

Europe Needs the Courage to Be Itself – Alona Lebedieva

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Europe has marked the 25th anniversary of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights – a document that defines the core of European identity and guarantees the rights of every person within the Union. Since gaining legal force in 2009, the Charter has become a binding legal benchmark for EU institutions and Member States in the application of EU law.



Alona Lebedieva

The Charter encompasses 50 rights and freedoms across six key areas – from dignity, equality, and civil liberties to social solidarity and access to justice. It reflects the evolution of society, technology, and the economy, ensuring the protection of personal data, freedom of expression, access to healthcare, fair working conditions, the right to education, and freedom of movement.

Alona Lebedieva, owner of the Ukrainian diversified industrial and investment group Aurum Group, believes that the 25-year milestone is not only an occasion for celebration but also a moment for an honest assessment: how effectively does the EU safeguard rights in a period of radical change – from the digital revolution to Russia’s full-scale war against Ukraine, which has undermined the foundations of Europe’s security and stability? Today, the European Union must not only declare its values but must also be able to consistently defend them amid real crises.

“The question is this – are the Charter’s legal mechanisms flexible enough to respond to new threats: hybrid attacks, violations of refugees’ rights, pressure from authoritarian regimes, attempts to manipulate the information space, and efforts to erode European freedoms?” she says.

A new external challenge for Europe has also emerged in the form of political statements by global leaders. In a recent [interview with Politico](#), U.S. President Donald Trump described Europe as “a declining continent” and its leaders as “weak,” placing responsibility for the continuation of

Russian aggression effectively on the victim country and on European governments. As global media, including [Bloomberg](#), note, such statements amplify a stream of insults and disinformation through which he conducts international diplomacy. This once again demonstrates that the EU must be prepared to defend its values without depending on political fluctuations in other global centers of influence.

Lebedieva is also convinced that Europe can no longer rely on the legal and political assumptions of the early 2000s. The mechanisms for implementing the Charter require rethinking and strengthening – especially in the fields of security, data protection, cyber resilience, countering propaganda, combating discrimination, and ensuring state accountability for human rights violations.

“Russia’s aggression against Ukraine has become a test of the strength of European values. And this test continues. The EU must take the next step – not only to proclaim rights but to ensure their real effect in everyday policymaking. All areas – from migration and social policy to defense – require more decisive actions and updated standards that correspond to contemporary risks,” Lebedieva believes.

Today, the Charter must finally move from the realm of declarations to the realm of guaranteed enforcement. The rights and freedoms of Europeans can no longer remain mere ideals – they must be protected by the real power of law, by the unity of states, and by the willingness to act together in the face of threats. Human security, solidarity among societies, and resilience to aggression and blackmail are what make Europe Europe. Only consistent, practical policies for protecting rights can preserve the values for which we once again must fight today.

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