

**Iryna Kushnir:** My name is Iryna Kushnir, today is May 30, 2023. This online interview with Sergii Koziakov. Interview for the project 'Ukrainian Refugees in the English sector of higher education.' Do you agree to an interview?

**Sergii Koziakov:** Yes, I do.

**Iryna Kushnir:** Thank you. Please tell us a little about yourself.

**Sergii Koziakov:** If very briefly...

**Iryna Kushnir:** It's possible not quite briefly.

**Sergii Koziakov:** Before the war, I was an Associate Professor at the Taras Shevchenko Institute of International Relations in Kyiv National University, Department of Private International Law. At the University, I specialize in the legal regulation of foreign economic activity, competition law, as well as private legal practice. And at the same time, I have been a lawyer for many years. I have my own law firm, which was one of the first in Ukraine to be established as a private law firm. And I also have a lot of experience working for not only Ukrainian, but also foreign and international clients. On February 24, my family and I woke up at about 4:30 a.m. due to explosions. And after hesitation, by the middle of the day, we started to pack and left the apartment at about nine o'clock in the evening. And we drove by car towards the western border of Ukraine, and at that time there were already a huge number of cars on the road, there were terrible traffic jams. We drove the first 130 kilometres for 19 hours, and it takes in total 72 hours without sleep to get to the apartment in the city of Lublin, Poland. We had a stopover in Lublin for a few days, after which we moved to Warsaw. We were hosted by an international firm where my daughter works. They offered her 'relocation' even before the war started and we stopped in Warsaw to get her visa, a special visa for changing the location of work, and the location was in Great Britain, London. We lived there for about 3 weeks with the help of my daughter's company and after that we came to London, we were settled, again with their help for the first couple of months. Further, we already received a special visa for those citizens of Ukraine who fled Ukraine due to the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation. It was in April, when we arrived, and at the end of May, I found an offer of such a fund, CARA (the Council for At-Risk Academics), which offered help, including to Ukrainian scientists who are at risk and have left Ukraine. I submitted documents for several months, we had consultations, they asked me questions, I passed an English language test. And in October, I offered my version of the university for cooperation. This London University of Economics and Political Science and Law School. Why I liked this University is because there is law, economics, and politics, and international relations at this university. And the law school is ranked 7th in the world. It's very cool. Therefore, I asked for contact with them and finally, at the end of October, I received all the necessary documents and from that moment I have been engaged in science, scientific research, considering my previous experience. I have access to all previously closed library resources, which makes me very happy. I now have a huge amount of material that I have found. I continue to find every day. I will work on a large amount of scientific and analytical work.

**Iryna Kushnir:** Yes. Thank you. In this period, since the war started and your relocation and actually looking for the job that you are now holding, how has this instability affected the work that you used to do at the University and the law firm?

**Sergii Koziakov:** Certainly, it had an effect. If we talk about the university, our work and lectures, seminar classes, and practical communication with students were generally stopped. But after a month it was restored, and we have been working exclusively online since then. I can't say that it is very difficult technically because we learned it during the pandemic. We have already learned this. The only problem is that students are now in Kyiv, where my university is located, and outside of Kyiv, in those regions of Ukraine that are relatively safe. I will say again about the fact that, unfortunately, all parts of the territory of Ukraine are under the threat of missile attacks by Russia,

