

Russian-Language Flash Mob Held in Western Ukraine

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Concerns have been mounting that allegiance to Russia in parts of Ukraine could lead to a split.

Residents in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv are holding a flash mob on Wednesday, speaking only Russian in a show of solidarity with the country's eastern and southern regions.

After Ukraine's parliament downgraded the status of the Russian language on Sunday, an activist in Lviv — a predominantly Ukrainian-speaking city — posted an appeal on Facebook, asking fellow residents to demonstrate national unity.

"We stood together on the barricades, we join you in mourning for the dead, and we want to join you in building a new Ukraine," activist Volodymyr Beglov said in his Russian-language post early Wednesday morning.

Within hours, the flash-mob pledge starting with the words "On Feb. 26, I, a resident of Lviv, will be communicating in Russian," received more than 3,000 Facebook "likes."

Concerns have been mounting in recent days that Ukraine may descend into chaos and split along the historic fault line between the Russian-speaking east and Ukrainian-speaking west.

"There have been many attempts to split up [Ukraine's] east and west during the years of Ukraine's independence," Beglov said. "But we are convinced that our people are wiser than any politicians. "

The European Union's ambassador to Russia, Vygaudas Usackas, said in an interview published in Moskovsky Komsomolets on Wednesday that the status of the Russian language in Ukraine should be determined by all interested parties.

The Ukrainian protests began when former President Viktor Yanukovich, under pressure from Moscow, abandoned EU association plans in favor of closer ties with Russia.

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