



Дослідження за перше півріччя 2023

SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE ON NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Prepared by the NGO "CAT-UA: Communication Analysis Team - Ukraine" at the request of the KRF "Public Alternative" within the framework of the project with the financial support of the World Vision and the European Disability Forum thanks to a grant from the NGO "League of the Strong". The views expressed in this material are those of CAT-UA and Civic Alternative and in no way reflect the official opinion of the funders.

HIGHLIGHTS (more details in the conclusions)

- SPECIALISTS IN THE FIELD OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE MORE ACTIVE AS AUTHORS THAN OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE DISCUSSION
 - WOMEN AND ELDERLY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ATTRACT LESS ATTENTION THAN CHILDREN AND MILITARY PERSONNEL
 - HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION DURING THE WAR IS DIRECTED AT MEN
 - PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FREELY SHARE THEIR OPINIONS ON A VARIETY OF TOPICS
 - COMMUNITIES HAVE A FOLLOWING AND ARE SYSTEMATICALLY ENGAGED IN
- THE PROMOTION
- RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES UNITE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, BUT THERE ARE NUANCES BECAUSE THIS HAPPENS ACROSS BORDERS
 - UKRAINIAN MEDIA SHOW AWARENESS OF TOPICS RELATED TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND INCLUSION
 - THERE IS A MEDIATISATION OF TOPICS ABOUT THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THE INSTRUMENTALISATION OF EMOTIONS
 - THERE ARE NO PRONOUNCED LINES OF DIVISION BETWEEN PEOPLE WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES IN SOCIETY
- COVERAGE OF A PERSON'S DISABILITY IS ACTUALISED IN CONNECTION WITH PARTICIPATION IN HOSTILITIES
 - THE TOPIC OF DISABILITY IS MENTIONED NOT ONLY IN SPECIFIC CHANNELS OF THEIR "BUBBLES"
 - PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN PAYMENTS, AND PROPAGANDISTS USE THESE TOPICS TO PROMOTE THEMSELVES
 - VIOLENCE AGAINST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES REMAINS ALMOST INVISIBLE

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PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES OF THE STUDY

Key question:

What approaches to the treatment of people with disabilities are common in society, and what narratives are being spread

Additional questions:

- Are there any differences in the attitude towards the military with disabilities, civilians with war-related disabilities, and other persons with disabilities?

Does the discussion highlight specific nosologies (people with visual impairments, people with hearing impairments, people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, people with motor disabilities, and people with amputations)?

- Are there any differences in discussion in the treatment of women and children?

- What narratives are being spread, and what image of a person with a disability prevails (sufferer and victim, hero, marginalized, sick, or an ordinary person who has barriers)? Is it possible to say which model of disability prevails (charitable, medical, social, or human-rights-based model)? Is the terminology used correctly?

- Are people ready to engage in the protection and promotion of the rights of people with disabilities, in particular, to ensure inclusive reconstruction? What categories of people are active in this issue?

- What are additional opportunities to promote the human-rights-based model in society? Who should be used to influence? What messages are better spread?

Period for analysis: first half of 2023.

Geography - Ukraine.

The study analyzed 1,200 relevant messages from social networks - Facebook, TikTok, Telegram, Odnoklassniki, Instagram, and VKontakte - collected using the YouScan monitoring system, which has access to all social networks, including those that are closed to users in Ukraine. Since they find ways to access them through the habit and need to communicate, their circle of friends, etc., adding these networks to the study is necessary.

A sample of posts. For analysis, a sample of posts was formed that were either open publications or comments on personal profiles on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Telegram, VKontakte, and TikTok data collected by the YouScan monitoring system, which had the largest coverage and were written in the first half of 2023. The posts (not comments or reposts) with the geolocations "Ukraine" and "Not defined.»

Given that search queries in monitoring systems usually do not consist of 100% relevant posts and that in some of the selected topics, it was very difficult to formulate an accurate query, and they had a relatively low share of relevant posts, the sample was formed in this way:

- The first 1,200 messages with the highest coverage were coded. If this number, there were 300 or more relevant posts, i.e., those that relate to the topic, contain negative the address of one or more social groups, and their authors are residents of Ukraine (for

users with automatically undetermined geolocation based on the results of the profile coding), the sample was confined to this.

- If not, the following were selected to code new messages in descending order of coverage. This coding continued until the total number of coded relevant messages did not reach 350.

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Each topic lists the number of coded messages and their total coverage separately.

Manual coding was carried out with the following categories identified:

A) Thematic coding - disability nosologies - or a situation in which a person with a disability is mentioned (in the text).

B) The authors of posts

C) What kind of person with a disability is this, if defined)

D) The author's attitude to a person with a disability.

E) Tonality.

After the quantitative data analysis, a discourse analysis was conducted to outline the correlations for these visualized distributions and describe the patterns.

- **A) "THEMATIC CODING – NOSOLOGIES DISABILITY/SITUATION OF VULNERABILITY"**
 - people with visual impairments, people with hearing impairments, people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, people with motor disabilities, and, separately, people with amputations - or the type of situation in which a person with a disability is mentioned
- **B) "WHO SPEAKS"**
 - 1) the person themselves, 2) a person close to them, or 3) specialist, 4) official sources, 5) media
- **C) "CHARACTERISTIC OF A PERSON WITH DISABILITIES"**
 - civil servant, Paralympian, youth, military, elderly, woman, man, child, or adult - if it could be identified in the text or by name or avatar
- **D) THE ATTITUDE TO A PERSON WITH DISABILITY»**
 - sufferer, victim, hero, marginalized, sick or ordinary person facing barriers - determined according to the content of the message
- **E) «TONALITY»**
 - defining the good and the bad, neutral posts in terms of tone or lexical coloration.

DESCRIPTION OF KEY TOPICS (NOSOLOGY)

Mobility. The problem of transporting people with limited mobility from places of danger, request for help, in particular, to install a stair lift for themselves and others (Maxim Sima), try to encourage ("5 weeks on crutches to build up shoulders" @dukhovne_lychko). There are stories about traveling abroad, dating announcements from people with cerebral palsy, and other routines.

Autism. The problems of children with autism are being discussed quite actively in connection with the significant date of 2 June. The posts have the character of information campaigns, with the same texts being shared by different women, apparently mothers of children with ASD, explaining what autism is, telling illustrative stories about bullying, exclusion from activities with other children, etc.

Congenital developmental disorders. There are mentions of dyslexia, dysgraphia, services for people with mental disorders, orphan diseases and state programs, volunteer activities, and services of specialists in this area. They talk about events for children with Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, etc., and about opening an inclusive coffee shop (Channel 5). The relevant communities are informed about services for PWDs (INVAK.info).

Amputation of limbs. Most of the reports are about the loss of arms and legs at the frontline due to mine explosions or as a result of the destruction of buildings due to Russian shelling. There are reports about road accidents and criticism of judges' decisions to establish justice, about queues in medical institutions that are difficult for a person with amputated limbs to stand. There are stories from the military about recovery after rehabilitation (Espresso.TV). There are also humorous posts, for example, about the wife of Dnipro Mayor Filatov having frozen her nose conquering the mountains (Espresso.TV).

Visual impairment. Most of the posts are shared among communities, with greetings on holidays, sharing helpful information, and reposting prayers.

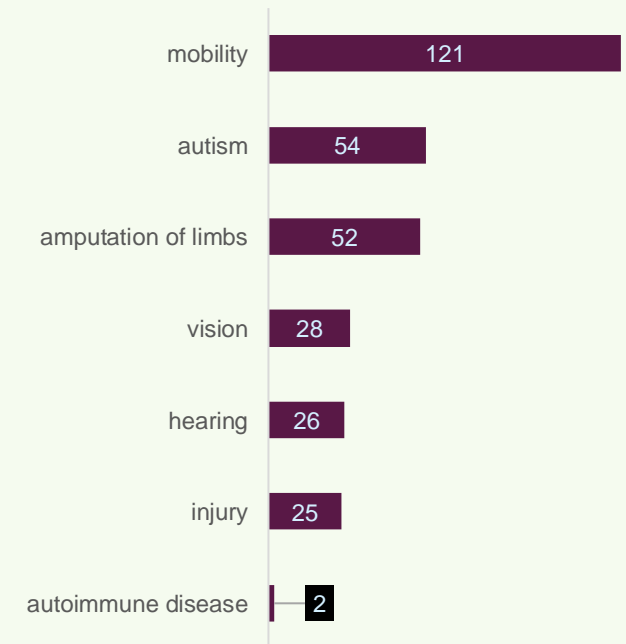
Hearing impairment. They write about workshops, excursions for people with hearing impairments, a sports competition, and other events with the support of UCH. Suggestions for listening to music with sign language.

Injuries. People write about innovations (an electric motorcycle for the Armed Forces) and fundraising for the wounded, spread the desperate message that "you are needed while you are fighting."

Autoimmune disease. Authors advise on how to cope in war conditions if there are problems with the level of "sugar" and no access to medicines. The consequences of diabetes are compared to the Coronavirus, and a global epidemic is predicted.

Only a quarter of the posts use the term nosology or indicate a human body disorder. They do not always use the terminology correctly, often using it as figures of speech – “are you blind”, “do not you hear” (in political appeals), or “have the blind seen” (in religious texts) or as insults to a normative person

(analysed 354 posts from the total coverage)



DESCRIPTION OF KEY TOPICS (SITUATION)

Humanitarian and social assistance. People discuss humanitarian aid ("Food for Kharkivites"), evacuation, registration at new places of arrival ("Brave Hearts" Charity Foundation), inspection of shelters, including barrier-free access (Ksenia Semenova), legal advice on paperwork, court, financial operations and cases of fraud (money luring, etc.). This topic often contains political posts criticizing the authorities and mentioning socially vulnerable groups, including retired people.

Inclusion and barrier-free environment. Discussion focuses on the development of an inclusive environment within the framework of international projects, public transport, the provision of inclusive taxi services (Uklon), and the equipment of premises by barrier-free requirements, and sharing foreign experience. Specialists offer individual educational programs for people with disabilities, socialization events for children and people with disabilities, open sensory rooms, etc. Usually, such events are held under the patronage of officials (city mayors, representatives of government departments). Dnipro hosts a marathon of inclusive education and the launch of the educational series "State without Barriers," as mentioned in Olena Zelenska's guide to accessibility.

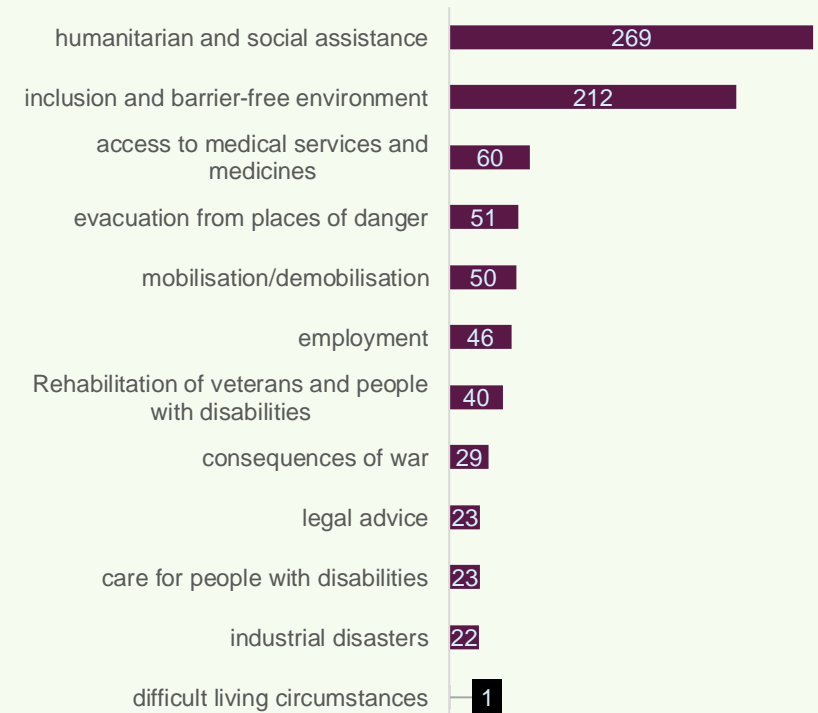
Access to medical services and medicines. Describe the procedure for undergoing the Medical Commission and report bribery of doctors. They ask for help with treatment, including cancer (women).

Evacuation from danger areas. Announcements from carriers from places of danger: from the occupation and under fire – to other parts of Ukraine and abroad. The issue of accompanying persons is raised (whether a man can accompany his daughter, father, etc.). There are also evaluative judgments about the transport service ("let's make the carrier famous"). There are comments about life without water, gas and electricity in the Kherson region.

