

Speech of Stefan von Raumer, Chair of CCBE Human Rights Committee on the occasion of the 2022 CCBE Human Rights Ceremony

Brussels, November 25, 2022

Dear Nadia Volkova, hoping you can hear me?

I am asking this because since the day before yesterday, Ukraine is nearly cut from any kind of connection and electricity.

Dear guests,

Dear friends, Lidiya and Valentyn,

Dear Maria Arena, thank you very much for your speech,

Dear James (CCBE President),

Dear colleagues,

Maria Arena already briefly presented the profile of lawyer Nadia Volkova, so I only wanted to had some few words about her. She is very much engaged in victim centered initiatives, from working with Amnesty International to combat human rights abuses in Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Central Asia and South Caucasus, preparing court applications and representing victims of human rights violations before national courts and to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).

In addition, she worked with the Council of Europe on a number of occasions, including on the promotion, signing and ratifying of Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence, more widely known as the Istanbul Convention.

She was already al very active in role in assisting national courts and the International Criminal Court in their investigation of potential war crimes through her organisation, the Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group (ULAG). She is therefore an excellent candidate for this Award.

And the second recipient for this award is the UNBA, today represented by its President, Lidiya Izovitova, and its Vice-President of the UNBA, Valentyn Gvozdiy.

I don't think that within the CCBE I have to present them and their Bar as we all know them very well. But today I want to give you some insight on the situation lawyers in Ukraine are facing because, yesterday both Lidiya and Valentyn were the guests in the meeting of the CCBE Human Rights Committee. And, there they explained something that I couldn't believe as a lawyer, a challenge that we would never face in our peaceful societies.

They explained that many lawyers cannot go to Court hearings because bombs are falling. Other lawyers who were able to make it to the Courtrooms then leave those Courtrooms because bombs are falling, which is their right. And we were informed that those lawyer who are not able to go to Court or who leave the Court because of the bombings are now facing disciplinary sanctions initiated by judges who – in positive way - want the judiciary system to continue working but who consider that those lawyers are failing their lawyer's duties.

And I am very glad that the UNBA is so independent and that on 17 November 2022 the UNBA took a resolution saying that it is the right of lawyers to leave the Court and to be relieved of their lawyers'

duties if their lives are in danger. This resolution was taken with the view to avoid further disciplinary sanctions against those lawyers from the Bar.

The reason I wanted to use this example was to show the particular challenges lawyers are facing due to the war in Ukraine.

I am therefore very glad that the CCBE decided this year to grant its Human Rights Award to the Nadia Volkova and the UNBA.