

Letter from Scientists of Ukrainian, Russian, and Belarusian descent to Governments and Science Funding Organizations

Among three million people who have already left the war zone in Ukraine and are seeking refuge in other countries, there are many talented scientists who had to flee to save their lives and lives of their families. Their immediate move to established research institutions in Western countries would not only bring them to safety but also greatly benefit science and engineering worldwide. The past contributions of Ukrainians, who escaped prior wars, have been large and multifaceted. Just consider Igor Sikorsky, who was born in Kyiv in 1889. He shares the same alma mater, Kyiv Polytechnic, which proudly displays Sikorsky name nowadays, with some of the signatories of this letter. He immigrated to the USA in 1919, founded the Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation in 1923, developed the first ocean-crossing flying boats and the first American helicopter. Another prominent scientist, Stepan Timoshenko was born near Chernigov in 1878 and later immigrated to the USA, and became the father of engineering mechanics and theory of elasticity underpinning modern mechanical engineering.

We, scientists of Ukrainian, Russian and Belarusian descent, currently working in the US, UK, and Canada, resolutely condemn aggression against Ukraine and call for Russian government to stop the military operation in Ukraine. We call for far-reaching support to Ukrainian scientists who have been deprived of an opportunity to perform research at their home institutions and study at their home universities, because of destruction and death brought by the war in Ukraine. In order to protect lives and intellectual potential of Ukrainian scientists, we request immediate actions by our governments, science funding agencies, non-profit organizations, and private foundations:

- Establish fast track visa processes for Ukrainian scientists and their families that short-cuts very slow routines in scientific institutions and consulates;
- Establish emergency funding programs to support temporary research positions for Ukrainian scientists for their immediate relocation to Western universities and research institutes;
- Provide additional funding for continuing study and training of Ukrainian students and post-docs;
- Open the door for fast track in obtaining a residence status for Ukrainian scientists and engineers.

It might be a long journey before science and engineering in independent Ukraine will flourish again. We are confident that it will eventually happen. Many saved scientists will go back to rebuild Ukraine and some others will stay here to make our countries stronger and support close collaboration with Ukraine. We believe that the end of dark ages imposed by Putin on Russia will also come to the end. His military defeat in Ukraine will hasten the end of temporary kleptocracy and facilitate the free flow of worldwide scientific exchange and collaboration of free people from all the countries.

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