Employment. Job offers for people with disabilities (sellers, cashiers, administrators, chat managers of marriage agencies). The rights of PWDs are discussed on 5 May, the Day of the Rights of People with Disabilities. There are ads from marriage agencies.

The situation of war has highlighted the needs of PWDs in society, which have now become familiar to people without disabilities. The topic of ensuring an inclusive environment is discussed quite actively, which is due to both the activity of specialists and the awareness of journalists about it and the state policy on the implementation of the inclusion strategy

(846 posts from the total coverage analysed)



DESCRIPTION OF KEY TOPICS (SITUATION). Continuation

Mobilisation/demobilisation is a hot topic. Official sources inform about the specifics of mobilisation of disabled people. There are stories about soldiers with disabilities at the front and in rehabilitation, they actively comment on the topic of mobilisation and evasion, criticise bribery of doctors who forge documents (a group of doctors earned \$300,000), tell story about a 22-year-old man who got married to avoid mobilization. People discuss the demobilization of the wounded, especially those with disabilities, and ask how to appeal against the decision of the Medical Commission.

Consequences of the war. Mostly supportive storytelling about the PWD at different times - during the DDR and in the Soviet period, often to compare past and present in favor to the last one. In the occupied territories, Victory Day celebrations are used to promote the occupying "authorities". People say that Russia is not happy to see "disabled" people returning from the war.

The rehabilitation of veterans and people with disabilities is promoted both in government programs and in stories from NGOs. Primarily, it concerns soldiers with motor disorders and amputations. Authors talk about innovations (in Ivano-Frankivsk, bone is being built up instead of amputation (Suspilne). They show the military's stay in rehabilitation centers, talk about non-standard methods of rehabilitation, such as animal-assisted therapy, yoga, self-massage, and art therapy (UAngel animals: the latest development in rehabilitation). The rehabilitation process is framed as an opportunity to restore lost possibilities and shattered myths, and rehabilitation therapists are presented as new heroes.

Caring for people with disabilities concerns children, adults, and the elderly in connection with guardianship, traveling abroad, or living in occupation: carers do not agree to leave. They highlight the high cost of caring for a "special" child. In the occupied territories, there are proposals to increase pensions at the expense of "dependents."

Undermining the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station dam is defined as **a man-made disaster**. The posts express a willingness to accept that the victims are from Mykolaiv and Kherson regions (Kyiv oblast). People report on the statistics of flooding. The authors mention the Chernobyl disaster. There are also other situations, such as reports of injuries at work.

Legal advice. People personally address questions about paperwork, termination of employment, paying taxes, receiving payments for injuries, disability certificates, etc. Publication explanatory materials invite students with a law degree to join the counseling of the "military displaced persons, families of disabled people" (Oleksiy Zemagroinfo).

FEATURES OF THE DISCUSSION. NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Adults. They ask for help for themselves and others and call for signing petitions to help people with disabilities (Suspilne Zaporizhzhia). They repost information about humanitarian aid and social services, including compensation for destroyed housing. MPs report on their actions personally. There are stories of PWDs being forcibly held in homes ("House of Mercy", Dykanka). There is a noticeable criticism of "Russian rescuers" who give gifts to PWDs for issuing a Russian passport (Luhansk region), and in the occupied territories (the so-called DPR) offer discounts on utility bills for "disabled people, war veterans, and victims of radiation or man-made disasters."

Children. They need help and care. The story of the first child with an amputation due to the war went viral (TikTok, 18.03.2022). People actively interacted and discussed a post about the removal of children by Russians and their sale for porn (Oleksii Liashenko), and stories about the lives of children with disabilities under occupation (TSN).

Military. They report on concerts to raise funds for prosthetics for heroes (Instagram), write about collections for crutches and medicines for the hospital, mention injuries that led to disability, undergoing medical examinations, bribes for prolonging disability, etc. **Military women.** They write about their injuries and treatment but for some reason in clickbait news that goes viral in FB groups with a frame of criticism of the authorities. They discuss a story that has signs of fake news about a woman's mobilization, even though she has a family and a husband with a disability after the ATO (Judge Rico Dredd, 1172 comments). People laugh at Lukashenko, who "rode" a wounded "DPR" member in a wheelchair (Public Auditor. Brovary).

Men ask for help due to job loss, write about passing the commission, about the illegal delivery of summonses to boys with disabilities, and about passing the commission. There are stories about the use of the status of a person with a disability to avoid mobilization or as a screen for men to go abroad (Suspilne Ivano-Frankivsk). There is a story about the murder of a man with cerebral palsy in Russia by a "Wagner group" soldier who had returned from the war in Ukraine (Censor.NET).

Women. Kherson athletes with a disability cannot get a driver's license (Suspilne Kherson), repeatedly mentioned rudeness in the provision of medical services (Suspilne Kropyvnytskyi). A story is shared about a woman with a disability being used to get her husband registered as a guardian to travel abroad. A tale from Helen Hoang's book Kiss Ratio about a girl with autism's sex work provokes a heated discussion (Olha Skrynnyk). In occupied Donetsk, a writer shares publicly that he bought diapers for a bedridden patient (Vladislav Rusanov, VK).

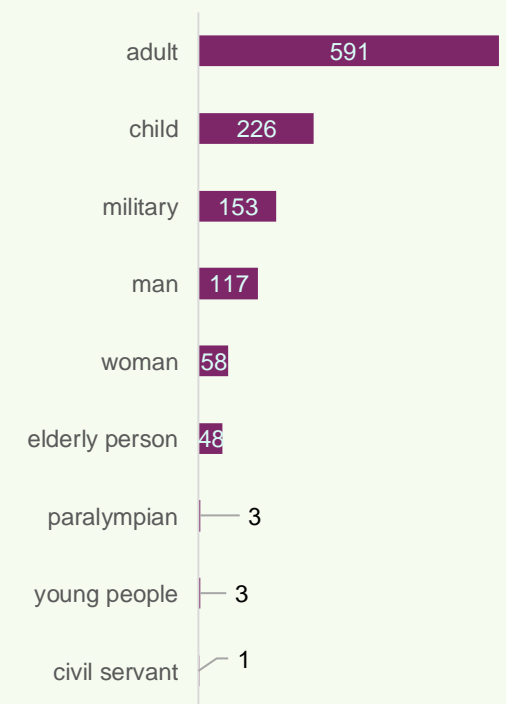
Elderly people. They are worried about bureaucratic problems, such as receiving pensions and making wills. They share stories about the evacuation of a pensioner under fire by police (ZAPORIZKA SICH) about the destruction of the house of a couple of people with disabilities due to shelling, which forced them to move (Stanislav Madens).

Paralympians. They are remembered for their victories in competitions, which should help to keep the spirit of Ukrainians alive. Discussing the ban, Russians are outraged by the participation of Ukrainian Paralympians alongside Russians and are outraged by the latter's support for the war and Putin.

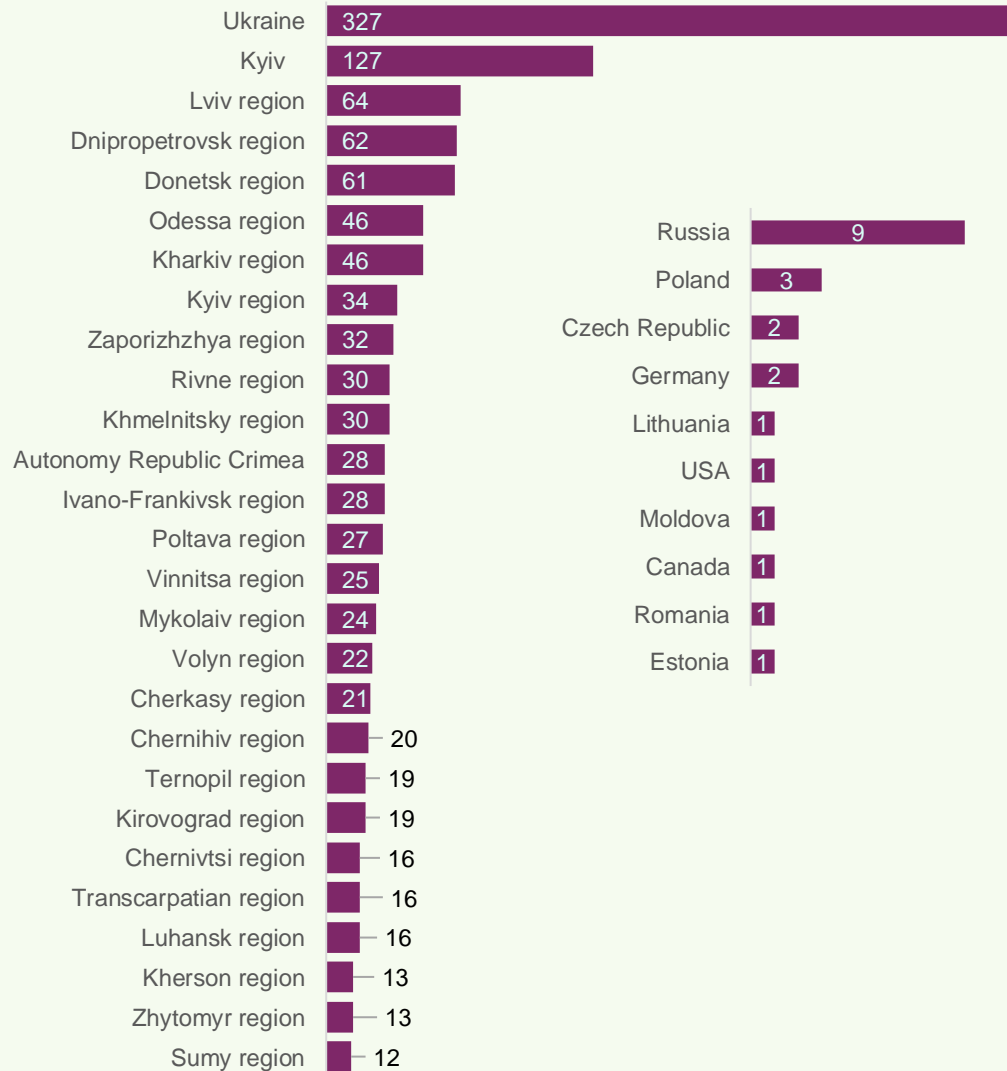
Young people are mentioned in connection with the need for access to educational services. A story is spreading that young people with disabilities in Cherkasy are making trench candles for the military. **Civil servants.** They provide information on special payments for them (TSN).

APPEALS FOR ASSISTANCE COME TO THE FORE, WITH A CLEAR OUTLINE OF THE NEED FOR PWDs. ATTENTION IS FOCUSED ON THE WAR-RELATED FACTORS, DEMOGRAPHICS, STATUS AND PROFESSION OF THE PERSON IN NEED.

(share of total coverage)



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLICATIONS



Communication is based on three models: 1) through the usual media chain: a media outlet or NGO posts the news on its online platform and promotes it on social media, where subscribers share it; 2) horizontally, among themselves, in their communities by nosology - PWDs, relatives of people with ASD, Down syndrome, etc.

Share of the coverage of posts in the sample)

The proliferation of topics related to people with disabilities was noticed in the all-Ukrainian public (Ukraine) of specialists or influencers and the accounts of broadcasters with national coverage (Suspilne, TSN, Espresso, Obozrevatel, etc.).

In the regions, the topic was covered in connection with events specific to a particular location: evacuations in dangerous areas (Kherson, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro, Donetsk regions) and in the hose where people were moving (Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Lviv, Rivne, Volyn). Users in other countries also shared supportive posts or news useful for displaced people (Estonia, Lithuania, Germany, Poland, Romania).

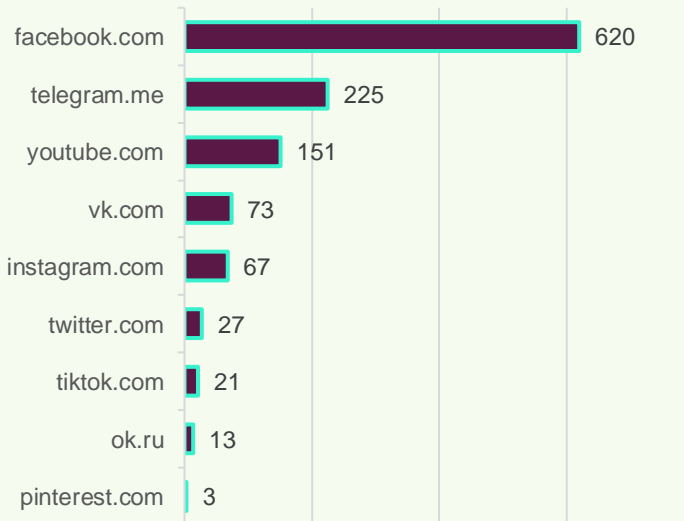
Posts that are linked to Russia (according to the author of the publication) look like they are especially "accelerated" for the PR of the occupation authorities or to draw attention to the disseminating account (Anton Anisimov, who is a Russian journalist, for some reason posts announcements in various social groups about a first-person request for financial assistance to a person with disability, but does not add the person's name with the card number. Usually, such requests are published in the first person with the name of the beneficiary or his/her relative (for example, Yaroslav Hubar from the Kharkiv region). Such posts discredit the very idea of PWD assistance and create grey noise.

