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# KyivPost

**22<sup>nd</sup> Year**

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May 19, 2017

## (Visa-)Free At Last! Europe opens to Ukraine



Zaporizhzhya National University students unveil a giant European Union flag for the Days of Europe celebration on May 14 in Zaporizhzhya. On June 11, Ukrainians will start enjoying visa-free travel to most EU nations for stays of 90 days or less. Authorities are also negotiating other agreements that will soon allow Ukrainians to travel either visa-free or obtain visas upon arrival to 121 nations. (UNIAN)

BY NATALIYA TRACH  
[TRACH@KYIVPOST.COM](mailto:TRACH@KYIVPOST.COM)

As visa barriers to the European Union drop for Ukrainians starting on June 11, people and businesses are gearing up for the practical

advantages and the psychological lift of being able to explore the continent more easily.

Once the agreement takes effect, Ukrainians will be able to travel without visas (or with visas upon arrival) to 121 of the world's 195 nations.

The next attractive destinations for lifting visa restrictions include the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Japan — although Ukraine is not close to getting visa barriers dropped from any of those nations yet.

But for now, Ukraine is savoring its long-awaited victory in abolishing the hated, humiliating and costly process of getting a visa simply to visit another European state.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko presided at the May 17

signing ceremony at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, and hailed the agreement as a landmark event in Ukraine's history.

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# Ukraine's paratroopers play cat and mouse with enemy

**BY WILL PONOMARENKO**  
SAINT.ANGER1992@GMAIL.COM

**MAYORSK, UKRAINE** — It's May at the war front, and things aren't going well for Russian-backed soldiers at this spot some 600 kilometers south-east of Kyiv.

"We usually let our enemies recover the bodies of their dead from the battlefield," says a Ukrainian paratrooper known as "German."

He says that shootouts happen almost every night, "so we often hear separatists talking about their high death toll after assaults."

In his 20s, the paratrooper keeps his finger on the trigger of a Kalashnikov machine gun and stares at the horizon through the gun's sights. His fellow soldiers also keep watch, peeking out from behind defenses made from concrete blocks and wooden ammunition boxes, with automatic rifles in their hands.

Their task is to watch for any hostile activity. They don't have far to look. The enemy's entrenchments lie several hundred meters away in flat wilderness across a minefield.

On the Ukrainian-controlled side, the concrete floor is covered with empty cartridges from the previous night's shootout. In four hours, their watch will be over and the soldiers will return to their dugout for sleep.

After three years of bloodshed and 10,000 deaths, Russia's war keeps raging on in Ukraine's east.

The Donbas, the country's one-time industrial heartland, is bisected by 400 kilometers of front lines.

The elite 25th Dnipropetrovsk Airborne Brigade, one of the most capable Ukrainian army units, has fought from the first days of the war instigated by Russia in the spring of 2014. It helped retake Sloviansk and Kramatorsk in the summer of 2014, but was forced to retreat in the bloody battles for Savur Mohyla, the

destroyed Donetsk airport and the city of Debaltseve.

In the summer of 2014, the paratroopers defended Luhansk airport after it was surrounded by Russian-backed forces, and 40 of them were killed when an Il-76 transport aircraft was downed by a missile fired by Russian-backed forces on June 14, 2014.

In defeats and victories, the 25th Airborne Brigade has lost 130 fighters, killed in action, and over 500 men have been wounded.

## 'Give 'em hell'

The brigade's 8th company is now defending the area of Mayorsk near the Russian-occupied city of Horlivka,

The company's positions lie among neglected fields and sparse forestland close to the Siversky Donets-Donbas water pipeline. The paratroopers are defending the pipeline and a power station near Mayorsk's railway station to prevent the enemy

from taking control of water supplies to heavily populated areas of Donetsk Oblast.

Area road bridges were blown up in 2014 and still lie in ruins. The local railroad leading to occupied Horlivka was cratered by shellfire.

Checkpoints in Mayorsk and nearby Zaitseve allow civilians to cross the lines between the government-controlled and Russian-occupied parts.

The morning of May 14 saw the paratroopers enter battle again.

Sporadic exchanges of fire started soon after dawn, and continuous bursts of gunfire could be heard almost everywhere. Ukrainian troops are permitted to return fire even if they don't have visual contact with the enemy.

