

Ukraine

Adrian Kosmaczewski

2022-03-04

It has been hard for me to think about anything else than the Russian invasion of Ukraine since last week; it is also hard for me to write about it.

I have friends in Ukraine, and I'm worried about them. It's as simple as that.

I visited Ukraine only once, in July 2016, when I was invited to speak at the UMT conference in Dnipro. We took a high-speed train from Kyiv to Dnipro with Anastasiia, Paul, and many more.

From the train I saw the infinite yellow fields meeting the light blue sky; I discovered that the Ukrainian flag is actually a photograph.

UMT 2016 was the first conference I ever participated where my family name fit naturally among all the other speakers. I did feel bad because I could not greet people, not even in Polish (I learnt that Polish and Ukrainian were closer than I ever imagined). I did feel, however, very welcome and surrounded by warm and funny people.

I remember trying to decypher the Ukrainian alphabet, in Cyrillic script, figuring out things like food names in menus; and discovering in the airport that Zürich is spelled “Zurich”.

I am worried about my friends. I am worried about a whole country. But I am proud to know them in person. I am proud to know they're fighting back.

Today I feel Ukrainian.