TOPIC COVERAGE

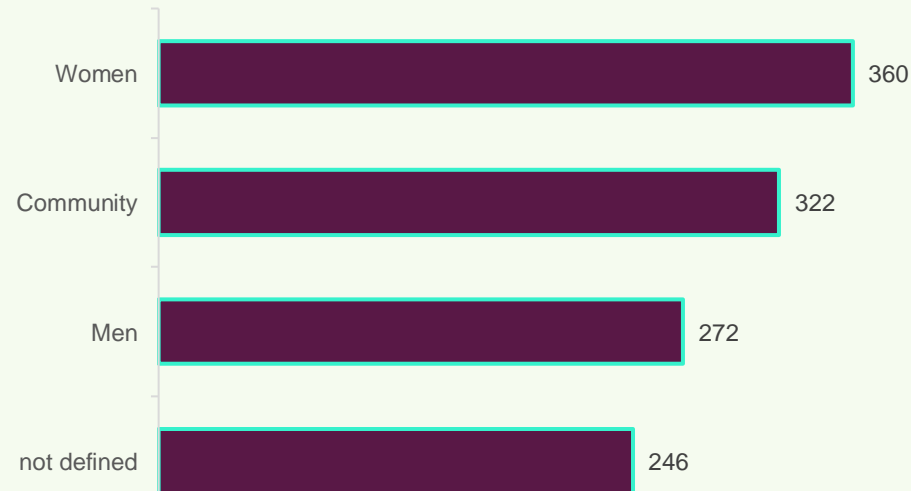
Mostly, discussions take place on Facebook, where both people with disabilities and professionals are active, with a significant part of the debate taking place on Telegram. People use visual content on Instagram and TikTok to publish messages for people with hearing impairments. Official sources and national media use social media to deliver content to the target audience, while activists conduct information campaigns and online flash mobs with hashtags. Authors on Vkontakte and Odnoklassniki represent Russian propaganda posts prepared for the occupied territories, where Russian authorities offer to PWDs social services and evacuation. Women speak more and not only for themselves; men speak primarily for themselves. Communities speak on behalf of people with disabilities and organizations working in the interests of people with disabilities. The discussion is mainly framed in positive or neutral terms. The key is that it is primarily about humanitarian aid. Among the "bad" news, there are credible stories about bribes, abuse statuses, and fakes or disinformation about mobilization and attitudes towards the PWD. There are posts with political connotations (e.g. criticism of the Ukrainian authorities using offensive words), which mention PAPs in the general list of social groups.

(Share of post reach)

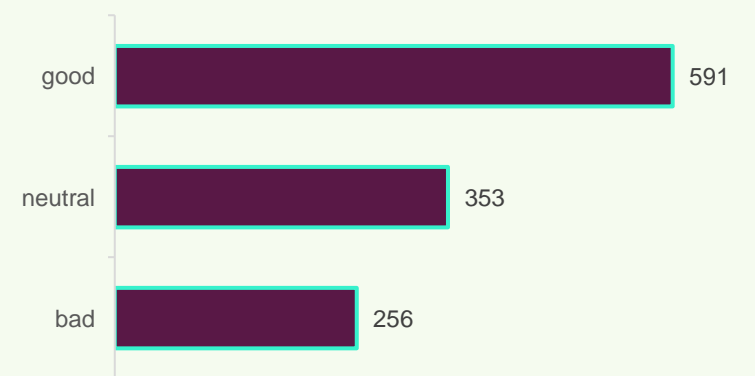
Sources



Demography



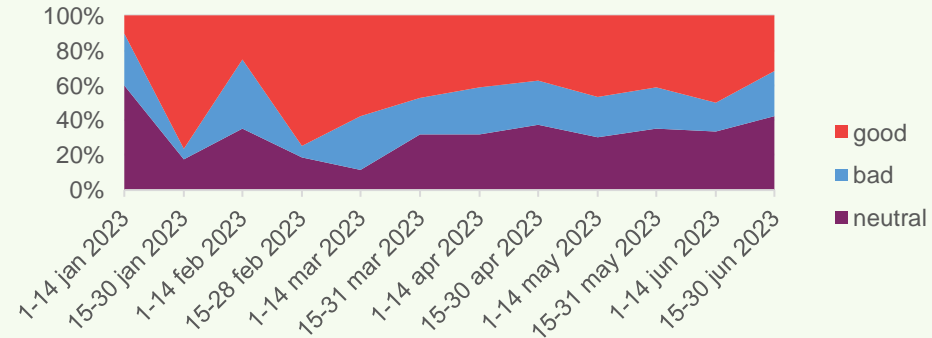
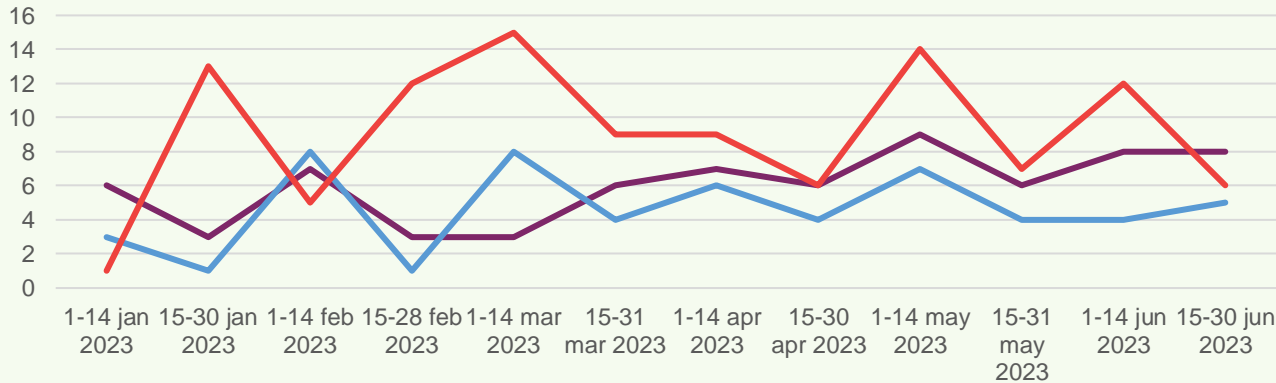
Tonality



DISCUSSION DYNAMICS AND NEWSWORTHY EVENTS

The tonality of publications in the discussion

(Share of coverage of posts)



By mid-January, there is a peak of good news in connection with the celebrations of World Braille Day (4 January), Christmas, and the Old New Year (7,14 January). At this time, there are also negative posts, for example, about an incident in Simferopol (occupied) - relatives came to visit, and a person with a disability was taken to an unknown destination (Blacklist of people Simferopol news).

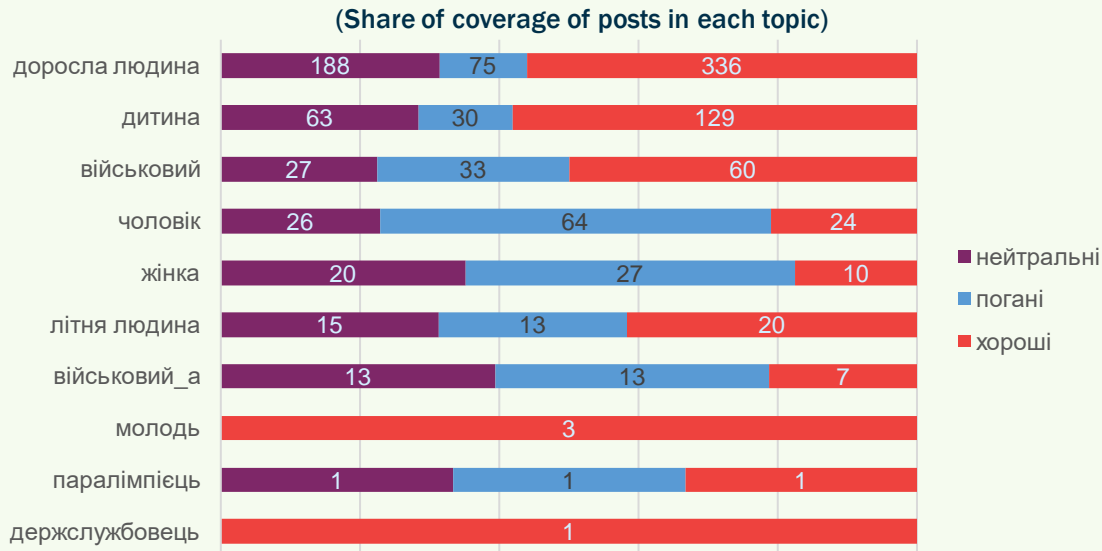
After 16 January, the negative started to grow, especially after a rocket hit a civilian building in Dnipro, where the family of a girl who has not spoken since birth and could not call for help (Dnipro - we are from Ukraine, dp). Negative attitudes peaked in mid-February and have been declining. Since February, the emotional background has been growing in spurts. Since the beginning of March, stories about the return to life of IDPs in the de-occupied territories (Izium, East-West Hub), in new locations, activities for children (Dnipro), and reports on receiving assistance have been spread as good news.

Since mid-March, bad news has been related to the medical commission - a story has been spreading about a guy with cerebral palsy whose disability was not confirmed (Informant. Kolomyia). On 21 March, people celebrate the Day of the Person with Down Syndrome, which keeps things positive for a while. The fall into negativity is ensured by links to advertising websites or garbage sites that spread stories about the beating of a man with a disability, about a defender without a leg who was refused recognition as a person with a disability (Antonina Zalyubovska, Molodiy Bukovynets, vshoke.kie.v.ua), etc.

From the 2nd of April, more posts about autism in connection with the World Autism Day Dissemination of information about autism (activists and communities). The positive momentum grows until mid-May due to Easter. Celebrities take part in a media campaign to debunk myths about autism (Potap, Maneken, Solomiya Vitvitska, Oleg Vinnik, Alina Pash, Zhenya Galich, Iryna Horova, Andriy Khlyvnyuk, and Onuka). Since April 2023, there have been posts about the reform of the MSEC (referring to Prime-Minister D.Shmyhal), which resonated. Meanwhile, the number of neutral articles about social payments, humanitarian aid and information about it is increasing. On 30 April, Easter is celebrated, and World Mobility Day is marked accessibility (Sergei Valerievich Tyutyunnik), which has a positive effect due to the privileges. In May, the celebration of the Day of Reconciliation of the IWW (8 May) and Victory Day (9 May, barbecue) is also remembered. Negativity is manifested in stories about the issuance of summonses to PWD - "a guy without arms was issued a summons" (VK, Pofig normality); such posts have signs of Russian propaganda. At this time, the discussion of the participation of Russian Paralympians in world sports competitions ("Base of Ukrainian sports") also provoked negative feedback. In June, the explosion of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station was mentioned but framed as good news in connection with assisting the PWD the distribution of food packages, etc. The neutral coverage has publications about visits to doctors and teacher training events.

