

Interview with Wojciech Koźmic (WK), direct participant of 2013-2014 Maidan. Interviewer: Iwona Reichardt (IR). Place of record: Kraków.

IR: Wojtek, please tell me, how did it happen that you got interested in Ukrainian affairs?

WK: In the beginning I was actually interested in Russia. However, I have to admit that it was actually the whole post-Soviet territory. I studied Culture of Russia and its Neighbouring States. Ukraine started to show up there, as well.. during classes and trips in this direction. In 2013, however, I got a job proposal in Kyiv to work as an assistant for people's deputy in Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and I decided to leave for Kyiv. At that time I was still working on a tourist guide to Western Ukraine which I was preparing for one of Polish publishers. And it just happened that I went to Ukraine at the time when there was no Maidan, but we can say that this was the period before Maidan.

IR: And did Maidan surprise you as you were there on the spot, where you surprised or not?

WK: I was not surprised, as we talk about social moods, that is the base for this protest, meaning certain... an escalation of protests we can say that it was expected. However, the moment of the beginning of the Maidan was a surprise. Yes, this moment, you think that you are expecting it, and yet a few hundred people appearing in one spot, new emotions, some hope – this is all of course a surprise.

IR: So please tell me what were these emotions as you were not surprised by them, meaning that you were observing them and you already had drawn your conclusions. What did you see back then in Ukrainians?

WK: Ukrainians were and it seems to me that they still are disappointed with their state, including their political class. The political class as a whole as they do not criticise only one political option, this or that, but overall the anger is directed at those who, for the whole time, disappoint them. This means that Ukrainians did not like the state of their country, meaning in what state it was – low wages, weak

development, weak quality of infrastructure, lack of responsibility of the civil servants, the police. These were the accusations, overall, directed at this world in which they were living.

IR: So the refusal to sign the Association Agreement that was...

WK: That was an instigator.... It was an explosion.

IR: So there was something else going on... this frustration was deeper, yes?

WK: I think that the frustration was deeper, but this this opportunity to sign the Association Agreement... the Association Agreement with the European Union was presented by groups which support this agreement as an opportunity for Ukraine's development. So, the Ukrainians – with this whole hopelessness around them – the sense of hopelessness, they felt that there was a chance to improve their position. And suddenly they were taken this opportunity away. That is why the lack of one signature on one agreement by President Yanukovich created an explosion of anger. Showing that we do not agree with that, we do not agree with the foreign policy of our authorities...

IR: You were at the Maidan from the very beginning. Was it the first day?

WK: Yes, I was there from the first, the first gathering in fact, on November 21, if I remember correctly, which was summoned by Mustafa Nayem.

IR: And how did you learn about it. From Facebook?

WK: Yes, from Facebook. Yes.

IR: From his profile? Or did it spread....?

WK: No, not from his profile. Somebody simply shared a link with this information. I remember that it was a very unpleasant evening. It was autumn, it was cold, really, it was not the weather that would make you want leave your home, but I thought to myself: maybe something will happen. Maybe... I had nothing interesting to do at home so I thought: "why not?". I took a marshrutka, later metro, and I went to Maidan. People started to gather there, protesters, people who responded to Nayem's post and this is how it all started.

IR: Could you feel it already in the metro, or when you got out?

WK: No, in the metro, absolutely not.

IR: So when you got on the surface, yes?

WK: Yes, I think that this first group which then came to the street and which stayed there for the whole night – I wasn't there for the whole night – these were the most aware and active people. But this was not a mass protest yet.. simply...

IR: At that time there was not stage, right?

WK: No of course not. It was like that that somebody brought thermos with some tea, somebody had the speaker, somebody had a flag, EU flag, I think, somebody had a Ukrainian flag, and it was like an impulse “I will go and protest”. I think that at that time not many people expected that this will turn into a really huge protest.

IR: What happened next? As this was first but later they started to gather everyday, right? Did you also go every day to Maidan?

