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Prof. Chyzhevskya teaches at the Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University and has long-term cooperation with Prague University of Economics and Business. In addition to professional activities, Prof. Chyzhevskya is also involved in cooperation with the Czech Republic. She heads the Zhytomyr Association of Volhynia Czechs and also works as the head of the Václav Dlouhý Czech Center for Education and Culture at the Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University. In addition to her native Ukrainian, she speaks not only English and Russian, but also Czech. She belongs to the sixth generation of Volhynia Czechs who came to Ukraine in 1870.



What does a typical semester at Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University look like now — in terms of teaching, safety, and student support?

Classes may be interrupted in two situations: first, when the air-raid sirens sound and everyone must go to the shelter; and second, for the daily moment of silence at 9:00 a.m., when we honor the heroes who have fallen in combat. In my classes, I always try to sense the students' moods—especially during periods with frequent alerts and among those who have relatives on the front line. Both students and faculty have access to professional psychological support.

We're in the fourth year of the war. Compared with the first year, what feels different—at the university or among people around you?

The hardest part is people's psychological state. It's not that they've lost hope, but living under the pressure of war for four years is exhausting. Repeating power cuts have become part of daily life, so we constantly adapt our work. What worries me is that we no longer respond to air-raid alerts as we should—we've grown used to them. Everyone in Ukraine knows how to check various apps to see the threat level in their region and where incoming attacks are coming from. But the worst part is that news about casualties is now part of everyday life, and the list of fallen students and alumni keeps growing.

Many young people have left Ukraine—either abroad or to safer regions. Four years on, do you see signs of people coming back—to Ukraine, to your region, or to Zhytomyr Polytechnic specifically?

Rather than returns, we've seen students continue their studies with us without interruption. Even after moving abroad and enrolling at local universities, many have kept studying at Zhytomyr Polytechnic in parallel. We've also welcomed many internally displaced people from eastern Ukraine who are now studying at our university.

How has support from the Czech society evolved over the years—what has worked well, and what still needs reinforcement?

I know people and organizations in the Czech Republic who still say, 'WE ARE RIGHT NEXT DOOR', and they continue to help in many ways. For example, VSE supports short-term student visits to the Czech Republic; the Sokol movement helps organize camps and humanitarian aid for internally displaced people; and Czech National Agency for International Education and Research supports with Czech-language classes. What's essential is to raise awareness to the fact that if the war does not end in Ukraine, it could spread further into Europe.

The exhibition 'Unissued Diplomas' returns on the 4th anniversary of the invasion. What do you read differently now, and what should visitors take away this year?

It's important to stress something I keep hearing from Czechs: helping Ukraine is an investment in their own security. The most painful part is that the number of unissued diplomas has grown—but this isn't about statistics; it's about the loss of an entire generation's potential. This exhibition is a call to sustain support, to recognize the price of freedom and peace, and a call to further action.