At 11 a.m., two mortar shells whistle in from the left flank. A unit has come under enemy fire from 82-millimeter mortars.

more **War** on page 16

# Gingrich expects Trump to strongly support Ukraine

**BY BRIAN BONNER**  
BONNER@KYIVPOST.COM

Former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich, an informal adviser to U.S. President Donald J. Trump, told the Kyiv Post on May 16 that he expects the administration's stance against Russia will harden.

"I would be surprised if they don't increase the lethality of the weapons that are made available to Ukraine," Gingrich said. "I think we want to maximize the ability of Ukrainians to defend themselves, without necessarily forcing Russia into a major escalation."

Emphasizing that he was not speaking for the Trump administration, Gingrich said that "looking at what's going on, looking at the people in charge now. They're very tough-minded. They're aware you have this low-grade war going on and Ukrainians are at a disadvantage. It's not in our interest for Ukrainians to be at a disadvantage. We should figure out what are the most useful force multipliers that



Former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich, an adviser to U.S. President Donald J. Trump, spent 90 minutes speaking and answering questions at the Diplomatic Academy in Kyiv on May 16. Gingrich came at the invitation of the Victor Pinchuk Foundation, the philanthropic organization created by billionaire oligarch Victor Pinchuk. (Victor Pinchuk Foundation/Serge Illin)

would be helpful in raising the costs to the Russian so they decide they can't continue their adventure in eastern Ukraine."

Gingrich also raised the prospect that Trump will eventually favor tougher sanctions against the Kremlin. "I think they have really

begun to reluctantly conclude that there may have to be additional sanctions. They're trying to find a way to get (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's attention," Gingrich said. "I don't know if anything is effective with Putin. What would be effectively ultimately is if his support inside Russia craters."

But Gingrich said that Ukraine cannot expect greater government financial aid because Trump doesn't consider such aid to be effective. Instead, he said, the administration is likely to encourage greater private sector investment in Ukraine.

"They will try to think through to what degree we can find a way to maximize private sector investment," Gingrich said. "Their bias will be to try to get companies to come in that are permanent rather than having our bureaucracy give the Ukrainian bureaucracy money."

Gingrich came to Kyiv at the invitation of the Victor Pinchuk Foundation as part of its public lecture series, which last year attracted former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

While the Pinchuk Foundation did not disclose Pinchuk's speaking fees, Politico reported on Dec. 2 that Gingrich is "cashing in" on Trump's popularity. Citing Gingrich's agency, Worldwide Speakers Group, his speaking fees are \$75,000 plus expenses for U.S. appearances.

The Republican Gingrich, who turns 74 on June 17, served in the U.S. Congress from 1979 until 1999 and as speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1995 to 1999. ■

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# Prosecutors strike secret deals with Yanukovych allies, lawmaker says

BY OLEG SUKHOV  
SUKHOV@KYIVPOST.COM

Backroom dealings between Ukrainian authorities and members of the entourage of ousted ex-Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych have allowed suspects in high-profile corruption cases to escape prosecution, an opposition lawmaker said.

Reformist lawmaker Sergii Leshchenko on May 16 alleged that some top Yanukovych allies previously under investigation, including lawmaker Yuriy Boyko, had reached secret deals with prosecutors.

Leshchenko's claims come after the Prosecutor General's Office in January and February announced that it had struck plea bargains with some suspects in cases from the years that Yanukovych was in power from 2010–2014.

But Leshchenko and lawyers familiar with the cases say the details of the plea bargains are secret, in violation of the law. "It's especially cynical that these 'plea bargains' are absolutely secret, and society is deprived of the opportunity to oversee the authorities' work," Leshchenko said.

The Prosecutor General's Office has denied accusations that it made secret backroom deals, instead portraying the plea bargains as signs it is making progress in the cases.

## Boyko scandal

Leshchenko on May 16 published the text of what he says is a draft parliament motion to strip Boyko, the former energy minister and the leader of the Opposition Bloc, the main offshoot of Yanukovych's now-defunct Party of Regions, of his immunity from prosecution.

Boyko could then have been arrested and put on trial in a case that involves alleged embezzlement during the sale of natural gas.