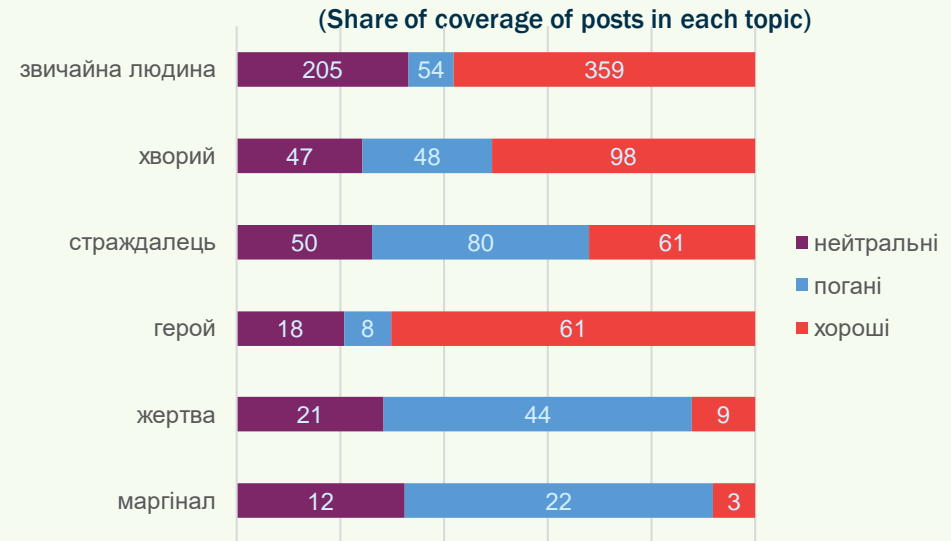
ATTITUDES TOWARDS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

To person's external characteristics



Due to the war, special attention is paid to children and the military. The positive in the discussion is focused on the person, and the negative on the circumstances (war, destruction, service, etc.). The war additionally frames the attention. Most active adults are visible on social media, speaking either for themselves ("I need to", "I want to submit documents, do something, move, etc.") or for friends ("help a good person," "my friend," "a professional," etc.), relatives (requests for help for those under care) or specialists (asking for help for groups). Such news usually has a positive connotation. Bribes cause negative connotations during the commission, the use of disability status to evade the army. Announcements about social services from the state, CSOs, or volunteers are neutral. The statement of LGBTQ human rights activists (ZMINA), "Transgender people in Ukraine cannot be drafted into the Armed Forces and must be removed from the military register" as unfit (distributed in the right-wing radical Christian public space Ecclesia Militans), causes outrage. Pro-Russian websites are frightening "freak carnival" and the use of disability to promote a "liberal agenda" with transgender people and pedophiles in the West (Antifascist).

Observer bias



The existence of prejudice against PWD in society is manifested in the way an observer describes a person. The media mostly talk about PWDs as ordinary people who need help. In posts from relatives and friends, people with disabilities are presented as sick, sufferers, or heroes. Moreover, "sick" has mostly positive connotations. The instrumentalization of emotions to evoke empathy for a person with a disability by presenting them as a sick person, sufferer or hero is a common practice, especially in personal posts. PWDs are presented as marginalized persons whose fate should not be imitated, but not about such a person, but as an insulting characteristic of a normative person. There is a negative use of the words "disabled", "retarded", and "down" as offensive, but not in relation to people with disabilities, but to others, or to describe the future of a person who may find themselves in a difficult situation ("you will become disabled"), including as a result of indifference to their development, including language learning ("disabled because they do not know the language", "let's all laugh together at the disabled person without a jaw").

DISCUSSION: SPECIALISTS

There is much less bad news here than positive or neutral news. Specialists share recommendations, offer their services, supportive publications, and networking in their bubbles. They mostly describe people with disabilities as normal or sick. The topics of humanitarian aid, inclusive environment and educational needs are common.

Educators are becoming one of the drivers of the inclusive agenda. They share their experience in implementing socialisation projects, teaching PWDs, and invite them to events, both for special audiences and for the general public. The posts usually indicate the target group. Educators discuss the provision of educational services, training for working with children with disabilities, and the creation of an inclusive environment. As always, an important hook for them is obtaining a certificate in the relevant specialisation (working with children with ASD etc.).

Psychologists, lawyers, and attorneys offer free consultations on their issues to IDPs. Videos are being distributed from specialists or experts with advice on how to draw up documents, pensions, deferment from the army, travelling abroad.

Bloggers who create content that evokes positive emotions are also involved in the topic of maintaining a psychological state (Yana Metiolkina).

Among the specialists active in drawing attention to people with disabilities (children, athletes) and promoting the ideas of inclusion are sports experts - coaches, consultants. Paralympic athletes often become the heroes of stories and act as influencers in their communities.

There is a significant share of advice for those who have acquired disability status due to the war, who have changed their place of residence and want to go abroad, and for those who want to obtain a disability status or become a guardian (men only).

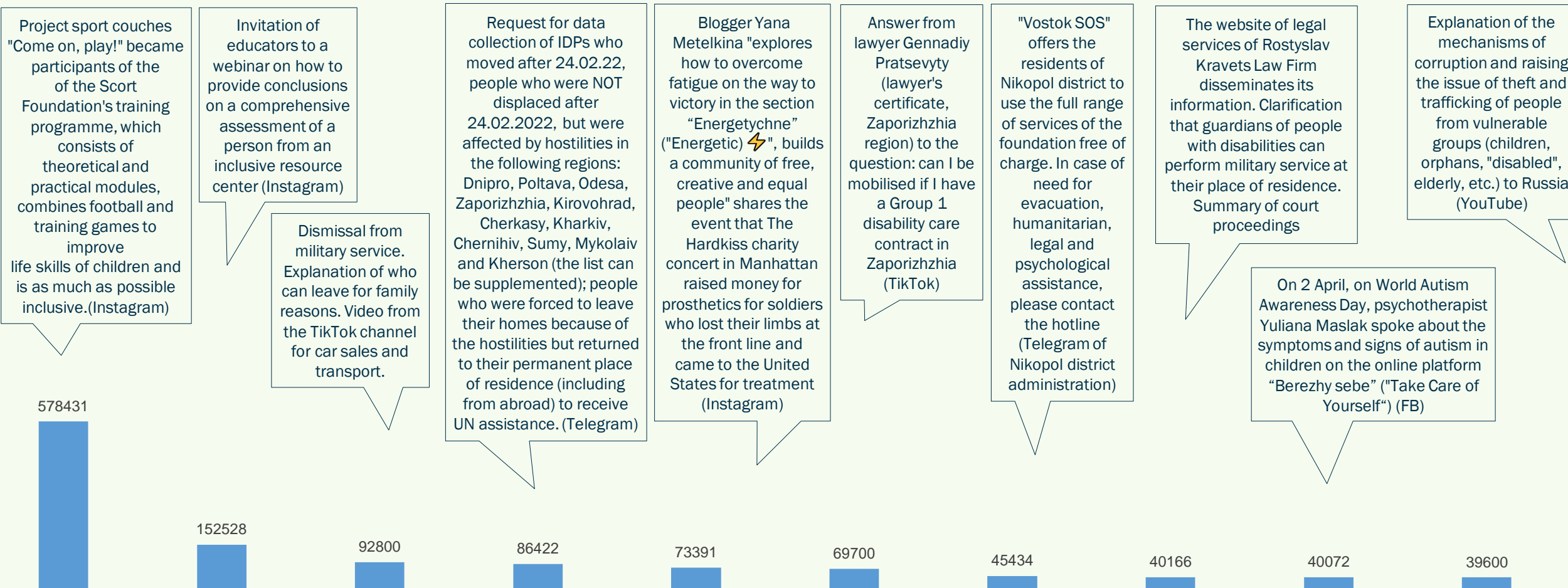
Lawyers and attorneys are taking advantage of the opportunity to increase their client base on the topics of war and displacement.

420 relevant posts with the widest reach, with a total audience of 3.7 million contacts analyzed.

TOP 10 AUTHORS: SPECIALISTS. TOPICS

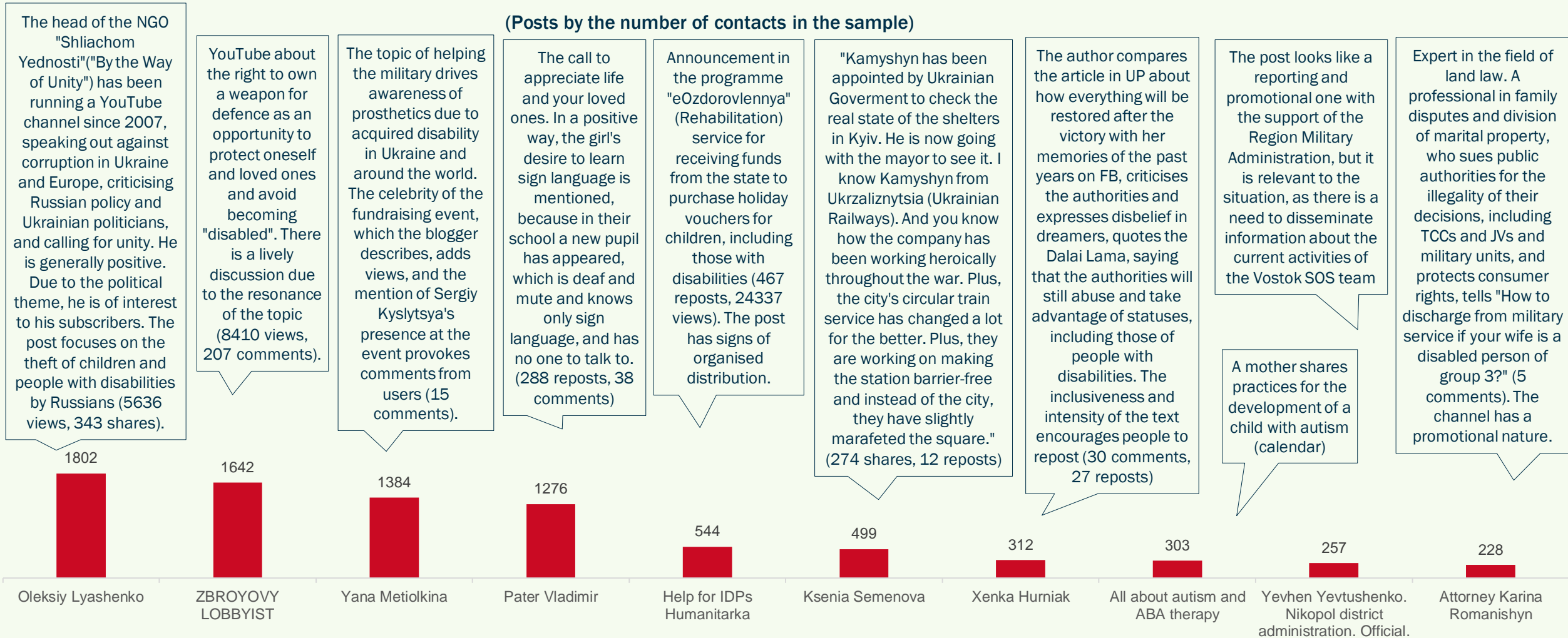
Specialists who developed their channels before the war have the trust of consumers and become channels for disseminating relevant information useful to their audiences. Calendar dates, special events, and, of course, the events of the war became a reason for the media to invite professionals to the topic.

(Posts by number of followers)



TOP 10 AUTHORS: SPECIALISTS. INTERACTION

Announcements, cautionary stories, specific advice, and prayers motivate people to repost publications. Activists respond to adequate actions of the authorities and share them with the public. Specialists use social media to promote their services, lawyers and attorneys use the window of opportunity to use disability as a pretext for evasion from military service



Mostly, the discussion of PWD issues in the media is about life with disabilities during the war, in the occupation, and about injuries on the frontline, injuries caused by shelling and being under rubble, about rehabilitation and overcoming circumstances.

The heroes of the stories are different, although, of course, more attention is paid to the military (men and women). Stories about people with disabilities are often sensationalistic in nature (TSN), and covered by other national broadcasters and news agencies (Suspilne, Ukrinform), the topic of providing social services and financial assistance is in demand (UKRAINE TODAY - MONEY, this publication distributes information in both Ukrainian and Russian). The topic of inclusion is a "promoted" one, primarily covered in connection with educational initiatives in schools, and has received national media coverage through the involvement of officials (Olena Zelenska) and celebrity influencers (Potap, Onuka, etc.). Some media resources cover military personnel who acquired disabilities in combat, increasing the overall number of persons with disabilities in Ukrainian society, and this contributes to the rethinking of the role of PWDs in society and attention to their needs (Public and regional offices, TSN). In contrast, some resources do not see a person with a disability unless they are related to military affairs (Pryamyi, Espresso.TV). The topic of accessibility and barrier-free access is discussed in connection with the destruction and reconstruction. Also, it provides media stories in the presence of local heads of regional administrations or mayors.

