

Two years after Ukraine's Orange revolution, the reforms have fallen short of initial expectations. At the same time, Russia's interest in influencing political developments in the Ukrainian "near abroad" may exploit existing status quo ante sentiments by continuing to denounce the revolution as "Western bought and foreign made".

In that specific context, the paper focuses on the relation between Western donors of democracy aid and their Ukrainian recipients - those activists of advocacy NGOs who have played a major role as actors during the period of the revolution. How do the activists view Western aid? How do they respond to claims of being "backed by foreign interests"? How do they assess the political situation in Ukraine today, and do they perceive these claims as serious threats to the development of an open civil society in Ukraine?

This study finds that despite a widespread discontent with the outcomes of the revolution, the "foreign bought revolution" argument does not play a significant role in the contemporary Ukrainian political discourse. It also shows, that Western aid has helped the democratic activists in many ways. In the eyes of the Ukrainian activists, this aid had nevertheless many shortcomings: Mainly the inability to concentrate on the local peculiarities and to detect the "genuine reformers" at the grass-root level. Besides, much of the civil society aid to Ukraine should be revised: there is an urgent need for more experience-sharing visits, internship and international student exchange programs