However, Leshchenko said the



Artur Herasimov, head of President Petro Poroshenko's faction in parliament, Opposition Bloc leader Yuriy Boyko and lawmaker Dmytro Andriyevsky speak in the Verkhovna Rada on July 11. Poroshenko and Prosecutor General Yuriy Lutsenko deny accusations of reaching shady deals to not pursue multimillion-dollar corruption cases against Boyko and other loyalists of ex-President Viktor Yanukovych. (UNIAN)

motion was blocked first by ex-Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin and then by his successor, Yuriy Lutsenko.

Lutsenko's spokeswoman Larysa Sargan denied the existence of the draft motion, pointing to a 2016 report by Sergei Gorbatur, the head of the prosecution service's department for trials in absentia. Gorbatur said in the report that not enough evidence had been collected to support a motion to prosecute Boyko in a separate case involving the embezzlement of \$400 million during the purchase of oil and gas rigs.

However, both Gorbatur and Leshchenko called Sargan's bluff, saying that Gorbatur's report was about a different case, and did not say anything about the motion in the

natural gas case.

Sargan responded by publishing another document by the prosecution service's chief investigator, Yuriy Hryshchenko, saying there had been no motions to prosecute Boyko.

But Leshchenko dismissed the document, saying that Hryshchenko would write anything because he is a loyalist of the authorities.

Although the case of the oil rigs had been previously known as the "Boyko rigs" investigation, Lutsenko has claimed that Boyko had little to do with it, and that the main suspects in the case are the Katsuba brothers, Serhiy (a lawmaker until 2014) and Oleksandr (the former deputy head of state oil and gas company Naftogaz under Yanukovych).

"The Prosecutor General's Office got an order from the Presidential Administration to block the motion to strip Boyko of immunity as part of the strategic alliance between Boyko and (President Petro) Poroshenko" Leshchenko said.

At the same time, the oil rig case was taken away from Gorbatur's department and transferred to the military prosecutor's office last year to make sure that Boyko remained safe, Leshchenko claimed.

Gorbatur said in a report filed with Lutsenko that the transfer of the case had no legal grounds and would hurt the investigation. According to another document filed by Gorbatur, his department was also preparing notices of suspicion on top incum-

bent officials of the Energy Ministry and Naftogaz, but they were not filed after the case was taken away from the department.

## Tax mafia

Other top officials have also escaped being charged.

In an embezzlement case against Yanukovych's Tax and Revenue Minister Oleksandr Klymenko, about 50 suspects were expected to be charged before the case was taken away from Gorbatur's department in 2016. Now only about 12 suspects have been charged.

The officials who avoided prosecution in that case include Lyudmila Demchenko, head of the State Fiscal Service's Kyiv branch, and Viktor Dvornikov, a former deputy head of Kyiv's Pechersk District tax office and an advisor to Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko.

"Gorbatur was upbraided by (Deputy Prosecutor General Yuriy) Stolyarchuk and Shokin," Leshchenko said. "They were pressuring him not to touch Dvornikov, because he's a close friend of Klitschko."

Suspects who escaped punishment also include other top officials of the Tax and Revenue Ministry and its Kyiv branch.

Meanwhile, Vladyslav Filatov, an employee of the Center for Democracy and the Rule of Law, on May 15 published on Facebook what he said was a photo of Yanukovych's ex-Deputy Chief of Staff Yuriy Chmyr in front of the Presidential Administration in Kyiv. The photo triggered speculation that Chmyr was trying to curry favor with Poroshenko to escape prosecution. The Presidential Administration said information on visits to the administration was secret.

Chmyr is being investigated in a

more Yanukovych on page 10

## Straight Talk 'Ukrainian banking sector in turmoil'

May 24 | Fedoriv Hub | 6.30 p.m.

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Editorials

## Eurovision success

The two-weeks Eurovision extravaganza is over. Some 20,000 foreigners came to Kyiv during the contest; 64,000 people attended the nine shows at the International Exhibition Center. Many more fans joined the frenzy. The city was buzzing with music and light shows, festivals and May moods.

While some doubted the country's ability to host the \$32 million event, Ukraine did a great job. Just like the Euro 2012 football championships, Ukraine can host an international event and show tourists a great time.