the army of the Russian Federation. They are not only in Ukraine, but also abroad. I know that I have students who are, for example, in Japan, in many European countries and in Africa, in the United States of America. I work with them via 'Teams' by Kyiv time. That is, if the lecture starts at 8 a.m. Kyiv time, it is 6:00 a.m. for me. It suits me because I finish my classes with students earlier, but there are students for whom it is still night, there are students when it will be night. And this, of course, is difficult, and very often communication can be lost, and the most important thing for Ukrainian students is that when we start a lecture or a seminar class and when an air raid signal sounds, I am obliged to pause. Then they have the opportunity to go to a safe place, a bomb shelter. I want to say that it usually happens that not everyone returns, because the connection is very often interrupted and cannot be restored quickly. This is from the point of view of communication with students. Regarding the term exams, for example, now for the last term exams I had tests. Tests are very simple, you can do it based on the results of work in the semester, but if it's an exam, then the exam is more of a burden on students and we can conduct an oral (oral or written) exam, and I immediately refuse, because it is impossible to predict the working day. Therefore, exams are only in writing. This is also normal. For students, when they log in 'Teams' for 3 hours, we also have to understand that there can be a pause. Fortunately, this year, just this May, there was a day free of bombings and the students were all able to write the exams on time, by the way, very well. If we talk about my work as a lawyer, I can say that this applies to all law firms of lawyers in Ukraine. In the best case, approximately 30% of the volume of work has recovered. This, if we talk about most lawyers, because a large number of clients fled Ukraine. Especially for those who worked with individuals, of course, millions of people left Ukraine, millions of potential clients fled. At the same time, if we talk about legal entities, clients are also stopped works, and many could not fully recover, many of them also left Ukraine, if we talk about foreign clients. New customers hardly come, and they are definitely not investors. The only new customers who can come, those who come under contracts for the restoration of some areas. We have not yet seriously started this recovery procedure and recovery processes, because the war is not over. I can say that there is really a very large and negative psychological burden on the students, and not only on them personally, but also on their parents and relatives with whom they live. And especially if a student's mother has gone abroad, and father and brother have stayed, then this creates an additional psychological burden and psychological burnout also occurs. I can say that we have cases when buildings and apartments of both students and teachers were burned. And there were some teachers, including those under occupation not far from Kyiv. It is not even in the east, not even in the south of Ukraine, it is not far. When the Kyiv region was occupied, many of those whose houses were outside the city, and they thought that it would be safer there, not in the city, not in the capital, but outside the city, precisely these areas and those regions were occupied, very close to Kyiv. And I can say that houses were destroyed, including those of close relatives of my family. Their house very close to Kyiv was completely destroyed. First, a group of occupiers, who have been living there for two or three weeks, entered there (already in an empty house). Then, when they were leaving, the tank turned around and fired at the second floor. That is how they said 'goodbye.' The second floor was ignited, and the building completely burned down. These are directly close relatives. This is just the man, a serious lawyer, his wife is a young Ukrainian writer. They now live abroad and have no home. This is one of those things that apply to people I know personally. All this together, of course, imposes negative emotions on everyday life, and not just every day, but 24 hours a day. Because when an air alert is announced in Ukraine at night, we also follow it. They do not sleep, and we also do not sleep so much at this time, being far away from the events that are happening.

**Iryna Kushnir:** Absolutely. Thank you. Please tell us a little more about your decision to move to the UK. You mentioned that the company your daughter worked for helped a little. But were there any other thoughts of moving somewhere else? Tell us more about your decision and experience of moving.

**Sergii Koziakov:** The fact is that this 'relocation' was offered to my daughter about a month and a half before the start of the war, and since the embassies in Kyiv were already closed, in particular, the British embassy, it was impossible to apply for a visa. It was still necessary to go abroad. The nearest place is in Poland, specifically Warsaw, where the British Embassy is located. I should have left earlier, but while I was looking for time for this, we were thinking; the airports were closed, it was not possible to fly out. There was only the railway and the buses, and just the day the invasion started, my daughter told me quite harshly that we had to leave, because I was still having doubts. I did not believe that it would be very long. I did not believe at all that it would begin, because it was impossible from the point of view of normal logic, analytical logic, even such a deep logic, but it happened and my daughter just said that day, 'yes, we should leave.' It was already possible to leave only by car. Because it was impossible to get tickets and get on the train, as well as on buses, that's why we drove. The amount of clothes that we took wasn't for a year or two. We took it in the amount for a few months and we thought that we would return. But it so happened that we did not return, not even after a year. Already in June last year, three months after we left, we asked our relatives to send us the necessary things for further living here. The first things arrived in June, and then we asked several more times, either by mail, or with help of some people, and we ask to hand over something, as well as some medicines, which are more difficult to buy here. On the contrary, we sent very high-quality British vitamins for close relatives.

**Iryna Kushnir:** I understand, thank you. Well, let's move on to the discussion of the higher education sector now. What were your expectations in general? You moved here and knew that work was in Ukraine. Were you hoping to find a job in higher education here, or were you planning to? What were your initial thoughts?

