

# Ukraine's Civil Society after the Euromaidan: Were Any Lessons Learned from the 2004 Orange Revolution?

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**Abstract:** *The Euromaidan revolution achieved significant progress with respect to the sustained mobilization and organization of Ukraine's civil society, as well as the formation of alternative political parties, such as the Democratic Alliance. However, three years after the Revolution of Dignity there is a broad consensus that reforms and the democratic transformation process have slowed, while the role of civil activists has decreased in all spheres. This article compares the role of civil society in Ukraine after the 2004 Orange Revolution and after the 2014 Euromaidan and offers a cautionary tale about the risks of a failed revolution, along with some recommendations regarding pitfalls to avoid.*

The vibrancy of civil society is widely held to be a defining strength of Ukraine's democracy. Civic activists have been the main driving force behind the post-Euromaidan reforms, and their collective energy has brought Ukraine to a new level of societal development.<sup>1</sup> Having catalyzed the work of the most committed citizens and volunteers, the Maidan unleashed the enormous potential of Ukrainians to transform their society. After the 2014 Revolution of Dignity, activists across the country rushed to create advocacy groups,

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<sup>1</sup> Iryna Solonenko, "Ukrainian Civil Society from the Orange Revolution to Euro-maidan: Striving for a New Social Contract," in *OSCE Yearbook 2014*, ed. Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (Baden-Baden, 2015), 219–35; and Oleksandra Matviychuk, "Civil Society in Ukraine," *Razom for Ukraine* (2016), <https://razomforukraine.org/policyreport/civil-society-in-ukraine/>.