Nobody even missed Russia, which disqualified itself by choosing singer Yulia Samoylova, who deliberately broke Ukrainian law by performing in the Russian-occupied Crimean peninsula, seized in 2014.

It helped that so many of the 26 finalists were very talented and gave splendid performances. The Eurovision stage did not see international superstars like Justin Timberlake, who performed at Eurovision 2016, but Ukraine offered its own great homegrown music. Pop singer Monatik, electronic pop band Onuka and Eurovision winners of 2004 and 2016, Ruslana and Jamala, respectively, filled the gap splendidly. The video of Monatik's first semi-final performance gained more than 1 million YouTube views, while Onuka surged on European music charts.

Kyiv's Eurovision also saw a marriage proposal received by Macedonian contestant Jana Burceska and Portugal's first victory in its 52-year history of Eurovision participation. Some will remember the show for the mooning Ukrainian prankster Vitaliy Sediuk, who jumped on stage during Jamala's performance. But, in truth, nothing spoiled this great show. Not only did Salvador Sobral win for Portugal, all of Ukraine won. Molodets!

## More harm than good

When a country bans parts of the internet, it's bad for free speech. This is something China, Iran, Russia and Saudi Arabia do, not democracies.

So alarm bells went off when President Petro Poroshenko on May 16 restricted Ukrainians' access to Russian search engine Yandex, mail agent Mail.ru and Russian social media websites VKontakte and Odnoklassniki for three years. All four are among the 10 most-visited websites in Ukraine.

The worry is not that Poroshenko's ban will succeed. It's impossible to enforce: Within hours VKontakte sent messages to its Ukrainian users telling them how to bypass the ban. Anyone who doesn't know can simply google it.

Rather, it's Poroshenko's timing and motives that are concerning, as well as the damage done to Ukraine's image as a country seeking to become a modern democracy governed by the rule of law. The internet was designed to ensure information always gets through - that's why authoritarians dislike it and seek to restrict it.

Russia's propaganda machine, of course, pounced gleefully on Poroshenko's ban. The president justified the ban on these websites and other media, including one of Russia's last independent television stations, RBK, as being "in support of economic and personal sanctions" imposed by the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers. Notably, however, websites of the Kremlin-controlled RT and propaganda media Sputnik aren't blocked. Another pro-Kremlin Russian news website Life.ru isn't touched.

Complicating the issue is the fact that Russia uses these websites to disseminate propaganda and gather intelligence in its war against Ukraine. It is still the main destination for pro-Russian Ukrainians, but it is not the only one.

A temporary ban of all Russian websites and media at the start of Russia's war in 2014 could have achieved something useful and would have been more justifiable. Now it's more questionable. Poroshenko, after all, didn't stop doing business in Russia until he was forced to do so. Russia remains Ukraine's largest investor and trade partner. Other blockades and bans have been led by citizens, not Ukraine's political leaders.

Poroshenko's ban looks more like a clumsy attempt to be seen as doing something rather than achieving anything useful. The president still has yet to officially declare this a war or rally the nation for shared commitment and sacrifice -- especially billionaire oligarchs like himself.

While the ban on VKontakte and Odnoklassniki might filter out harmful Russian information assaults, it will also restrict Ukrainians' access to information and potentially cut off valuable information for Ukraine's own intelligence gathering.

In the end, this ban does more harm than good.

**NEWS ITEM:** Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko signed a decree on May 16 blocking access to popular Russian websites, including VKontakte, Odnoklassniki, Yandex and Mail.ru, and imposing a range of sanctions on Russian companies and individuals. The ban divided opinions: While some saw it as an essential defense against the aggressor state, others argued it was an attack on freedoms or a futile PR stunt by Poroshenko.



**NEWS ITEM:** A man was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison by the Galytsky district court in Lviv for promoting communist ideology on Facebook, namely by posting quotes by Vladimir Lenin and Soviet Communist slogans.



**NEWS ITEM:** Lawmaker Sergii Leshchenko published a copy of a motion addressed to parliament requesting that it strip the Opposition Bloc lawmaker and former Energy Minister Yuriy Boyko of his parliamentary immunity so as to prosecute him for corruption. The request was prepared by the General Prosecutor's Office in 2015, but was never sent because neither the then-Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin, nor his successor Yuriy Lutsenko would sign it, Leshchenko said. However, Lutsenko said the motion never existed at all.