WK: I tried to go everyday, yes. Maidan, in fact, had different phases. Of course they are hard to catch for observers from far away, however the first phase took place until the end of November when there were those not so large protests, indeed, at the Maidan – protests – demonstrations as a matter of fact. It was meant to show the authorities that there is a group of people who do not like this policy, meaning the lack of the Association Agreement, there were also politicians, all kinds of activists. And it, all in all, lasted. Later it developed, there was a small stage, as far as I remember, and overall it had some signs of a town, I want to say, yes such a town, some kind of infrastructure for a protest, but it was not a massive protest just yet. I would rather say that everybody got used to the fact that it was lasting but also that it will not end with something, that it has no force to break through. As the authorities will not react to just standing, being wet and collecting a few hundred people, maximum.

IR: So when was this moment when you would say it became massive?

WK: The key moment was.... indeed it was the Berkut, militia, raid over Maidan. I was not there. At that time, I was on my way from Poland, as then I went to Poland for a few days. Everybody was wondering why it had actually happened as there was no need, or at least this is what everybody thought. But the way, the way, in this these students were dispersed – people tend to say students as indeed there were mostly students there – meaning the brutality, with people being wounded, caused an even greater anger in the society. Meaning in the beginning, on the 21st, the activists came, those most active people, who wanted to come out to the streets and shout that they want the European Union but after Maidan was dispersed on November 30th, it was at night, then the masses rose. I came on the next day to Kyiv and I saw how this

protest was getting stronger. At that time it was not taking place in fact on Maidan, as there Christmas decorations were being put up, but at the Michailsky Church and you could feel a very strong energy there. There were already thousands of people who had all kinds of banners and were indeed preparing a huge demonstration which was supposed to take place there, probably on the next day or in a few days.

IR: OK, so you are saying that different groups, banners, there were preparations. But what it means these “preparations”? What was the organization of this? Could you sense that there were some groups of leaders? That there were organisers of all of that? As it could not be all spontaneous...

WK: You know I think it was spontaneous. That this was the stage of a great spontaneity, meaning somebody came with a piece of paper, somebody brought markers, somebody else, I do not know, warm clothes, somebody brought food, and this is how it all started to get organised. Meaning, organised, as at that time it was such a crowd that was – we can say – like a wave, it was shouting, whistling at the police... People were not scared, they were standing in this crowd, some were joining, other leaving, but they were shouting that they did not like what was going on, that there was no Association Agreement, that the activities of the authorities led to such brutal beating of these Maidan protesters, who were very calm at that moment. All this was... you could feel this enormous energy and it seems to me that the opposition from that time picked it up and they decided that they would lead this huge march. I do not remember now – a march of discontent towards everything that was going on. And it was supposed to take place on the weekend, it was supposed to be a Saturday or Sunday, I remember well. But at that time there was no such organization, one that would capture it all, these were all the beginnings of what was to take place later.

IR: But there was no chaos?

WK: Chaos? No, no. This was in one, two places in Kyiv. People were standing, simply in central places in Kyiv. But there was no chaos as such. There was this positive mood, so to say. Positive from the point of view of the people who were supporting this protest. Such a mood, meaning you could feel that people want to do something to stop being afraid that there is no hopelessness, a sense of hopelessness, but the will to act. It needs to.... This line got crossed over.

IR: And up until which moment lasted this atmosphere "we are doing something and we are not afraid"?

WK: That was up to the moment of that large march, but I would really need to check these dates...

IR: And after the march, things got changed, yes....