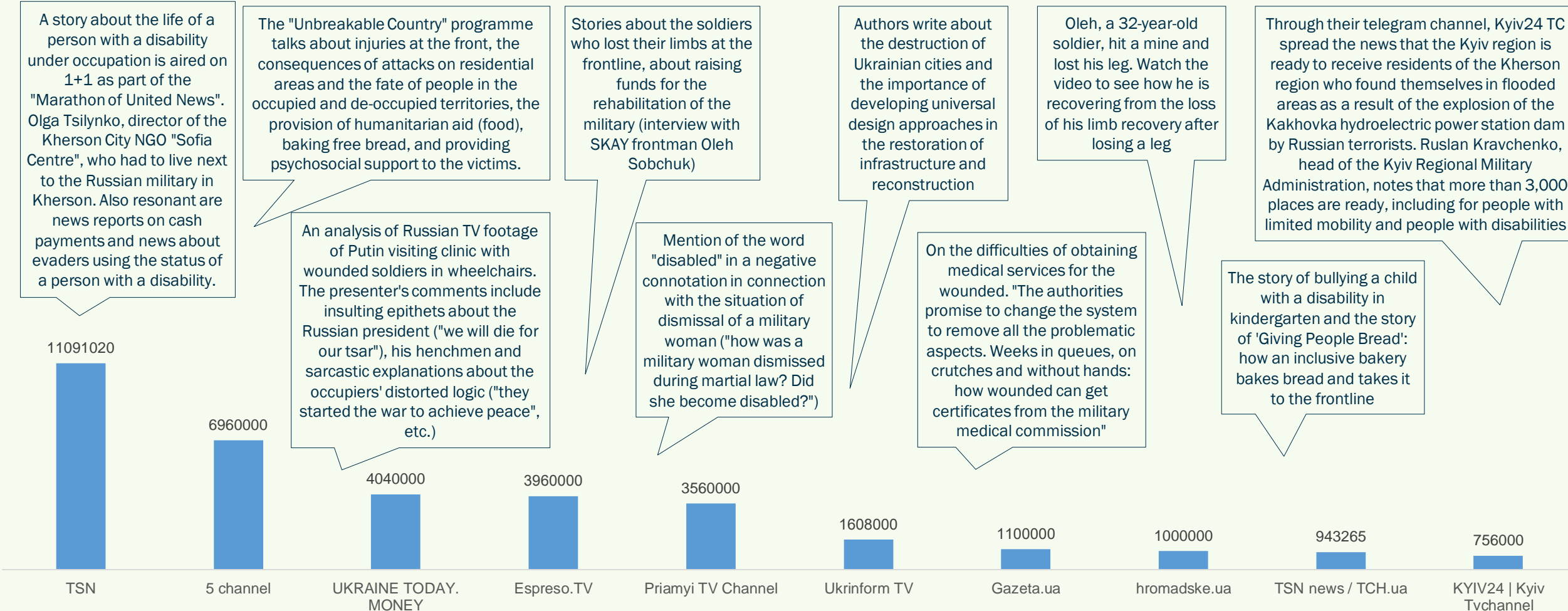
Regional media play a significant role in covering the lives of the PWDs during the war. In the government-controlled areas, they broadcast in Ukrainian (Kyiv24 | Kyiv TV channel, Suspilne Chernihiv, Dnipro, Ukraine, Informant Kyiv, Kharkiv 1654, Tea Party Out of Time, Avers TV channel, Channel 11, Olha Romanska, We are Dynamo, Dynamo is Us, Competitor TV channel - news from Lutsk and Volyn, DniproTV channel, Suspilne Chernivtsi, Priazovia news, Kharkiv News, Suspilne Ivano-Frankivsk, First City TV channel. Kryvyi Rih, ukrainecar, Suspilne Rivne, Work Kyiv Vacancies, PVP.POLTAVA, user4160639107072, Public Auditor. Brovary, Suspilne Kherson, Suspilne Donbas), in the occupied territories - in Russian (Luhansk*Krym * Evpatoria, Donetsk News, Crimean railway, Disabled people of the DPR. Donetsk, Novosti Kerch Krym Rossiya, Antifashist, etc.) In pro-Ukrainian media outlets, discussions are focused on concrete actions - aid, social and medical services, and stories about the consequences of the war. In pro-Russian, PWD is more often presented as a victim or an object of PR or additional income.

There are also information platforms for civil society organizations that have expertise but need to interact with civil society due to the lack of information dissemination policies (INVAK.info), which results in low coverage and interaction. An angry post about the injustice to "ordinary people" who cannot "evade" service, even if they are carers of a person with a disability (e.g., a mother) (Victoriya Nemcova).

TOP 10 AUTHORS: MEDIA. TOPICS

In the national media, coverage is provided by commonly covered topics - the consequences of the occupation, evacuation and displacement issues, destruction and injuries at the frontline, and the war consequences for people. The regional media cover more diverse stories about the employment of PWDs and other social projects.

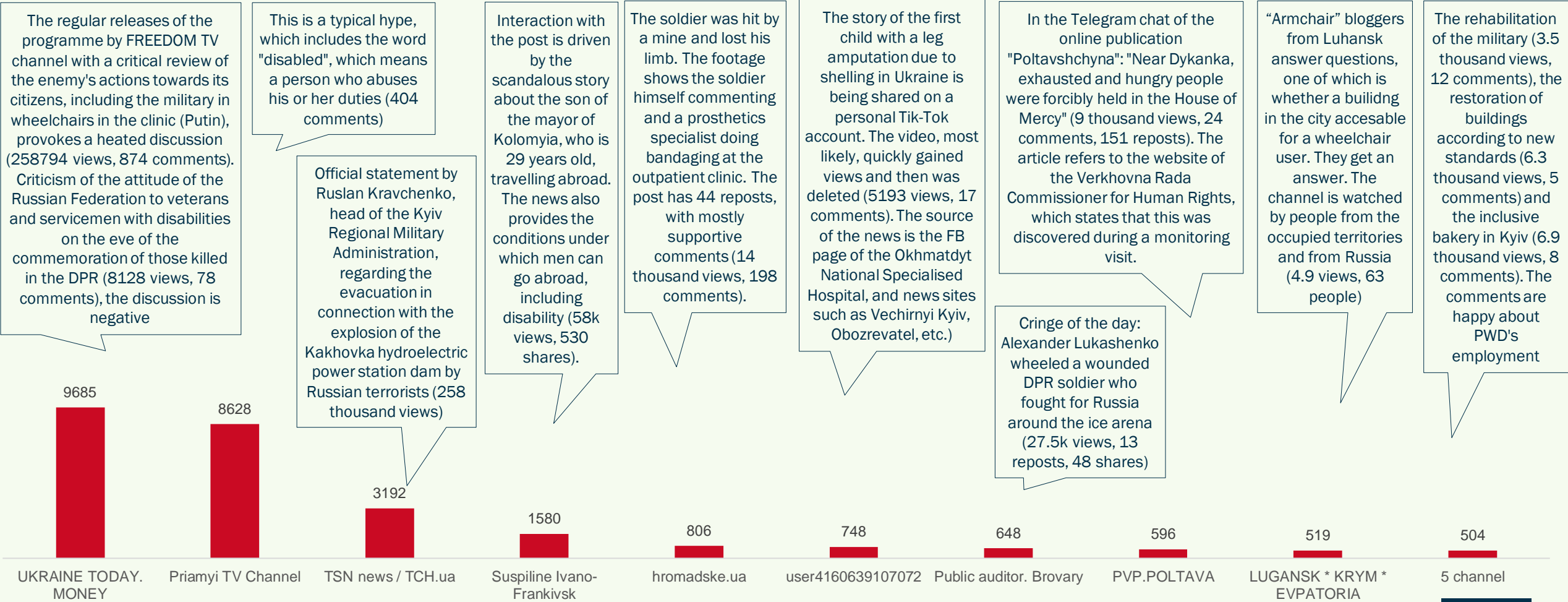
(Posts by number of followers)



TOP 10 AUTHORS: MEDIA. INTERACTIONS.

Stories drive the interaction, with scandalousness and relevance to widely covered events (for example, the flooding of the Kakhovka dam) becoming triggers. Digests with several topics or reviews linked to the regular news releases of the United News TV Marathon are more engaging.

(Posts by the number of contacts in the sample)



DISCUSSION: ACTIVISTS

The good news is determined by the activists' position as people who are motivated to engage in civic activities. They discuss the development of an inclusive environment, humanitarian aid, and the problems of people with mental disabilities and challenging life circumstances. PWDs are presented as ordinary people or, to a lesser extent, as sufferers.

Due to the consequences of the war, people with disabilities are being mutually integrated into a wide range of IDPs, and vice versa - inclusive activities for IDPs become support for people and children without disabilities. This does not raise awareness of the specific problems or needs of people with disabilities but includes them in the field of interaction with other bubbles. Three types of people with disabilities are in the focus of activists' attention: 1) those who acquired disabilities as a result of the war - participation in hostilities at the front due to shelling, getting under the rubble as a result of rocket attacks (activates general volunteers, has a broader reach); 2) those who had a disability before the war (discussions in bubbles of specific communities - autism, cerebral palsy, societies of the blind, deaf, etc.); 3) those who want to use the status of disability to avoid going to the front or going abroad (mostly men discuss). Announcements and calls to action are effective in communication: to join the work, sign a petition, or participate in an event.

There is still frequent use of incorrect terms: "vulnerable categories of people," "disabled people," and euphemisms such as "little Bakhmutians," "children of the sun," "inclusive people," and "special children." Activists include representatives of civic and religious organizations, members of social media communities, entrepreneurs, and people who want to give or sell things that may be useful to the PWDs.

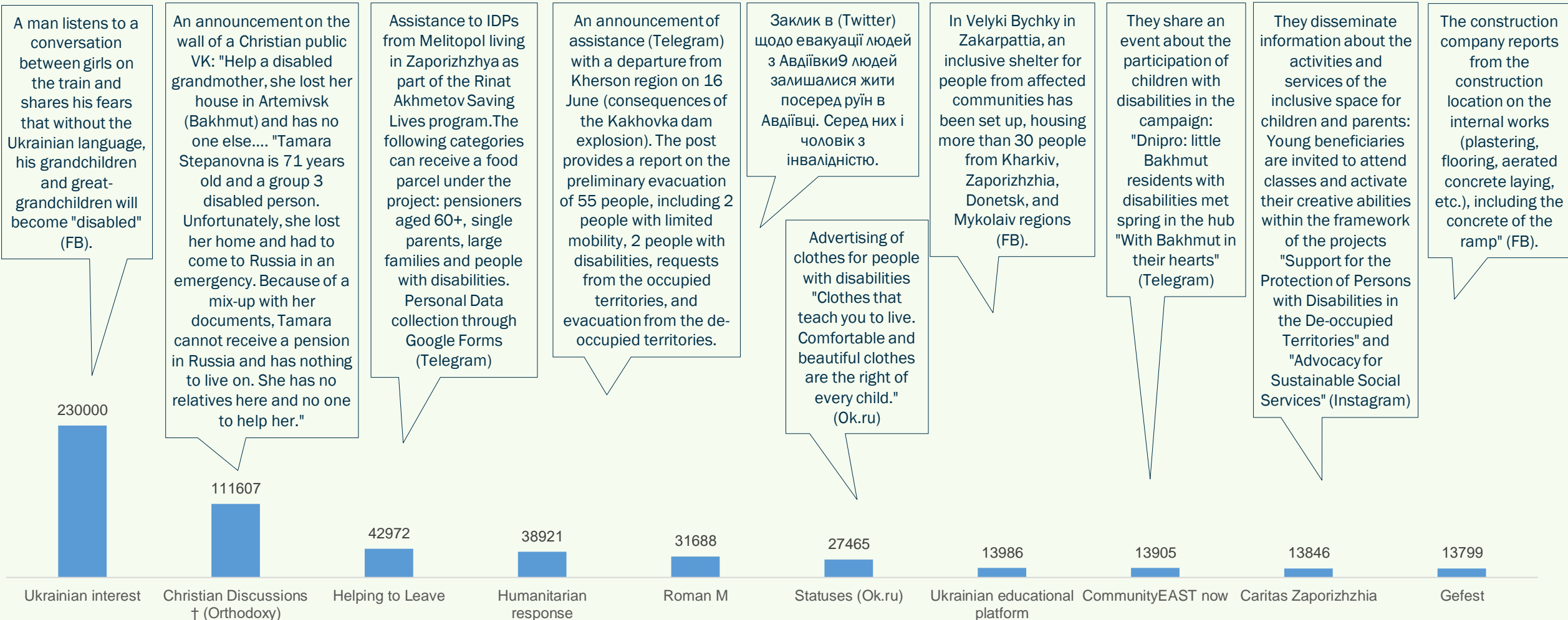
As part of their PR campaigns, businesses focus on implementing accessibility and barrier-free access (safe space, installation of a ramp, an inclusive center, etc.). So-called LPR "public activists" recall Elizaveta Glinka (Doctor Lisa), who died in a plane crash in 2016 while flying to Syria. They say that she had been evacuating residents of Donbas since 2015. seriously ill and wounded children for treatment in Russia as part of the humanitarian aid of the so-called DPR. It is said that 219 children have been traveling to treatment under the same program (Ok.ru)

121 relevant posts with the widest reach, with a total audience of 1.16 million contacts analyzed.

TOP 10 AUTHORS: ACTIVISTS. TOPICS

Information about the needs is mostly provided in the general framework of war events (dam blowing up, shelling, evacuation, occupation). Still, there are visible activities within the framework of the organizations' pre-war activities.