**NEWS ITEM:** Ihor Ustyenko, a former employee of the State Security Service of Ukraine, may have witnessed the planting of a bomb under the car of journalist Pavel Sheremet on July 20. Ustyenko spent several hours near the car shortly before the bomb killed Sheremet, Ukrainian journalists found in their investigation. At the same time, the SBU has been accused of staging a protest against anti-corruption activist Vitaliy Shabunin. The SBU said that its employees indeed were at the protest, but by chance.

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## Reformer of the week

## Alexandra Ustinova

Alexandra Ustinova, an expert at the Anti-Corruption Action Center, and her colleagues from the watchdog have sued the Security Service of Ukraine for hiding its employees' income declarations from the public and other state agencies.

Ustinova said on May 11 that she had been followed by SBU employees and people hired by the SBU. The agency has denied harassing critics of the authorities.

Reformist lawmaker Sergii Leshchenko said on May 13 that he had been harassed by a person claiming to be a journalist. Leshchenko argues that the person was also hired by the SBU.

On April 20, Radio Liberty published possible evidence of the SBU's involvement in organizing a protest against Vitaly Shabunin, head of the Anti-Corruption Action Center's executive board.

Meanwhile, the National Police on May 16 searched the apartment of Max Cherkasenko from the reformist Democratic Alliance party. Cherkasenko claims that the searches had been carried out with procedural violations and aimed to obtain politically sensitive information from him. The authorities have also investigated other opponents of Poroshenko, including Dragon Capital CEO Tomas Fiala, ex-customs official Yulia Marushevska and anti-corruption investigator Kateryna Vezeleva-Borisova.

— Oleg Sukhov



## Anti-reformer of the week

## Vitaly Hlukhoverya

Interior Minister Arsen Avakov on May 10 appointed Vitaly Hlukhoverya as chief of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast's police.

Hlukhoverya replaced Ihor Repeshko, who was fired due to a brutal crackdown by the police and pro-government thugs, or "titushki", on nationalist activists and Ukrainian veterans of Russia's war against Ukraine at a protest on May 9. The police and titushki beat the activists with batons and kicked them with their legs.

Hlukhoverya has triggered a controversy when a photo of him with a sweater reading "USSR" has been shared on social networks.

In 2010 to 2013 he worked as the Interior Ministry's representative in Russia and was seen as a close ally of ex-President Viktor Yanukovich's Interior Minister Vitaly Zakharchenko.

Hlukhoverya was previously appointed as chief of Dnipro Oblast police in 2014, when he failed to fire or punish police officers involved in crackdowns on EuroMaidan protesters.

Meanwhile, ex-Cherkassy Oblast Police Chief Vladyslav Pustovar, who was fired and arrested last year on suspicion of giving a \$2,000 bribe, said on May 18 that he had been reinstated on his job by a court. This was seen as another sign of the police reform's failure.

— Oleg Sukhov



VOX populi

WITH MARIYA KAPINOS  
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## Do you support the ban on Russian social media websites in Ukraine?



## Natalie Kovalska

accountant  
"In general, I do not mind blocking of social networks such as VKontakte, Odnoklassniki

etc. These resources give a hostile country certain advantages. Precedents had already happened when people distributed anti-Ukrainian information through VKontakte."



## Valentyna Rudenko

retiree  
"What's happening is very bad! With the enactment of this law I lose the ability to talk to my

classmates, relatives, also I have friends in Israel which I communicate to on Odnoklassniki. I simply cannot process what is going on! I have talked about this to my friends and they are also strictly against the decree. Maybe younger people are on Facebook but people of older age are mostly on Odnoklassniki."



## Vasyl Mudryk

post-graduate studies  
"I blocked my e-mail on Mail.ru and VKontakte account in 2012. Since then I use only

Facebook. I know many of my friends are on VKontakte and they will feel disappointed but as for me it is a right decision to block Russian social platforms."



## Anatoliy Shynkarev

finance company  
"I do not really care about Odnoklassniki, but I am on VKontakte since 2007

and thousands of people follow me on this social network. I think VKontakte has to be aside from politics, so yes, I am definitely against the prohibition."