**Sergii Koziakov:** I was lucky, because thanks to my experience, I know very well how higher education is structured in Europe and, particularly, in Great Britain. Why? Well, because I was just interested, but the main thing, if we talk about important details, then somewhere around the middle of my daughter's studies at Kyiv University (she studied at the Faculty of Biology) we began to think that she could continue her studies in England. Because England was one of those countries where we travelled most often, in particular to London. This is our favourite city. And when she was finishing her bachelor's degree, we chose Imperial College of London. She received a scholarship, and she studied on the program [inaudible] After that she started a PhD degree, also continued her studies, and spent 7 years in Great Britain, receiving a British education. I was monitoring all the time, she told a lot about how education is structured in general, how higher education management is structured at her university. And I had a lot of knowledge. Moreover, in peace times, I paid a lot of attention to higher legal education. I participated in several projects funded by the American Bar Association, USA AD on the modernization of higher legal education in Ukraine. I was very interested in the work of law schools in the world, Europe, the United States, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand. I had dozens of such studies for myself. I knew a lot about it.

There was also a moment, or rather many such moments, when I received information only from open sources, open library sources, and I saw that a lot of information was unavailable to me, because this is how the world's leading libraries work. I have thought many times that maybe one day I would be able to work on the topics that interest me in libraries in other countries and, perhaps in a library in Great Britain. I also worked as the head of the Higher Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine for five years. It was a surprise for me, such a project of working in a public position. We were working on the reform of the Judiciary, in particular, on the problem of combating corruption in the judiciary, and there I gained some experience. I also read a lot of information provided to us by international experts. This part was also very important when I came here with my family and thought about how to continue, because I can't sit in one place, I need to do something, besides the fact I was working full-time in University in Kyiv online. I had to continue, and funding was also important. If I could get a grant, and it was important for me, to get

a grant, for example, to be able to pay for an apartment. I started looking pretty quickly, immediately after we got settled in London. I immediately started looking for these opportunities and eventually found them. But the things that I told about my previous experience were quite easy for me to fit into my former scientific and analytical interests. I am less interested in theoretical research. I think that I am just one of those academics who can be called experts in practice. And this is what I found. I found this thanks to two institutions, the CARA Foundation, and the university where I am invited as a Senior Researcher.

**Iryna Kushnir:** Very good. And what were your expectations? Did you expect that there would not be a very difficult adaptation period?

**Sergii Koziakov:** I cannot say that it was very easy, because there is the usual normal bureaucracy, this is the preparation of documents. You have to submit the documents so that they are correct, then wait, then pass the tests. I passed the English proficiency test twice. The first time was not because I failed, but because there was a technical problem. I also passed it the second time and it was also such an interesting experience, as I'm used to taking exams, not passing them. Well, everything turned out fine. This waiting period was mentally difficult. Perhaps this very awaiting was not easy. But this is how serious decisions are made, it takes time. I cannot say that I was nervous, I was worried, of course, and worked out different options. If this project had not come out, I would just come to the library and work there every day. Well, I have a library at home digitally, and this, of course, is much easier.

**Iryna Kushnir:** Tell us about your university experience now in England. What do you like? What do you see as difficulties?

**Sergii Koziakov:** I love the way the university has helped me, and I am very grateful. At the same time, I can say that I would like to see more projects related to Ukraine. In general, I consider myself a specialist in large projects, because when I personally have the experience of organizing a competition for the Supreme Court, where there were 1300 candidates and there was an exam for 600 people, and I also had a competition for the First Court of Ukraine, where there were 4,128 candidates at the same time, who passed in one room, and there is only one such room in Ukraine. I made the Supreme Anti-Corruption Court in Ukraine. These are big projects; I would like to continue this experience of mine. Of course, we have our own projects here and we don't need such big projects as I had in Ukraine during the implementation of the judicial reform, because the court system in Great Britain has existed for one thousand years. We need to look for some options that would be useful for Britain, Europe, and Ukraine. And there are a lot of such projects. There's always someone there, and that doesn't mean I can be better, but I can be helpful sometimes. It is also necessary to work on this, and this is exactly my personal task, and this will not be given to me as a gift. It is necessary to prove that I am a sufficiently high-quality specialist and expert, this is the first. The second is that I have a disadvantage, in addition to the advantages that I know, I have disadvantages because I am more of a practitioner and a teacher. For example, as a practitioner, I organized and conducted an English-language master's program in International Trade Regulation at my Institute of International Relations in Kyiv. There are 21 subjects in English and half of the teachers were interns. But as for scientific works and in serious publications, I have extremely few of them. I need to multiply them. I need to work on scientific articles, preferably a scientific book or textbooks. It takes time for this. This is exactly what I want to emphasize, not on big projects, because I have already done enough of them. I think I am a world champion in some things, but I have shortcomings in scientific articles and scientific publications. I have to work on it. Managers from the CARA fund, they offered me additional help with this. I think I will be able to make results here as well. I have topics, I have materials for this, I have materials that no one has, empirical materials, including statistical materials... Now we are collaborating with you on video

