Fund), National Endowment for Democracy, Natur&Kultur, UNDP, GIZ, IFCN, by Internews Ukraine and the Embassies of the United States and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. We received two institutional grants from the International Renaissance Foundation and Pact Inc. which helped us enhance the stability of our organization. During implementation of the organization sustainable development plan, we have intensified and expanded the key projects, established a lot of KPIs for ourselves in the operative plan and achieved 90% of them during the year, developed internal policies and procedures that will help us ensure effectiveness and transparency of the organization and content quality.



Expenditures

9 601 201 hrn



Everything we are proud of is the result of the joint work of the VoxUkraine team and the volunteer Editorial Board. In 2018, 8 experts joined us: Svitlana Slipchenko, Nazar Moshniaha and Volodymyr Landa strengthened VoxCheck, Olha Rybak worked on iMoRe, Yulia Danylenko became the VoxConnector project editor, Maryna Ott got a data analyst position, Halyna Kalachova headed the Budget Watchdog project, and Liudmyla Halychyna took care of our communications.

We formed a Supervisory Board consisting of Yuriy Gorodnichenko (head), Olena Bilan, Oleksandr Zholud, Ilona Sologoub, and Serhii Plokhii. Dmytro Yablonovskyi and Tymofiy Brik joined the Editorial Board

We joined the International Fact-Checking Network) organized in 2015 under the auspices of the US Poynter Institute. Since then, the network held four international fact-checking conferences (the VoxCheck project participated in three of them) and launched Fact-Checker's Code of Honour. VoxCheck was subjected to a thorough external audit from IFCN (the results are available here) and signed the Code of Honour. However, we shared the values of the Code from the very start of our project.

An incredibly interesting year, full of challenges and opportunities, lies ahead. Thank you for being with us! See you in 2019!

If you have any questions, comments or criticism, we will be grateful for your feedback – please write to voxukraine@voxukraine.org

VoxUkraine — це незалежна та незаангажована аналітична платформа, яку заснувала та очолює команда досвідчених та висококваліфікованих економістів і юристів, що працюють в Україні та за кордоном. Метою VoxUkraine є підтримка економічних реформ у країні через просування заснованого на дослідженнях аналізу економічної політики, незалежну оцінку економічних перетворень, здійснення моніторингу та інтеграцію України в глобальну мережу економістів і політичних лідерів.

© VOXUKRAINE