## Mykola Staryi

journalist  
"We are in a war and it is not ethical to use Russian social networks, especially if there are interna-

tional analog such as Facebook, Instagram. I feel like Ukrainians are setting apart from Russian content and in my environment people don't use Yandex or VKontakte for quite a time."

## Ukraine's Friend &amp; Foe Of The Week

Editor's Note: This feature separates Ukraine's friends from its enemies. The Order of Yaroslav the Wise has been given since 1995 for distinguished service to the nation. It is named after the Kyivan Rus leader from 1019-1054, when the medieval empire reached its zenith. The Order of Lenin was the highest decoration bestowed by the Soviet Union, whose demise Russian President Vladimir Putin mourns. It is named after Vladimir Lenin, whose corpse still rots on the Kremlin's Red Square, 100 years after the October Revolution he led.



Elmar Brok

with other Yanukovich cronies — that he "and his friends cannot stop me from working against selective justice and for the freedom of opposition leaders."

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko recognized Brok's contributions on April 20 by awarding him the Order of Yaroslav the Wise.

According to the president's official website, Poroshenko thanked Brok for supporting Ukraine for many years, especially noting his support during the EuroMaidan Revolution that drove Yanukovich from power on Feb. 22, 2014, the ratification of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement, reinforcement of democratic institu-

tions in Ukraine and support for the visa-free regime for Ukrainians.

Brok, in turn, noted Ukraine's progress in making internal transformations in recent years. The presidential website quoted him as saying that a "successful Ukraine is important for the whole European continent" and that the success of Ukraine "will mean the failure" of Russian President Vladimir Putin's attempts to subjugate Ukraine and steer it away from closer integration with Europe.

And the other good thing about Brok is he doesn't shy away from Ukraine's need to battle corruption among its elites and establish rule of law.

"A country at war, which is going through a period of transformation, has no other opportunity to show its success to everyone, including Putin, than to successfully implement the reforms," Brok said on April 20.

Brok also said Ukraine needs to reform the public authorities, calling it the aim of cooperation and dialogue between the European Parliament and the Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's parliament.

— Brian Bonner



Dana Rohrabacher

Thanks to an explosive allegation made by U.S. House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy on June 16, and only revealed on May 17 by the Washington Post, the world now knows that even top Republicans were suspicious of Russian President Vladimir Putin's ties to two key party leaders — U.S. President Donald J. Trump and U.S. Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, called Putin's "favorite congressman."

"There're two people I think Putin pays: Rohrabacher and Putin," McCarthy said in a meeting with fellow Republican leaders. The Washington Post obtained a recording of the private talk and published a key excerpt of the transcript.

While later McCarthy tried to dismiss the remark as a joke, it's no laughing matter to Ukraine.

Californian Rohrabacher, after being tough on the Soviet Union during the Cold War, has flipped and become a leading apologist in Congress for Putin's dictatorship, human rights abuses and war against Ukraine. His remarks are offensive and often false.

— Brian Bonner



Order of Lenin

remove Sergei Magnitsky's name from a global anti-corruption law. Magnitsky was murdered in 2009 while imprisoned in Russia after exposing a massive embezzlement scheme involving Russian officials.

Rohrabacher highlights corruption in Ukraine, which is fair enough, but it's in the context of defending Russia's war, which is indefensible.

What's also interesting in the transcript for Ukraine is the conversation that involved separate talks that McCarthy and U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan had earlier that day with visiting Ukrainian Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman. Part of that centered on the Kremlin tactic of financing populist politicians to undermine democratic institutions, according to the Washington Post.

"So we should not have Ukraine fatigue, we should have Russian fatigue," Ryan told his fellow Republican lawmakers after hearing from Groysman how Russia is waging its war in various ways — troops, propaganda and cyberattacks — against Ukraine.

"So he's saying they're doing this throughout Europe. This just isn't about Ukraine," Ryan

says. And at another point in the conversation: "Russian is trying to turn Ukraine against itself."

Groysman evidently had impressed Ryan with his pitch about how Ukrainians are defending themselves against Russia and fighting corruption at home. "This guy's a pretty good guy," Ryan said. "This guy's like the anti-corruption guy."

