

# Ukraine, Western Allies Defend Crimea on Euro 2020 Kit

By [AFP](#)

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Passersby walk past a billboard showing the Ukrainian national football team in Kiev. **Sergei Supinsky / AFP**

Ukraine said Monday it would not allow anyone to insult its football kit that features Moscow-annexed Crimea while its Western allies gave the uniforms emblazoned with popular nationalist chants a thumbs up.

Kiev has provoked Moscow's ire after its football association unveiled Euro 2020 kits that show the outline of Ukraine including Crimea, that was annexed by Russia in 2014.

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The shirts also feature the words "Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the Heroes!"

Ukraine's football association told AFP that the national team will wear the kit for the first

time in a Euro 2020 warm-up against Cyprus in the northeastern city of Kharkiv on Monday.

"I really like our team's new uniform," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Twitter. "We will not allow anyone to insult our national symbols. Glory to Ukraine!"

Those who have begun "hissing," Kuleba added, could not stand the sight of Ukraine's "internationally recognized borders."

The U.S. and British embassies cheered the shirts.

"Love the new look. Glory to Ukraine! #CrimeaisUkraine," the U.S. diplomatic mission in Kiev said on Twitter.

"We love it too!", the British embassy added.

UEFA traditionally stresses the importance of steering clear of politics in football.

In a statement to AFP, European football's governing body said that the shirt of the Ukrainian national team "has been approved by UEFA, in accordance with the applicable equipment regulations."

According to UEFA kit regulations, items must not "offend common decency or transmit political, religious or racial messages."

On the front of Ukraine's yellow shirt, the outline of Ukraine is picked out in white, including Crimea and the separatist-controlled regions of Donetsk and Lugansk.

"Glory to Ukraine" is a patriotic chant that became a rallying cry for protesters who ousted a Kremlin-backed leader, Viktor Yanukovich, during a popular uprising in 2014.

The slogan has drawn criticism from Moscow for its association with World War II-era nationalist groups who cooperated with the Nazis.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that Euro 2020 organizers and fans "should know" that the Ukrainian rallying cry "imitates" an infamous Nazi slogan.

She also derided the map, saying Ukraine's football team "attached Ukraine's territory to Russia's Crimea."

Euro 2020 will be played from June 11 to July 11 across 11 cities including St. Petersburg. Russia's second city will host seven matches, including a quarter-final.

In the group stage, Ukraine open against the Dutch in Amsterdam on Sunday before facing North Macedonia and Austria in Bucharest.

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