WK: The march in fact changes everything in Kyiv. It starts at... the Taras Shevchenko park, near the university. I remember that from this park to the Bessarabskyiv Square there is this steep street, and I remember that when you were looking at the crowd, as it was walking, you could feel this enormous energy. Everybody was probably surprised that such crowds came to the streets then. Some people say that it was a million, I do not think that it was a million, but the crowd was enormous, thousands of people for sure. Then, I remember, the Lenin's monument was surrounded and this was some kind of a symbol, a symbol of the authorities, that is the Party of Regions, so to say. And I remember that this whole crowd got into Khreshchatyk, the main street of Kyiv, and was heading towards Maidan. And I remember that the politicians of the opposition were speaking then, announcing a popular strike in Ukraine, demanding the dismissal of people who were responsible for this brutal beating of the students... and the first barricades were started to be built. But those barricades then were simple, like let's move this bench to the street", and some elements of this Christmas decoration were thrown there. This was all still like... like nobody knew what was really going on. However, the truth also is that then the building of the Administration in Kyiv, the City Administration, was already taken over and I remember until today that somebody sprayed on its wall "the headquarters of a revolution". And I remember that I was quite struck by that. I thought to myself "Something is starting to take place". On the very same day there were these skirmishes in front of the Presidential Administration but overall I think we can say that this was the first day when something started to grow on Maidan. The first barricades, first tents, something was starting to take place.

IR: But it was still peaceful then?

WK: Of course it was peaceful. Apart from those skirmishes in front of the Presidential Administration. There some people were beaten, however I think that this was such... I would say an element of Ukrainian political life. Meaning, I do not accept these beatings, but let's say, the beating it was not yet such... meaning there were of course demands for a dismissal, but it was not yet this what turned into the killings, murder, death as a result of protest.

IR: And how did this atmosphere escalate?

WK: In fact it is then when Maidan, the real Maidan, starts. By Maidan I mean this whole tent camp with a stage, barricades, with a huge self-organisation which will be gradually expanding. What atmosphere? An atmosphere to fight. To fight, we can say, it means you could feel that finally the opposition had a tool in its hand which it could use to pressure the Ukrainian authorities. I think that the people, willingly or not, agree that politicians speak on Maidan. In other words, seemingly there was no full approval of Maidan being used by the opposition parties. Many people wanted it be of activists, ordinary residents of Kyiv or other cities, but there had to be some politicians there, to achieve some political goals. The tent camp was set up on Maidan and this is how it was going.

IR: It was set up, just like that?

WK: It was set up the day after this march, as it was actually then when the first tents were set up, the first such... maybe it is the wrong word to use "barricades" simply, there were obstacles in the streets. This is very symbolic – here we are building Maidan. This will be our camp of discontent towards the authorities. If, I believe, the police wanted to disperse it back then, it would not have many problems to do that. However, there was no such decision, it lasted and was expanding, meaning the barricades were getting bigger, there were more tents set up, people were collecting money for food, for drinks, and other expenses and everything started to work. Meaning at the end of November, beginning of December, the Maidan really starts. All this lasted until mid-December, I remember in the middle of December, at night, there was a raid over Maidan which was stopped at a certain point. At that time Maidan could have been completely dispersed, but it was stopped. Why?

IR: Nobody knows?

WK: I do not know. Maybe somebody made a phone call, I do not know, to the authorities. Somebody from the West, telling them to stop. I think that these were political decisions. It was not a problem of lack of security forces, militia, Berkuk to disperse. I think that if they wanted to disperse, they would have had, we cannot cheat ourselves. I was on Maidan at that time and I saw what was, what were the proportions of the forces. It is cool to talk about Maidan's myth, but the truth is that at that time the authorities could destroy it. The question is what happened later, but at that time it did not succeed. Only some tents were destroyed, some barricades, but the security forces moved out from this area.

IR: OK, let us know move to this full escalation, meaning we have first victims, the real ones. Were you on that day on the Maidan?

WK: The first victims are in January.

IR: The Armenian and the Belarusian.