While Groysman has yet to show himself as the "anti-corruption guy," the tenor of the Republicans' conversation was very understanding and supportive of Ukraine. That's all the more reason that Rohrabacher's defense of Putin is inexcusable.

— Brian Bonner

Since this is the week that the European Union finally ratified visa-free travel for Ukrainians, it's a good time to praise a long-time ally of Ukraine — Elmar Brok, a German member of the European Parliament who chairs the Foreign Affairs Committee.

"He has been backing Ukraine and criticizing Russia for years," Andrii Lavreniuk, Ukrinform's staff correspondent in Belgium, told the Kyiv Post in 2013.

Brok in 2013 became the target

of a smear campaign by discredited ex-First Ukrainian Deputy General Prosecutor Renat Kuzmin, who accused him of being "accompanied by escort girls and large volumes of alcohol at a nightclub in Kyiv's Troeshchyna" neighborhood.

The political motive seemed clear, even at the time. Brok had been a forceful and outspoken opponent of the conviction and imprisonment of ex-Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, then-President Viktor Yanukovich's biggest political enemy.

Brok took it in stride, denying the accusations and warning Kuzmin — who has since fled abroad along



Order of Yaroslav The Wise





# World in Ukraine

**Editor's Note:** World in Ukraine takes a look at Ukraine's bilateral relations with different nations. To sponsor this news feature, please contact the Kyiv Post's sales team at [advertising@kyivpost.com](mailto:advertising@kyivpost.com) or call 591-7788.

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# Japanese ambassador says nation will abide by principles in Ukraine relations

BY BRIAN BONNER  
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Alone among Asian nations, Japan has steadfastly supported economic sanctions against Russia for its illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula and ongoing three-year war in eastern Ukraine, which has killed 10,000 people.

Japan is also among the largest financial donors to Ukraine, providing \$1.86 billion in economic grants or loans since the EuroMaidan Revolution that forced President Viktor Yanukovich to flee on Feb. 22, 2014.

It's no wonder then that the media-friendly Japanese Ambassador Shigeki Sumi is frequently greeted with smiles and appreciation by Ukrainians.

"Now Japan is very well known in Ukraine," Sumi said in an interview with the Kyiv Post from the Embassy of Japan, just off Khreshchatyk Street near European Square. "Although I don't speak the Ukrainian language, sometimes people approach me when I am walking down the street and say: 'Are you the Japanese ambassador? I saw your interview on TV. Thank you very much for all you are doing in Ukraine.'"

It's no wonder, also, that Sumi has great access to and frequent



conversations with President Petro Poroshenko. Sumi hosted the president and First Lady Maryna Poroshenko at a private dinner in his official residence last September, several months after the Poroshenkos visited Japan.

"I think he's working very hard for the betterment of Ukraine and it's good," Sumi said. "If you have this kind of family dinner, you get very close."

In gratitude, Poroshenko designated 2017 as the Year of Japan in Ukraine, with a calendar of special events marking the relationship.

## Peace, principles

As for Ukraine's attempts to recover the Crimean peninsula and control of Russian-occupied areas of the eastern Donbas, Japan also knows something about long-running territorial disputes with Russia.

The two nations have been feuding since the end of World War II over four islands that Russia illegally



People walk under cherry blossoms in a park in Tokyo on April 6. Japan's cherry blossom season kicks off parties across the country and draws tourists from far and wide. (AFP)

annexed at the tail end of World War II, which ended with Japan's announced surrender on Aug. 15, 1945. Russia calls them the Kuril Islands while Japan calls them the Northern Territories.

Just as in Japan's 62-year-old quest to regain the islands, Ukraine's success in recovering its lost territories will require patience, planning — and peace, the ambassador said.

"Everybody wants to get it solved as soon as possible. How can they solve it? Nobody wants to settle by war or fighting. Everyone wants peaceful a settlement. It's nothing to do with patience. We have to have a concrete plan for settlement."

Patience with Russia is wearing thin in the West.

Japan, as the world's third-largest economy and a leading democracy, is part of the Group of Seven — or G7 — industrial democracies, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy. As the G7 summit hosted by Japan last summer, the group agreed to lift sanctions if the Minsk peace agreements are fulfilled and apply tougher sanctions on Moscow if the Kremlin escalates its war against Ukraine.