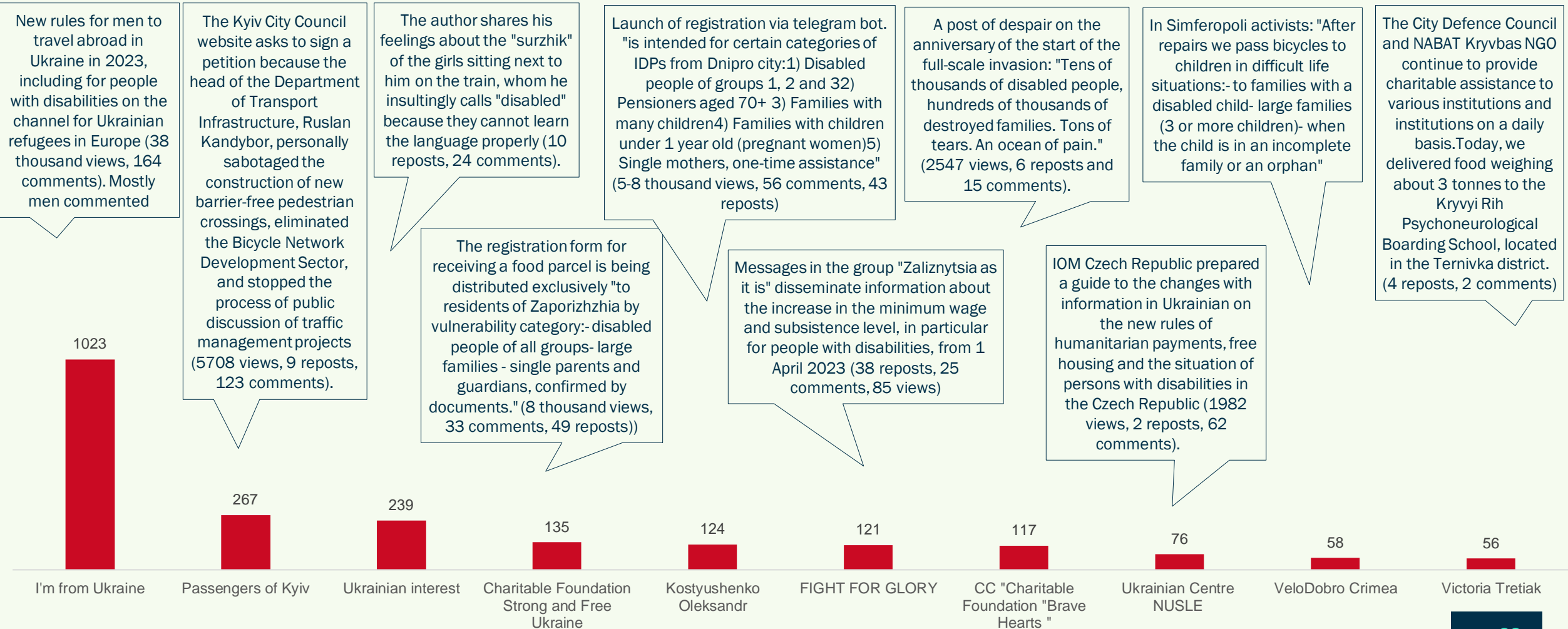
(Posts by number of followers)



TOP 10 AUTHORS: ACTIVISTS. INTERACTION

Those who have not previously interacted with the PWDs are involved in activism and help them among IDPs. The followers in social media interact with the ads more actively because it is clearly texted what needs to be done.

(Posts by the number of contacts in the sample)



DISCUSSION. A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY

There is a high percentage of negative sentiments from authors of persons with disabilities related to the Medical Commission and the rehabilitation period, with posts about indifference and the consequences of poor treatment. They share this as a fact, specifically about themselves, and in general, indicating their disability group, but sharing their judgement.

Most posts are about problems with the motor system, humanitarian and social assistance, and access to medical services and medicines. In the posts, people are positioning themselves either as ordinary person or as sufferer or patients, and this is due to the content, as they usually either ask for help with a motor disorder, humanitarian or social assistance, or access to medical services and medicines. People with disabilities mainly use social media to announce the need for aid for treatment or vital support (food, clothing, equipment).

They share their interests, call for communication and acquaintances, and express an active patriotic position.

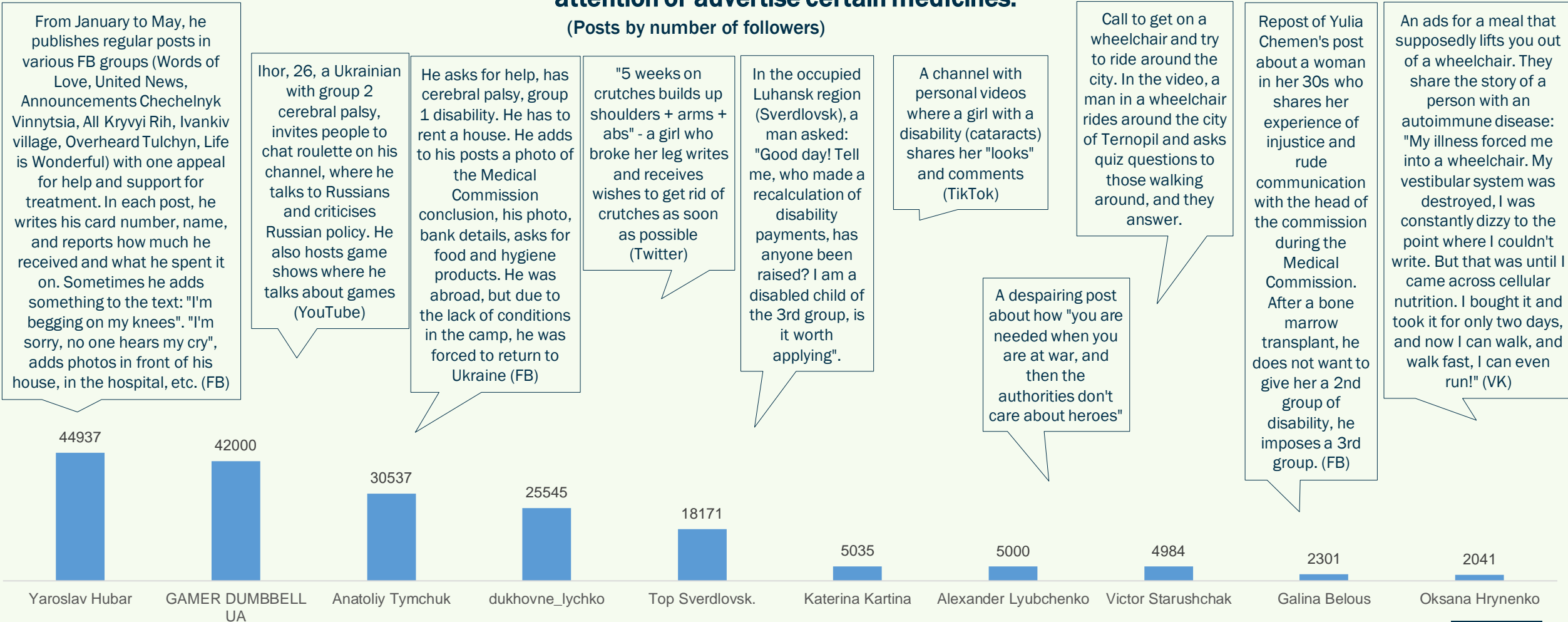
In some posts, there are signs that the topic of disability is being used both to spread political "treason" and for advertising.

120 relevant posts with the widest reach, with a total audience of 1.7 million contacts are analyzed.

TOP 10. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. TOPICS

Usually, PWDs make posts about assistance, and they demonstrate a fairly systematic approach to posting regularly and selecting groups for publication. Another category of PWDs is those who use social media to communicate and develop their channels, play online games together, and organize events (active people with cerebral palsy). Some posts have signs of paid-for desperation stories used to attract attention or advertise certain medicines.

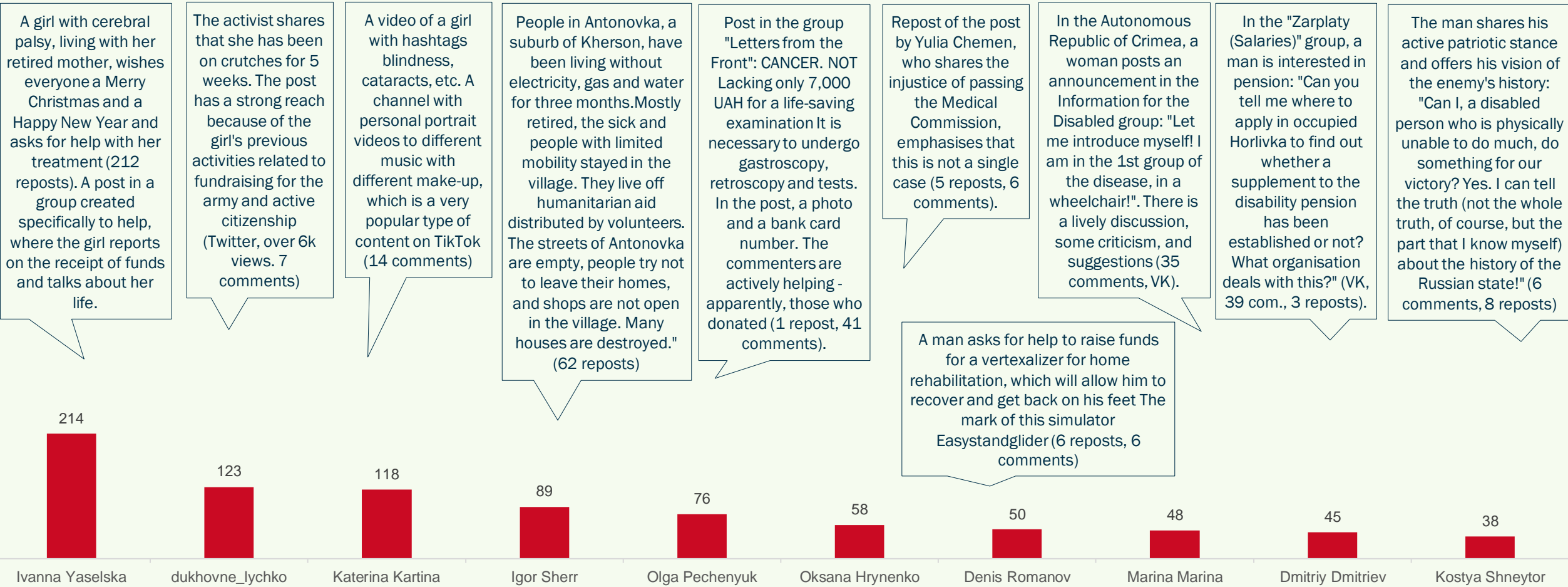
(Posts by number of followers)



TOP 10 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. INTERACTION

Interaction is active if there is an articulated need or a question raised. They interact for help, to communicate, get to know each other, and share knowledge and the situation. In the occupied territories, they find out about the possibilities of payments, pensions, and social assistance. Obviously, there they do not have enough information.

(Дописи за кількістю контактів у вибірці)



DISCUSSIONS: PEOPLE CLOSE TO PERSON WITH DISABILITIES

Mostly good or neutral news is shared, or bad news is spoken about in an upbeat manner with a pathos of overcoming or desire to resolve the problem and their acquaintance with a person with a disability is quoted as an example.

People with disabilities are written about either as sufferers or as heroes, especially when it comes to caring for wounded soldiers. The leading nosologies are the musculoskeletal system, limb amputations and mental disorders, due to the urgency of the problems in connection with war and, in the latter case, with the uncertainty of bureaucratic procedures for people with mental disorders.

Close relatives of people with disabilities write about raising funds for their child, about the need to take care of older relatives, more often about mothers or women.

