

Entrant company name: **DTEK**

Entry title: "**Carol of the Bells**" at a **Destroyed TPP**

Category: **Best Event**

The campaign featuring a performance of “Carol of the Bells” at a one of destroyed DTEK’s TPP was implemented amid widespread power outages and heightened emotional tension in society, against a backdrop of limited public understanding of the scale of damage inflicted on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure.

The project juxtaposed the destroyed power plant with the people who, despite constant risk, continue to restore electricity to homes – deliberately timed on the eve of the Christmas holidays. This powerful cultural image helped shift public focus from irritation and frustration to support and gratitude, connecting the reality of loss with human resilience.

For international audiences, “Carol of the Bells” became a clear and emotionally compelling call for support. Through the universal language of culture, the project conveyed the scale of destruction and the urgent need to restore Ukraine’s energy system. As a result, by the end of 2025, DTEK Energy secured €68 million in international technical assistance in the form of equipment and materials, confirming the effectiveness of this approach to international communication.

Challenge

Ukraine’s fourth winter of war became the hardest. Temperatures dropped to -20°C — exactly the scenario the enemy anticipated while systematically attacking the country’s energy infrastructure. Strikes intensified during extreme cold, turning the threat of large-scale blackouts into a daily reality.

At the same time, global information overload made it harder for international audiences to stay focused on Ukraine. After years of war, the prolonged crisis competed with new global challenges, creating information fatigue precisely when support for Ukraine was most critical. Inside the country, freezing temperatures, power outages and uncertainty led to deep emotional exhaustion. Frustration and polarization grew, amplified by Russian information operations. Complex explanations lost their impact — people wanted something simple: light and heat at home.

Traditional messaging was no longer enough. The project had to address two connected challenges: restore hope and gratitude inside the country, while making Ukraine's experience visible and emotionally tangible to the world through a powerful cultural code.

Goals

- To reduce the level of emotional tension in society by showing that, despite attacks and destruction, Ukraine has endured and continues to fight and rebuild. To visualise Ukrainian reality in a way people recognise themselves in it, feel synergy, unity, gratitude, and a moment of light and mutual support during the Christmas period.
- To portray Ukrainian energy workers as heroes of daily resistance, whose work is especially felt during the darkest time of the year.
- During the Christmas period, when the world is particularly receptive to stories of light and hope, to address the international audience with a universal message of support — through music that is understood beyond words and borders.

Inside

We needed a different way to amplify the voices of energy workers – one that shows the scale of destruction and human courage without lengthy explanations. This led to a project that doesn't try to prove a point, but helps people feel a simple truth: Russia is destroying Ukraine's energy system, yet Ukrainian energy workers continue to keep the lights on.

We chose Christmas – a moment when the expectation of light and hope becomes a shared experience for millions around the world. And we realized that music could convey these feelings best.

The melody we chose was Shchedryk – one of the most recognizable in the world and a part of Ukraine's cultural code, symbolizing unity and the strength of generations. Performed at a destroyed TPP, it became a symbol of Ukrainian Christmas: we are under attack, our power is cut, yet strength, hope, and the ability to create beauty even in darkness remain. The light holds — thanks to the people who restore it every day, and to those who support them alongside us.

Implementation

For the first time in history, a choir accompanied by an orchestra performed Carol of the Bells on the territory of a thermal power plant. Cultural initiatives of this scale had never taken place at a TPP before – it is a closed strategic facility with restricted access, especially under wartime conditions. The decision to record the project there was deliberate: not to move the story into a safe, symbolic space, but to let the music be heard where light is generated and where it becomes a target of enemy attacks. Where it is defended, restored, and sustained every day despite constant threat

The recording took place shortly after a recent missile strike. The plant was damaged and shut down, and the space still bore visible traces of the attack.

Among the industrial ruins, alongside the musicians, real energy workers from this TPP appeared on camera – people for whom restoring electricity is a daily job and responsibility.

The project was produced under extremely challenging conditions: cold temperatures, limited electricity supply, and the constant threat of renewed Russian attacks. The recording was conducted in strict compliance with security protocols and within a tightly limited time window.

The contrast between the halted power plant and the living sound of Carol of the Bells became the key artistic device – a moment in which culture does not aestheticise destruction, but speaks about resilience and hope without words.

The project deliberately avoided staging and the aestheticisation of tragedy. Its purpose was to document reality and human presence within it, creating an emotionally honest gesture for the country and for the world.

Results

International Support

- €68 million in international technical assistance for DTEK Energy (equipment and materials, total for 2025)
- €160+ million – the largest single contribution by Germany to the Ukraine Energy Support Fund
- €60 million in additional winter and energy support provided by Germany

Reach and Engagement

- 12 million contacts in social networks

- 8 million contacts in ukrainian and international TIER-1 media
- 500 000 interactions generated in social networks and media

Reputational Impact

- 96% brand awareness for DTEK – the highest level ever recorded, despite widespread power outages
- 75% positive sentiment toward DTEK, even though 52% of respondents experienced outages lasting more than 12 hours per day
- 81% consider the profession of energy worker critically important – a record-high figure across the entire study period