

CINÉ ONU

presented by United Nations Regional Information Centre

To mark International Migrants Day
and Human Rights Day,
the United Nations has the pleasure of
inviting you
to a screening of the documentary
“Nice Ladies” by Mariia Ponomarova.



The film will be followed by a panel discussion with:



Mariia Ponomarova
Writer, Director and
Executive Producer of the
documentary "Nice
Ladies"

Mariia has been based in the Netherlands since 2014. Mariia studied directing at Karpenko-Karyi Kyiv National University of Theatre, Cinema & Television in Ukraine. In 2016, she completed the Master of Film artistic research programme at the Netherlands Film Academy. Fiction and documentary films Mariia worked on were screened at such acclaimed festivals as DokLeipzig, IDFA, Sarajevo FF, Sheffield DocFest, Chicago IFF, Krakow FF, Clermont-Ferrand ISFF, Go Short ISFF, Palm Springs SFF and more. Her debut feature documentary, "Nice Ladies", had an international premiere at HotDocs and received a Special Mention at DocudaysUA IHRFF. Mariia is a member of the European Film Academy and a Senior Consultant at the Documentary Association of Europe.



Mercedes García Pérez
Deputy Director for Global
Issues and Head of Division
for Migration and Human
Security,
European External Action
Service

Mercedes' career of more than 20 years in EU Foreign and Security Policy includes a five year posting in Washington DC, where she was the Head of Global Issues and Innovation at the Delegation of the European Union to the USA, representing the EU in the Green Deal and global health areas. She served as Head of Division for Human Rights until 2018, leading the formulation of the EU's human rights policy and guidelines applied worldwide. From 2012 to 2016, she was the Head of Operations in the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), where she oversaw the conduct of ten EU Civilian Operations in three continents with more than 3000 staff on the ground. Alongside her diplomatic career, Ms. García is a visual artist with a studio in Brussels.



Lukas Gehrke
Director of the
International Organization
for Migration
Global Office in Brussels

Lukas brings over 20 years of experience in migration and protection issues, most recently serving as Deputy Director General and Director of Policy, Research & Strategy at ICMPD. He has held several senior leadership positions, leading policy engagement, capacity building, and resource mobilisation. As an established expert in the European and international migration debate, he has cultivated a wide network of decision-makers, including government representatives, international organizations, civil society, diaspora groups, and academia across Europe and beyond. For over two decades, Lukas has been dedicated to improving migration policy through innovation and collaboration, successfully leading numerous teams and fostering a culture of teamwork.



Moderator: Sherri Aldis -
Director, United Nations
Regional Information
Centre

Sherri Aldis is the Director of the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe since February 2022. From 2015 to 2022 she was Chief of United Nations Publications at the UN headquarters in New York, overseeing its publishing activities and strategic partnerships with the publishing industry and academia. Before joining the United Nations, she had an extensive career in international publishing.



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One
World

This event is organised by the United Nations in Brussels. There will be drinks after the documentary, courtesy of the International Organization for Migration.

Synopsis

Twice a week, twelve women aged 38 to 73, known as the “Nice Ladies,” gather at Kharkiv University’s hall to train for the European Cheerleading Championship. Coming from all walks of life, they unite through their passion. For some, cheerleading is a way to shine. For others, it is a means to heal, belong, or defy stereotypes of age and gender. As the war breaks out in Ukraine, hard decisions arise that bring the plight of living in conflict-affected Ukraine and the tension between leaving or staying to the fore. As the Nice Ladies push forward to make their human rights heard, we see that the experiences of displacement, distance and guilt are not marginal - they are central to understanding the broader human cost of war.

A documentary by Mariia Ponomarova.
The documentary will be in Ukrainian with English subtitles,
and has a runtime of 52 minutes.



Human Rights, Our Everyday Essentials

“Every day, the United Nations helps people around the world realise their most basic rights. Together with civil society and governments, we deliver food and provide shelter; support education and elections; clear mines; defend the environment; empower women; and strive for peace.

But we cannot do it alone.

This work depends on all people, everywhere, taking a stand. When we protect the most vulnerable, when we refuse to look away, when we speak up for the institutions that speak up for us, we keep human rights alive.”

António Guterres,
United Nations Secretary-General
Human Rights Day 2025



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