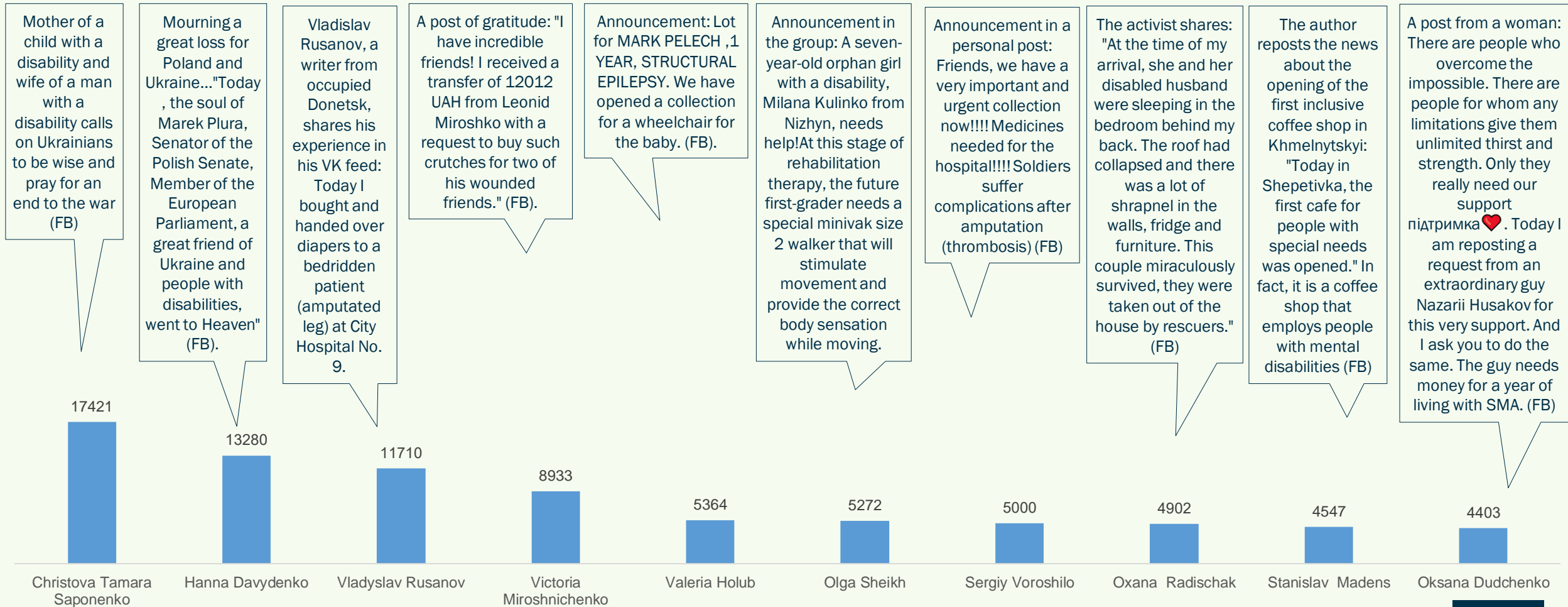
Close people write about themselves - about their burnout. Still, not much, and although this topic is perceived positively ("you can rest a little", "you have the right", "you have delegated authority to those you trust") in the bubble, it is labeled as revolutionary. Women write more about this.

98 relevant posts with the widest reach, with a total audience of 1.1 million contacts analyzed

TOP 10. PEOPLE CLOSE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. TOPICS

It isn't easy to separate this group from the activists, but the people close to PWDs are mostly relatives or friends. The posts are about children or those who cannot make a publication themselves, in particular, they ask for wounded soldiers.

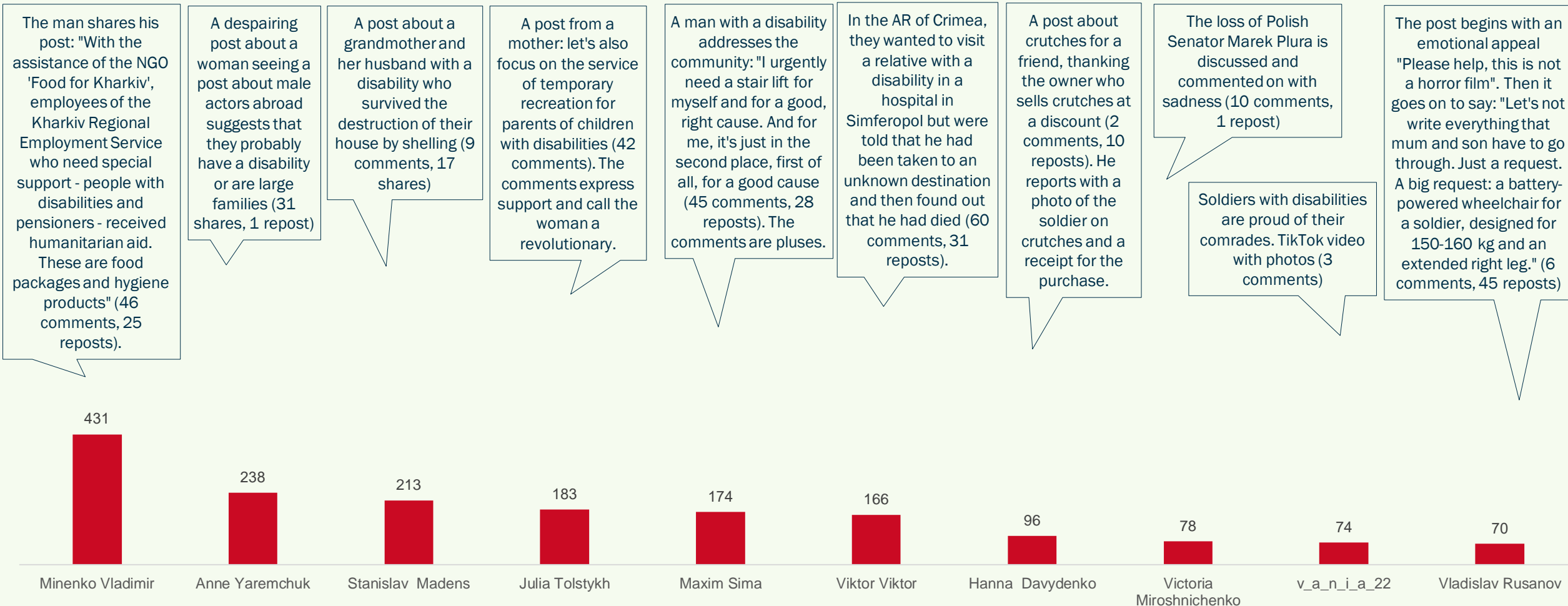
(Posts by number of followers)



TOP 10. PEOPLE CLOSE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. INTERACTION

On controlled territories by Ukraine interaction is initiated by posts with appeals. Confusing stories are spread in the occupied territories to provoke emotional reactions and "tie" PWDs to the source of the information.

(Posts by the number of contacts in the sample)



DISCUSSION: GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

The news is mostly good, because it is reporting. People with disabilities appear either like all IDPs or as a sufferer in the description. The leader is The topic of humanitarian and social assistance, to a large extent, and evacuation.

War, on the one hand, catalyzes the involvement of officials who demonstrate awareness of their actions and even inspiration from the Implementation of projects necessary in the situation. Mayors, heads of local authorities, heads of departments, and deputies communicate personally; Ministries mostly broadcast institutionally. The careless use of terms by officials shows that they mostly do not dive deeply into understanding the needs of PWD, with rare exceptions. Euphemisms such as "little children" are still used to make a more convincing presentation of care for them, and official statements use "disabilities" instead of "impairments" - developmental, hearing, visual, etc.

For the most part, government officials communicate reactively - reporting and responding to challenges. Partnerships with civil society organizations are actively demonstrated in reporting information materials. Women heads and deputies in communities demonstrate convincing rhetoric, but it looks more like a PR exercise for the authorities.

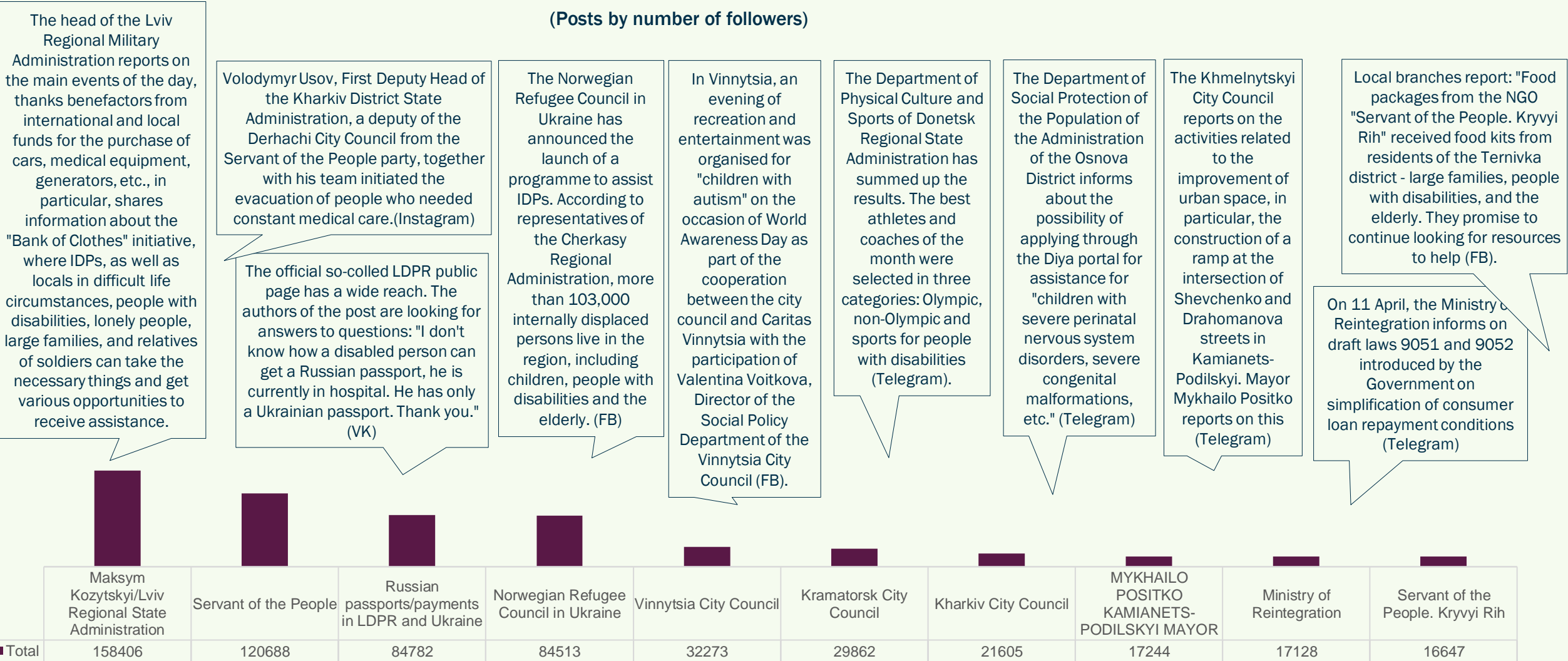
Functionally, heads of departments, officials, and deputies act as intermediaries between people and those who can assist (businesses, international organizations, volunteers). Still, they always try to emphasize the importance of their actions in a paternalistic way and make the actions of their partners invisible (depending on their status, they only talk about their participation or mention it in passing), when giving interviews). MPs often misuse the means of expression and make heroes out of those who have to do their job (the communicators of the Servant of the People party, for example, add pretentious portraits of officials in posts about the evacuation).

63 relevant posts with the widest reach, with a total audience of 626 thousand contacts analyzed.

TOP-10 AUTHORS: GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. TOPICS

Despite the war, the official authorities are trying to promote themselves based on information about aid, road repairs, and construction. For the most part, it looks like a tribute to tradition.

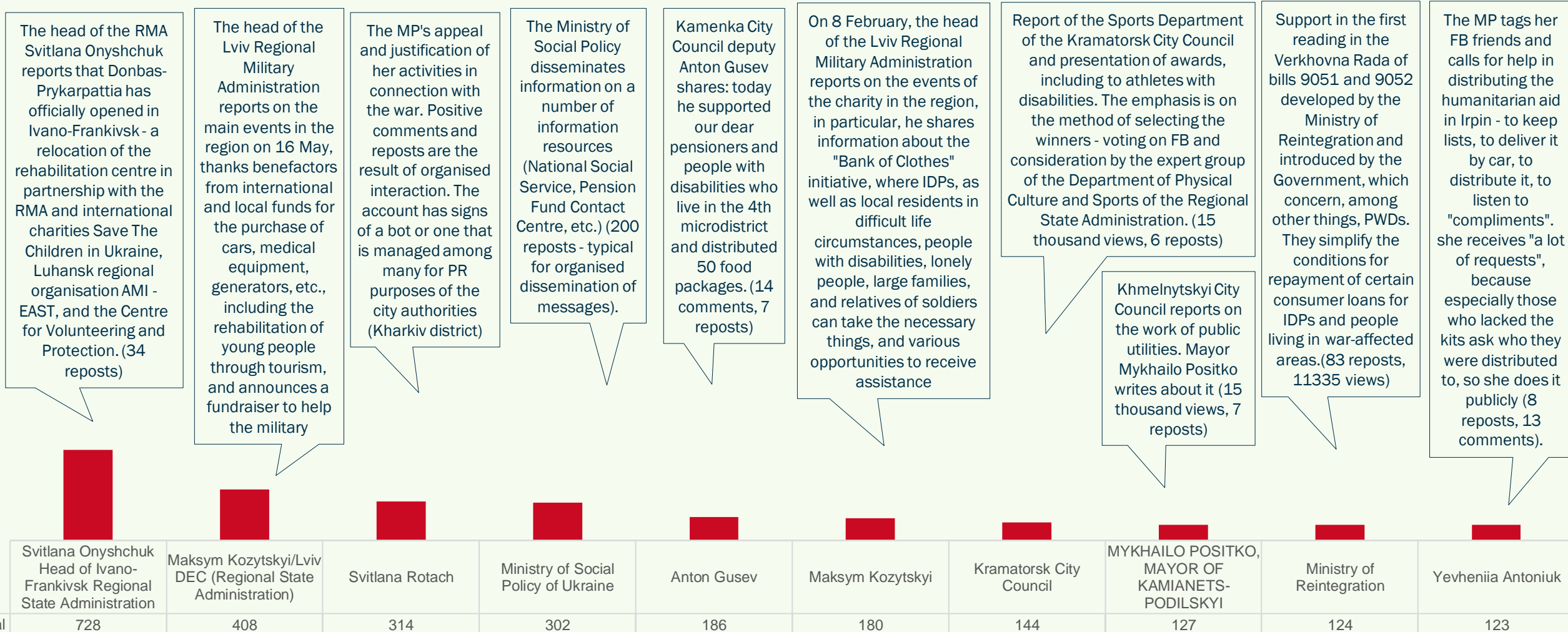
(Posts by number of followers)



TOP-10 AUTHORS: GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. INTERACTION

Interaction in social media looks like organized, as it is surprising when there are as many reposts about the activities of utility companies as there are, for example, with petitions. This indicates that the administrative resource is used to inform public.