WK: The first victims are in January, yes. But they are for sure after January 16th. After the fights at Hrushchevskiy street, which is right next to Maidan. This was the first clash, as this is when the really brutal fights between Maidan and law and order forces took place. And later emerged – wrong word – the first people. How it happened, I do not know if it has been explained by now. They died probably from the bullets shot by the police, but how it happened specifically, I do not know. I did not, I probably was at that time at Maidan, but I did not see these events. I remember that there was huge chaos, or information chaos, as here suddenly here somebody is lying, somebody has been lifted, here is a wound, suddenly somebody is killed and in such a chaos nobody knows whether somebody shot, shot from what and so on, and so forth. In any way in January, in the second half of January, after the fights at the Hryshchevskiy street,

after this escalation of aggression and this death it is probably very clear for everybody that this that this will not end in a peaceful way, or at least that it will not end without a dismissal of the currently ruling politicians.

IR: Is it this moment when Maidan is starting to get militarised?

WK: The question is what does it mean to "militarise"?

IR: It means that already then they are starting to train the squads, they are starting to collect...

WK: I think that Maidan started to militarize from the very beginning. Meaning, Maidan it was only that people are standing, shouting something, hanging banners with these slogans of theirs, I do not know, that they are simply there. To show that we are here that we do like something. On Maidan the structures were formed right away, the so-called Maidan Self-Defence, meaning structures which were comprised mostly of men, even though there were also women there, who were organised in the so-called sotnias of Maidan and these sotnias were to keep order, were to be a kind – this is how I saw it – law and order forces on Maidan. But at times there were also performing some tasks outside Maidan, some kind of protests in different points, in different points in the city.

IR: And you were looking at this process of organising these sotnias?

WK: This was somewhat from a side. When it all started to emerge. I always had a big problem with that, as somebody was saying that a sotnia emerged, then the second one, some kind of group, such a group, there something, there something – it was hard to capture as this information was floating, somewhere online somebody bragged, somewhere someone could make some sew-on-badges, but it was hard to capture whether it was something serious, so simply an initiative of a few people. This is the impression I had. The fact that somebody called himself, that somebody called it sotnia did not mean that there was a

structure, that there were 100 persons, or maybe 120, but the name was simply created, we are like this right now, we are such and such sotnia, a number was assigned and that's it.

IR: But those raids were coordinated somehow?

WK: Yes, but are we talking about the police raids?

IR: No, later. Those of the protesters, yes?

WK: Yes, of course, that was on the bases of those sotnias.

IR: So there was some kind of co-ordination?

WK: Yes, but I am saying that they emerged at some point in early December. Maidan was militarising. Meaning militarising... there are some forces, which... meaning, that somebody is walking around me with a stick that means that he has been assigned to those kinds of keeping order tasks to put it mildly and not to pour soup for the protesters. These sotnias emerged. There were around 40, I can be wrong, but around 40. Maidan, to survive, for all of it to work, to be a political force, had to be somehow organised internally. That means there were some politicians, political forces, Kyiv business and I assume financially some oligarchs, who were helping it, but there also have to be people, yes? There have to be people who make sure there is order, so that there are for example no drunk people on Maidan, as this would look bad, image-wise, there had to be a group which, for example, would go to the Prosecutor and will be protesting there, for the protest to make sense, it has to be organised, but it should also look in such a way that it could make an impression on the authorities. This process started in early December and lasted practically until the end of Maidan, until February.

IR: But it was getting more and more advanced?

WK: Yes, yes, yes. At a certain moment, I even saw the situation that there were trainings for young men, who – as their trainer told me when I talked to him – a trainer, a guy, he was standing there, and taking these youngest, these boys who looked promising, young and he was training them in street fights. That is, how to fight with the police, how to protect their heads, how to hit, how to run away, etc, etc. There were trainings like that. This was also not a secret, they were visible to everyone.

IR: And the medics? Were they trained in a similar way? In first aid?