material. I have hundreds of video materials that are available in open sources, thanks to me I can safely use them and work on scientific paperwork.

**Iryna Kushnir:** Yes, absolutely. And do you have a mentor at the university where you work, who could also help you with writing and review these articles?

**Sergii Koziakov:** I have a mentor, but CARA offered me another one. They are now just looking for someone who will work closely with me. That is, definition of the topic, definition of the work plan, definition of the publication where such a topic may be interesting. I am already moving in this direction, for example, I was approached by the staff of the scientific legal journal from Duke Law School. This is an American university, one of the oldest law schools. We did my interview with them about the judicial reform in Ukraine, in particular, about the competition for the Supreme Court, and it should be published in the next few days, maybe it will be published there in the next 2-3 days. This is what we did with them. Moreover, on my initiative we made such a joint event between the London School of Economics and Political Science and the British Institute of International Comparative Law. We also made a recording, there were several experts in the interview. She was an expert on the judicial reform of Albania and I, as an expert on the judicial reform of Ukraine. We had such a discussion about what and how we did. This is a movement towards a research paper topic, so we are moving.

**Iryna Kushnir:** Regarding the structure of writing such articles, journals, I think you mean the journals based on Global Focus, Global Science?

**Sergii Koziakov:** Yes.

**Iryna Kushnir:** How familiar are you with this structure and scope?

**Sergii Koziakov:** I am certainly familiar. Moreover, CARA offers very frequent webinars where they talk about this, where they talk about scientific research methods, how they are applied, that is, these things on which I am working.

**Iryna Kushnir:** Thank you. In terms of the opportunities, you see in your work now, what do you value most?

**Sergii Koziakov:** Most of all, I appreciate peace from war, as far as possible, remotely. That is, I know that there are no bombings. I know that when I work personally through my PC with some source from the library, I won't have to go to the bomb shelter. I appreciate that the CARA fund finances my ability to pay the rent for an apartment and my family is safe here. I have unlimited access to library resources. If I want to talk to some scientist, professor, or expert, they will be happy to meet with me. I will be able to discuss any topic of mutual interest. I really appreciate it. At the same time, I also appreciate London parks, London museums. This is a longstanding interest of mine. For example, I have been to the British Museum twice only in the spring. I also visited the Tate Gallery. There was an extremely interesting exhibition of Impressionists. Now the post-impressionist exhibition is in the National Gallery. I am planning to go there, maybe next weekend.

**Iryna Kushnir:** Amazing. Very good. Regarding the obstacles and such problems in your way... this question is probably a little similar to what has already been discussed about the weak points in your scientific profile. Do you see any things that shouldn't be there at some institutional state level here?

**Sergii Koziakov:** Look, I am a very serious pragmatist, and I even mentioned the word 'bureaucracy' during our interview today. It exists in any country. This is a necessary element of administrative management in the state, in any state. And there are things that simply must be done. That is, do not panic, do not engage in aggressive whining that everything is bad there, we are not understood here or something similar. This is not for me. Again, I want to say that my daughter