(Posts by the number of contacts in the sample)



EXPERTS ARE MORE ACTIVE AS AUTHORS THAN OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE DISCUSSION However, their potential reach is 10 times less than that of the media.

Specialists are a powerful communication resource, and they can act as mediators for media coverage of topics. There are also powerful authors among people with disabilities who, if possible, can develop into influencers for their communities.

WOMEN AND THE ELDERLY ATTRACT LESS ATTENTION THAN CHILDREN AND THE MILITARY, And this is despite the fact that women are more active, acting as guardians, volunteers, etc.

HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION DURING THE WAR IS AIMED AT MEN. The Ombudsman focuses on attention, while the posts by unofficials are mostly advice on mobilization, avoidance, or demobilization.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES SHARE THEIR VIEWS ON A VARIETY OF TOPICS. The free expression of opinions in posts with the geolocation of the territories controlled by Ukraine indicates a healthy information

environment where people feel safe to express themselves freely and have confidence in information dissemination resources.

COMMUNITIES HAVE SUBSCRIBERS AND SYSTEMATICALLY PROMOTE INFORMATION.

On the one hand, it helps to highlight important issues of people with disabilities and hold meetings; on the other hand, the media use stories about people with disabilities, especially children and the military, to increase the clickbait value of posts due to the increased attention of society to these categories.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES ARE UNITED, BUT THERE ARE NUANCES, BECAUSE THIS UNITY ALSO OCCURS ACROSS BORDERS. There is an active interaction of people with disabilities with posts that are relevant to the events or consequences of the war. In this field, there are posts by religious communities (NEW CHRISTIAN, Oksana Khoma) shared by people with disabilities.

UKRAINIAN MEDIA SHOW AWARENESS OF THE TOPIC OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

AND INCLUSION. News stories talk openly about problems, give the floor to people with disabilities, take comments from experts, etc.

MEDIATISATION OF THE TOPIC OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND INSTRUMENTALISATION OF EMOTIONS.

There is an active use of algorithms and products of social media. Stories are spread both organically and in an organized way - in the format of form campaigns or virally on YouTube and TikTok. The media instrumentalize emotions through a "picture" - they show a person in a wheelchair, or in a hospital, but this has no signs of objectification. There are images of a person with a disability as a victim, although this image is used by Russian propaganda in the occupied territories, demonstrating the attitude towards a person with a disability in the context of paternalistic patterns as sufferers and victims of the Ukrainian "regime".

THERE ARE NO CLEAR LINES OF DIVISION BETWEEN PEOPLE WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES IN SOCIETY. By focusing on overcoming their barriers, people with disabilities do not get distracted by political agendas and do not waste time on quarrels. It even makes them more resistant to disinformation. Carers of people with disabilities and people who sympathise with them show themselves to be more vulnerable to Russian propaganda (reposting disinformation, reinforcing negative sentiments about the future - indifference of society and about the government - criticism of corruption in the reconstruction, though sometimes justified).

COVERAGE OF A PERSON'S DISABILITY DUE TO PARTICIPATION IN HOSTILITIES The visibility of persons with disabilities is increased in the media due to wounded soldiers, but the topic of the needs of persons with disabilities is not always presented in a convincing way, but rather as a temporary consequence of the war

that affects those who participated in hostilities

DISABILITY IS NOT ONLY MENTIONED IN SPECIFIC CHANNELS OF THE BUBBLE The visibility of people with disabilities is increasing in the media due to the military theme and public opinion on empathy for people in vulnerable situations.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. In the occupied territories, information on assistance to people with disabilities looks like propaganda or PR by individual influencers. People with disabilities write less about themselves, less about everyday life, and ask exclusively about pensions, other social benefits and paperwork. Obviously, there is not enough information there and access to sources of information exchange for people with disabilities is limited in the occupied territories.

THE ISSUE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES REMAINS VIRTUALLY

INVISIBLE. There are some media stories about violence against women with disabilities and abuse of the status of guardian. More people are outraged by the fraudulent use of the status to travel abroad, and the focus on the needs of people with disabilities is lost in this discussion, and more authors or commentators are concerned with the unpatriotic position of the fraudster, which is due not only to the state of war, but also to the culture of communication in society.

COMMUNICATION IS BASED ON THREE MODELS: 1) through the usual media chain: a media outlet or NGO posts the news on its online platform and promotes it on social media, where it is shared by subscribers; 2) horizontally, among themselves, in their communities by nosology - PWDs, close to PWDs people (relatives of people with ASD, Down syndrome, etc.)

- **EMOTIONAL DYNAMICS WILL ALLOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOPICS ABOUT THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKS.** The positive discussion is due to the readiness of society to discuss the issues of people with disabilities. There are signs of public awareness on certain topics, such as inclusion in education, symptoms of certain mental disorders or congenital diseases, physical disabilities (ASD, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, etc.). The topic of physical accessibility of urban space and public places is gaining momentum, especially in the areas of restoration and construction. The development of these topics may be in the direction of expanding the value of inclusion for stakeholders.
- **THE KEY TO STRATEGIC PLANNING IS THE CALENDAR LOGIC IN COMMUNICATION.** In the context of limited access to communication due to the peculiarities of nosology, and now - due to military operations, the relevance of such a tool as calendar events in strategic planning increases. Firstly, calendar dates are something that does not change, not only

specific but also general (the Day of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, World Autism Awareness Day, Down Syndrome Day, as well as New Year, Christmas, Easter, etc.) Secondly, the planning of the life of a person with a disability evolves from holiday to holiday, from commission to commission. It is essential to take this into account in order to maintain communication and produce good news about people with disabilities, to increase the visibility of their lives in society.

- **PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF MEDIA CONTENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.** For a person with a disability, access to the information they need is essential. The most effective authors are trusted by their target groups, disseminate relevant information, and skillfully use media technologies. While official sources are limited to texts, experts effectively use the advantages of visual content - they record videos on Instagram and TikTok, where the ability to convey information through different channels of perception is enhanced by multimodality of the message (at least emotions are added to the information) and

convergence (duplication of content in texts, voice, and images). People with disabilities also create content and are trusted in their communities, so to disseminate important information effectively, they should be involved by providing the necessary technical support. To be more effective, different stakeholder bubbles (specialists, activists, relatives of people with disabilities, and official authorities) should communicate and exchange information. This can be achieved by organizing special events.

- **CONTENT DISTRIBUTION AND INTERACTION WITH POSTS.** Official sources and media have high coverage. The latter - through systematic outreach and improved content production, and the former - through events, speaker statuses and traditional access to communication resources. Any change in the external agenda will affect the change of topics and divert attention from people with disabilities. After the end of hostilities, due to the "fatigue" of society from discussing the consequences of the war, they risk being left on the media and government margins again.

- **INTERACTION WITH THE MEDIA.** The media are interested in stories, so it would be appropriate to establish a regular newsletter to inform about the needs of people with disabilities and their lives. It also makes sense to consider programmes such as 1+1 Breakfast, MORNING WITH INTER or other guest shows as a channel for raising awareness of the needs of people with disabilities, especially on the eve of calendar dates. However, it is necessary to monitor the level of public awareness of a particular topic in order to understand which issues are already understood and which require training, clarification and comments from specialists.

- **COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THEIR "BUBBLE".** It makes sense to consider policies to recognise those stakeholders (media, activists, professionals) who make a significant contribution to shaping the culture of interaction with people with disabilities, raising awareness of their needs and developing policies for them. Basic summary meetings every six months, or annual special events

(separate or as part of general events), where certain media, journalists, bloggers, activists, specialists who have created the most influential materials or contributed to the formation of the agenda for the protection of the rights of people with disabilities in society will be identified, thanked, given a certificate or a badge of a top advocate for the rights of people with disabilities, etc.

- **WORK WITH JOURNALISTS AND BLOGGERS ON THE USE OF WORDS SUCH AS "DISABLED".**

Measures should be taken, perhaps a moratorium on the use of the word "disabled," not only because it is not a correct term but also because it is used not about people with disabilities but as an insult to people who abuse their position or to humiliate or intimidate them about the future.

- **THE POTENTIAL OF WORKING WITH BUSINESSES TO EMPHASISE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCESSIBILITY.**

Adherence to the principles of universal design and the implementation of inclusion in both educational and construction projects can

become a communication opportunity for cooperation between people with disabilities, organisations working on their behalf, and businesses.

- **SPECIALISTS BECOME BLOGGERS AND INFLUENCERS.** The relevance of the topics and the need to provide information to people with disabilities and other groups related to them creates a field for building social capital and economic development for experts who are stakeholders in disseminating information for people with disabilities. Interaction with them can take place through communication projects, joint work on storytelling about people with disabilities, and the creation of digests in the context of calendar narratives that would be distributed on accessible media platforms for the general public and for people with disabilities. In particular, cooperation with activists who are successful both in crowdfunding and in disseminating information to representatives of vulnerable groups in society can be fruitful.

- **MENTION OF "DISABILITY" IN THE TOPIC OF WEAPONS** The discourse reveals specific topics that have a high potential for criticism of the authorities and promotion to lobby for certain decisions. In particular, the topic of weapons can be relevant for carers of people with disabilities, including military personnel and their brothers and sisters-in-arms who may need protection. Meanwhile, there is a high risk of abuse in this communication.
- **EVASION FROM THE ARMY DUE TO DISABILITY** This topic threatens to discredit the topic of assistance to people with disabilities It is important to promote voices in the media not only for people with disabilities who were injured at the front, but also for those who voluntarily went to the front, those who have carers, went abroad or stayed behind and are working, active, caring, motivated, and understanding the situation.

MONITORING OF APPEALS TO LAWYERS AND GENERAL COUNSELS Requests and proposals from lawyers mark topics related to persons with disabilities as being in demand. It is worth weighing up the risks and benefits of having people with disabilities seek legal services from generalist agencies rather than from highly specialised experts with whom they already have cooperation. On the one hand, there is an outflow of clients, on the other hand, there is a greater visibility of people with disabilities in the legal and human rights bubble.

- **PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE FORMULATED FOR INTERACTION WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND FOR MAINSTREAMING.** The ethical issues of covering the problems of people with disabilities arise in connection with recurring situations. A person with a disability is objectified as someone who attracts the

attention of media audiences, evokes empathy, and becomes a channel for the distribution of services and even medicines in the spirit of a panacea (he drank tea for two days, got up and walked). Stories about people with disabilities become drivers of advertising, which is not always useful for them. The topic of military personnel with disabilities is no less complicated. Therefore, it is worth thinking about the current version of the Ethics of Public Speaking about People with Disabilities and communication policies not only in the educational sphere.

Questions and comments:

Olena Zinenko, ZOIS research fellow, аналітикиня Cat-Ua analysis team zinenkoe@gmail.com

More researches by CAT-UA analysis team

<https://cat-ua.org/category/nashi-doslidjennja/>

New Publication:

The Mental Health Discourse in Social Media as a Factor of Information Resistance of Ukrainians

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/377775697_The_Mental_Health_Discourse_in_Social_Media_as_a_Factor_of_Information_Resistance_of_Ukrainians