WK: The medics, medics no. It seemed to me that the medics were professionals. That these were people who could, I do not know, come to Maidan after working hours, because they were supporting these slogans, they were coming here with their own equipment, and of course also other residents of Kyiv were bringing here all kinds of medicine, resources, and so on and so on...drugs. There were many people there, however, there was winter, at times it was cold. I myself felt this and there were many people sick, of course. So the medics were there, for the whole time, and when the fights started to take place, in January, when there were a lot of wounded people, the medics were there non-stop.

IR: And tell me whether for the whole time the Maidan message was anti-Yanukovych, or were there such names as Putin too?

WK: Maidan in fact, in my view, had... presented a collection of different slogans. The process started in November, the process, the processes itself, the first protests in November started with pro-EU slogans, anti-government, anti-Yanukovych, but this aspect of international politics was also very important, I think that for some time it was like that. Later there were, of course for the whole time there were anti-Yanukovych, anti, anti-government, I have prime minister Azarov and many other high-level officials, the authorities of the time, in mind, and I think that this slogan about the EU matters somehow disappeared. Even though the EU flags were hanging there all the time. However, the slogans, the anti-Putin slogans

appear. And for the whole time there is an impression that Putin plays against Maidan, against this part of the Ukrainian society that would like to head towards the European Union. And it looks like Putin is also such “a bad guy”. I would say that there was not much talk about Russia as such, about the state, but about Putin and Russian authorities.

IR: And tell me now, how you could get through the barricades? You reached quite far there, right?

WK: That is... what do you mean... Maybe let's put it this way; Maidan was surrounded, Maidan itself, as Maidan is the central square in Kyiv, and Maidan as the protest is a certain phenomenon on Ukrainian political scene and at some point it was occupying not only the main square but also a series of streets that were leading to it. And buildings. Everywhere on those roads connecting to Maidan where there was a stage, there were barricades, where there were, among others, sotnias on duty. There people were keeping order, at times checking some people, I was also checked, I remember, I had a backpack full of stuff, and somebody suspected that I could be bringing in a bomb. I was checked, they apologised, but such controls were taking place. To get through the barricades it was not that hard in fact to get through. Only when the fights had started, there were situations that they would not let people without helmets through, or for example women were not let through or third-parties, there were situations like this. But this would require us to get in specific details of what this structure of Maidan looked like. Yes.

IR: But you got quite far thanks to a press card, yes?

WK: This was in fact at the Hrushchevskyi street. There was such a place, that this first line of barricades, access to it was limited only to people who were involved or for the press. I could, thanks to the press card from New Eastern Europe. I could, thanks to the card, move around there and take more interesting photographs and talk to people who were there.

IR: But did you get instruction as how to take care of your security or were you acting completely based on your intuition? Or was there support?

WK: I acted mainly based on my intuition. It meant that for example outside Maidan I did not show elements that would indicate that I was from Maidan, that I go to Maidan, let me put it this. Because I wasn't....

IR: How were you doing such camouflage?

WK: That is... for example at a certain moment, if I got a military helmet, I would not carry it at my belt around Kyiv but hide it in my backpack. I did not wear any kinds of Ukrainian symbols, because they were all related to Maidan, or with the so-called anti-Maidan. I simply, despite my warm feelings towards many of these people who were protesting there, I was trying to be as if on a side. It was hard, but nonetheless I believed that I should not be walking around with ribbons, for example, in Ukrainian colours. I was also given advice to be careful outside Maidan as there were, apparently groups, who were catching people who were leaving Maidan, to beat them, scare them. Luckily, I was never in such a situation, but I was given such warnings, to be careful.

IR: I know, by small for example, as you simply smelled of Maidan, yes?

WK: Yes, yes, people who were on Maidan, who spent a lot of time there, you could smell from them burnt wood from all those furnaces which were brought there and this was a very characteristic smell, you could sense it from one kilometre away, of course I am exaggerating, a kilometre away, the persons who were spending their whole time on Maidan. I was, my jacket smelled of this burnt wood.

IR: Will you tell me about this most tragic day on Maidan?