spent 7 years here, and we know what it's like to rent an apartment, what it's like to change an apartment, move to another one. Right now, we are changing our apartment and will be moving to another one, and we need to do paperwork - that means we must have them. There are rules that differ from the Ukrainian lease agreement. They are stricter, so we will implement them. There are rules for receiving medical assistance from the state. For example, I don't really like it when I have to go to a clinic via the Internet and try to get some relatively minor advice. It takes longer than in Ukraine. It all took minutes or hours in Ukraine, or we can get advice from a narrowly specialized specialist today, but here it takes longer or much longer. These are features. I know the British are much more critical of their healthcare system than we are, I think. We are following it. Fluent English helps a lot. This is if we are talking about all the Ukrainians who are here. Someone speaks better, someone worse, someone does not know English at all, it is much more difficult for them. But when you know English, when there is a little patience, when there is a desire to understand the problem and the desire to understand how this problem is solved, then there is a result. It seems to me that we are getting the results we need. There are some issues about doctors, so I think it will be necessary to go to Kyiv, because some things can be obtained in Ukraine faster and, perhaps, of better quality. If we talk about the dentist, then in Ukraine you can get it cheaper, many times cheaper, and maybe even better quality. But this is one example, maybe I will find some other examples, but I can't say that there are many things of what I don't like. These are features of the country. According to my experience as a lawyer, I have been to approximately 40 countries, which I have visited only as a business lawyer. Therefore, I know that there are cultural differences, including traditions and European features, there is a separate British feature, which is different from European continental Europe, there is North Africa, where I have been several times, there is the Middle East, where I have been many times, there is Singapore, Hong Kong, where I was also at work, there is Pakistan, for example, in which I was on work. The country is extremely different not only from Britain, but also from Ukraine. You just have to remember everything, try to understand that you did not come to the resort. Although some Ukrainians may think, they have been living on a cruise ship for many months. Maybe some of them think this resort is so cool. I don't think so, my family doesn't think so. We do not think so, we have come and can bring some benefit not only to Ukraine, but also to the country where we now live and thanks to whose efforts, the Ukrainian army is at the front, and we live here. This is our approach; it seems quite productive to me.

**Iryna Kushnir:** Yes, absolutely. How do you think in general, people in your situation who had jobs in universities in Ukraine and had to move to England because of the war, what opportunities do you see for them to get a job at a university in England and what are the obstacles and what is missing and what else could be implemented at the level of universities, at the level of organizations like CARA, maybe others? From your point of view, what is working well and where are the gaps?

**Sergii Koziakov:** If we talk about Britain, CARA as an organization is quite active, they have received serious funding for this, there are separate projects, including in universities, and from what I have seen. And I want to say that there is a very serious opportunity for development. Moreover, the development is not only for the practice of scientific and educational Great Britain, but also for thinking about the future. I will give an example: Ukraine is currently witnessing the largest war in the world since the Second World War, in general, the largest war in the world, when hundreds of thousands of people participate on both sides in a full-scale war. Moreover, if we are talking about missile attacks, then such missile attacks have never happened anywhere, even if we are talking about one attack, and not those that happen every day. There has never been such a war involving drones anywhere, when 60-70 drones fly in one attack. More than 30 flew to Moscow today. And it's just a reconnaissance attack, it's not even a combat attack. 17 million people are displaced persons, from those who fled from Ukraine are approximately 7 million and the rest who are displaced persons on the territory of Ukraine. This is the largest number of displaced persons in the world, which has occurred in the entire history of mankind. During the war, a large number of

reforms took place in Ukraine. I was personally involved in the judicial reform and the reforms that need to be done in general in the judiciary and plus what needs to be done about the martial law that have been imposed. Dozens, perhaps hundreds, of bills were voted on by the Verhovna Rada of Ukraine that is Parliament, which is working under conditions of war. We need to think what can be useful. And can we imagine that the same thing can happen somewhere? There are no guarantees that it will never happen again. It may happen. This Ukrainian experience, it can be useful. It should be investigated. At the same time, there is a great fight against corruption, an extremely active fight during the war. I do not know any territory where the fight against corruption was fought during the war, and it is going on, every day there is a result. It is published, it is public information. This is also important, can be researched, and can be useful. Because dozens of countries in the commonwealth are very close to Great Britain, in Africa, in Asia, in Oceania. It can be useful there. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh - it might be useful there. The key point is the restoration of Ukraine after the end of the war. It is necessary to prepare if we are talking about the legal system. The legal system must be prepared for adaptation to peace. Which laws will have to be abolished, because they worked during the war, or will no longer be needed, and which ones the authorities may not want to abolish and will be more interesting to remain them. For example, by restricting some human rights. Then you have to think, what to do with the authorities if they don't want to abolish some law. These are such trivial details. There are social problems, there are psychological problems, there are problems of secondary education, there are huge problems for those children who remained in the territory of Ukraine, whose parents could not take them out. There will be huge problems for those soldiers who were injured and became disabled, and there are thousands, if not tens of thousands of them. How to help them manage? Here are such things, it seems to me that international and national funding can be found for them, because this is an extremely useful experience that must be studied and thought about, how to propose a solution to a large number of these problems. To make this happen it will be useful to create and, in my opinion, it is necessary to create Joint Scientific Expert Groups. It can be whether a single university or a consortium of universities. Why not consider a consortium of universities, online education, and ChatGPT, and not only this chat, but also other chats - is it a danger or is it still useful? Should students be banned from using it during homework? Or, on the contrary, we need to develop such tasks that the student can perform using the chat, because it is faster, but also those where they can also think, to oblige them, to force them to think. Joint Research Groups can also be created for this purpose. Not only with the involvement of teachers, but with the involvement of graduate students, because they understand things faster.

In my opinion, there are great opportunities for development, practical development of the things you asked about. I said only about the humanitarian aspect, humanitarian sciences, but there are also other sciences: chemistry, medicine... By the way, medicine has fantastic opportunities for joint research. I will put it simply; my daughter was in postgraduate studies was researching new concussion treatments. So, there you go... Frontline surgery? This is regarding medicine. I told you only two directions now.

**Iryna Kushnir:** Right. That is, there are many opportunities that could be developed here, including for people who moved from Ukrainian universities. And regarding gaps in helping Ukrainians from the higher education sector in Ukraine, who have entered universities here or want to enter, but have not yet been able to enter. What kind of assistance do you think could still be introduced?

**Sergii Koziakov:** As for me, I was given a lot of freedom. I would like to do reporting. That is, I do reports on my own, but if I had a rule of reporting there once every 3 months, for example, or once every 6 months, it would be better for my internal self-discipline. I also do a huge amount of work. For example, I have eight lectures and seminar classes per week. A large volume, in my opinion, of which 60% is in English for English-language programs in Ukraine. Even this can already be

considered as a result of why CARA helps me financially. I think that it is possible to do more joint activities of Ukrainian and British scientists, graduate students and students not only British ones. I can say that at the invitation of the Ukrainian students' association, I gave a lecture to them about the fight against corruption in the judicial system of Ukraine here in London, at one of the universities. Several foreign students even came to this lecture. I think that it would be interesting for students from Africa, Asia, because they have an analogy, similar problems, I know that for sure. That would be interesting. I think that it would be possible to connect to such events. Let me give you an example: I said that I was doing an interview with the academic journal of the Duke Law School in the United States of America, and the interview was conducted by a member of the editorial board who was a citizen of New Zealand, a retired judge. That is, we had New Zealand, London and the United States of America, and the interview was given by a Ukrainian. That is, it's nice to have the organization of such events, and it is not difficult at all. It does not require special funding. This is communication. Although, perhaps, there should be more activity of Ukrainians here, with such ideas that are easy to implement and useful for everyone.

**Iryna Kushnir:** Thank you. We are already finishing here. I also want to ask you about your plans for the future, including professionally.

**Sergii Koziakov:** My professional plans depend on the war, and depend on myself, because during my professional life, I had several opportunities to go abroad for internships for a year or six months, including to foreign universities. I refused every time, because there was a lot of work in Ukraine related to the things I was doing, but I always had a dream to leave for a certain time and work in another country, at a university in another country. Now such an opportunity exists, thanks to the war, unfortunately, and not thanks to peace. It happened and I accepted it. I would like it to last longer, but according to the plan, I will implement and work on those things that may be interesting not only to me. Therefore, I will try to think how to continue this, either scientific research, or work with students, and so on.

**Iryna Kushnir:** Great! I thank you very much for your time and for your answers, very informative and interesting, and shocking, unfortunately. Thank you very much, Sergii. Let's stay in touch.

**Sergii Koziakov:** Right. I am ready to continue if necessary. Thank you, Iryna, for the invitation and for the meaningful conversation. Goodbye!