WK: In fact there were three tragic days, I have to say and these were 18, 19, 20 February. On February 18th there was a huge Maidan protest outside Maidan. It was taking place in a park near Verkhovna Rada. Then there were serious fights between Maidan and the police and the so-called titushkys, that is – to put it colloquially – hooligans hired by the authorities. And there were the first killed victims, in those fights, as it later turned out. And this day ended with an attack on Maidan, but Maidan withheld it and only those security forces reached Maidan's borders and they were stopped. Later, on February 19th, that is something unclear, meaning Maidan is standing, the police is standing, and nobody is attacking nobody, neither one side, nor the other. Even though Maidan is at that moment, as far as I remember, very weak. I was on Maidan on that day for the whole day and it was soo weak. Many people escaped because the Self-Defense sotnias were very weak in their arms after the earlier fights. In fact, the persons, activists who were ready to stand there, suffer, were very few. Relatively speaking very few, if we are talking about a few hundred people in a huge city, which is Kyiv, that means very little. And I think if the police moved on then, it would have no problems to really kill this Maidan, literally. But it did not move on. At that time there were probably no victims, on that day. And then there is February 20th, that is probably this black Thursday. I was not there, on Maidan, from the early morning, meaning I did not really see these fights, about which there are now legends circulating around; who started, what triggered. It seems to me, yet, that it was Maidan that started, nonetheless. That it was not the police that move on, but Maidan. Why did it move on? Looking at how weak Maidan was the day before, it seems that may be, may be, as there were such voices in the press, that maybe somebody started to shoot from Maidan. The police was simply withdrawn, withdrawn for security reasons. That is – outside the reach of a shot, but seeing this people on Maidan started to move forward. We can say, call it: an attack. And then they encountered the fire from the snipers and the Berkut divisions, probably, who were using automatic weapons to shoot, and this is when there were the most people killed. I was not on Maidan then, so I know this only from other people's stories, and how it was later reported, from all this films. I was there two hours later, I reached Maidan. At that time metro was not working and I was driven by a taxi, a bit around as the taxi driver who was taking me there did not want to come close to Maidan. So I had about half an hour to walk. And this is it.

IR: When you were looking at this confrontation of forces, here we have state forces, armed as you say, with serious weapons, and here we have the self-proclaimed solidiers, yes, with Molotov coctails...

WK: I think that, if we are talking about February 20, there were already individual pieces of weapons among the Maidan members. I think that somebody could have a hunter's rifle, somebody could have a gun, some kind of riffle. I saw people with guns, with riffles. This is not any special secret, even though people from Maidan for this legend will probably not make this information public as Maidan was supposed to be good and the authorities bad. But when the conflict got more intense, there were weapons. Of course not on a massive scale, explaining this what I want to say, but I saw it. I saw, at least twice, people with guns, I saw with such BB-guns, after Maidan, later in those days I saw people with hunter's weapons, but I also once saw a person with a Kalashnikov. So maybe it was like this that someone started to shoot, and they started to withdraw, I mean Berkut, the police, internal military forces – and then Maidan moved as if forward to get back the positions it lost on February 18th and then there was this infamous massacre at Insytucka Street.

IR: But did you see there such a centre of command when those protesters were moving forward, were they fulfilling orders?

WK: I was not there, so I cannot say precisely. The centre of command was always on Maidan, that was the building of the Trade Unions, which got burnt on February 18th and later all these headquarters were moved, probably, the postal office building, which is on the opposite side of Maidan and to other buildings which are also there. I think that if we are talking about some kind of command system and so on I think that it was more at the grass-root level. Somebody simply, a leader of a group, maybe this sotnia, would say "let's go" or something and everything was going. I also think that there was some kind of crowd psychology, when you saw that the police was moving away, then we were moving forward, I mean Maidan, we have to go forward, right? And more people were taken by this enthusiasm. "Let's go, let's go and beat them, get things back, fight". I think, I think that then there was no one great organisation, in a sense, that somebody from the stage was saying "let's attack" or something like that. I think that it was rather, I think that it is possible that from the stage there were signals such as: we need to bring bandages, bags with sand or something like that. Yes, it was from the stage that such messages were sent. But was there a command of this action – I do not know, as I was not there unfortunately. Unfortunately or not, maybe it's good that I was not there. As even some haphazard persons died then. It was not that only those who were in the first row that were killed there, literally. There were also people killed who were in different places on Maidan. There were many bullets flying around that there were also haphazard victims.

IR: And tell me were you surprised by Yanukovych's escape?

WK: Probably yes. As Maidan was indeed expecting Yanukovych's dismissal. An agreement between the opposition and Yanukovych which was accepted by the ministries of foreign affairs of Poland, Germany and – I think – France was not satisfactory for Maidan. For those persons who were standing there. Everybody was expecting that Yanukovych should leave, right away. Not some kind of earlier elections, some kind of amendments to the Constitution, no, no, no. Yanukovych was meant to leave, that's it. Everything was gone, he was meant to disappear from political life. And suddenly, there is information that he escapes. Here there is a signed agreement, and he suddenly disappears.

IR: Do you think he would repeat the fate, given the social mood and everything that happened on Maidan, of Ceaușescu?

WK: I think that yes there was such a possibility. That indeed right after Maidan this whole system of power broke down. And I remember that Verkhovna Rada was protected by people wearing baklava-type of hats, they looked like some kind of guerrillas. The police disappeared. That means, it of course was functioning, it existed, but it was unclear who was in command and how far we could go. Everybody started calculating. Yes, on Maidan a lot of people were killed, the authorities were collapsing, nobody knows if Yanukovych would want to rule, or not, and everybody started calculating as what to do, whether to keep defending the authorities, or not, everything, such was my impression, everything somehow crept out. And in fact, those sotnias of Self-Defence that we were talking about a few times, they, at a certain moment, were such a force that was more or less organised and disciplined.

IR: And they could have such a real power?

WK: Yes, yes, yes. But I think that it was hard for Yanukovych to guarantee security in Kyiv. I think that if he hid somewhere in Kharkiv or Donetsk, he would be calm there. But in Kyiv I think that there was no chance that he could have stayed after all that. And maybe because he could not take it any more, hard to say, why he escaped. I heard opinions that there is no need to look for theories, that he simply got scared, simply. He got scared and run away. But, on the other hand, we can also say that this was to Russia's advantage. As Russia described the change of power in Ukraine as illegal and treated Yanukovych for some time, at least officially, as president in office.

IR: And just a few sentences about Pravy Sector. How did you see their presence; was it, from the very beginning, the same or did it evolve? Where they noticeable at all?

WK: Pravy Sector, overall, that was a group.... That was a brand name. I am not hesitant to use this word. This was a name that was created on Maidan and from what I heard very haphazardly, simply a few people were sitting there and did not know what to call themselves and finally they decided "Pravy Sector", so there is no special, great story – which gathered many groups with a radical, right-wing views. Maidan was, in my view, an ideal field for the activity of such organisations. There were fights there and certain aggression and a certain degree of hate, in which – in my view – such organizations always feel quite well, which can show themselves there. They gather people who have more radical views, are more hostile, are more eager to fight, and so on and so forth. That is why Pravy Sector, which was there, which would take credit for some fights, saying that they were carrying them out and so on, emerged but this was a kind of, I would say, sudden jump, there was a demand for such organisations to be there and this was a certain compromise between those forces that were more moderate and those radical ones, for the common goals, which was the final change of power in Ukraine. But, as the next months have showed, Pravy Sector and other radical organisations returned to their places, or put it differently, they did not play a larger role in Ukraine's political life, even though they participated in elections, which later took place, however they were treated very positively in the face of a common enemy, which was then the phrase used in regards to Russia.

IR: OK. Thank you very much.