So far, Sumi said, nobody has come up with a better plan than the 2015 Minsk agreements, which require Moscow to end its financing of separatist proxies, withdraw its troops and weapons, return control of the eastern border to Ukraine and allow international monitors unfettered access.

"If somebody has an idea for an alternative to the Minsk peace agreement, I'd like to hear it," Sumi said. "So far the Minsk agreement is the only concrete measure to which all

the parties have agreed."

No matter how long it takes, Japan will not waver, Sumi said, even if China and other nations don't follow.

"In this world, we have rules and regulations. We are not living in a jungle," Sumi said. "We should not change anything by military means or by force. All disputes should be settled by peaceful negotiations. I don't think it has anything to do with economic gains or losses...If Japan stops upholding the principle, what will happen to world? If everybody started seizing territory by force, what will happen? I think that view is shared by all the Japanese people."

## Economic ties

Bilateral economic ties are not anywhere near what they could be. Ukraine and Japan are not each other's leading trade or investment partners — not even close, not even in the top 10 list of nations.

There's a huge mismatch between the size of the economies, with Japan's 127 million people clocking in with a \$4.8 trillion economy, dwarfing the output of Ukraine's 40 million people, whose economic activity will be measured at only \$100 billion this year, if it's lucky.

Still, there is movement in the right direction.

For starters, relations at the highest levels of both governments appear to be reasonably active and cordial. Poroshenko visited Japan in 2016, a year after Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Kyiv.

This spring, Verkhovna Rada speaker Andriy Parubiy visited Japan while a large Japanese trade delegation came to Ukraine in March.

The Japanese trade delegation included 23 persons and 19 compa-

nies. It was organized by the Warsaw, Poland, office of JETRO, which stands for Japan External Trade Organization. According to its official website, JETRO is a government-related organization "that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential."

Additionally, many of Japan's leading companies are present in Ukraine's market. Those include: Panasonic, Sony, Mitsubishi, Toyota, Honda, Auto International, Nissan Motor, Subaru, Canon, Olympus, Toshiba, JVC, Fujikura, Yazaki and Sumitomo Electric Bordnetze.

Since the EuroMaidan Revolution, Fujikura has been a new entry in the Japanese family of companies doing business in Ukraine, while two others — Yazaki and SEBN (Sumitomo Electric Bordnetze) — have expanded their investment, according to the embassy. All three companies supply the automotive industry.

And that's no accident.

Japan's prowess in making cars and Ukraine's advantages to export-oriented manufacturers are a good fit in many ways. Ukraine's free-trade agreement with the European Union, its educated workers and modest wages are pluses. "What the Japanese company produces here can be exported to European countries tax free. That is a benefit," the ambassador said.

Altogether, Japan has invested

more **Ambassador** on page 8

## Japan at a glance

Total area: 378,000 square kilometers	Population: 127 million
Government type: parliamentary government with a constitutional monarchy	GDP, PPP: \$4.4 trillion* GDP per capita, PPP: \$39,312*
Chief of state: Emperor Akihito	Head of government: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe
Ukrainian-Japanese relations: Trade: \$737 million**	Japanese foreign direct investment in Ukraine: \$130 million**
Exports from Japan to Ukraine: automobiles, electric machines, rubber and resin, optical devices.	Exports from Ukraine to Japan: ores, slag, ash, grains, ferrous metals, aluminum, chemicals.
Main sectors of the Japanese economy: motor vehicles, electronic equipment, machine tools, steel and nonferrous metals, ships, chemicals, textiles, processed foods.	
Main Japanese businesses: Sony, Panasonic, Mitsubishi, Toyota, Honda, Auto International, Nissan Motor, Subaru, Canon, Olympus, Toshiba, JVC, Fujikura, Yazaki.	
Sources: World Bank, Embassy of Japan in Ukraine, Central Intelligence Agency, Ukrainian State Statistics Service.	

\*as of 2015      \*\*as of 2016      By Stella Shabliovska, Kyiv Post



# Panasonic diversifies, looks to sales growth in Ukraine

BY BERMET TALANT  
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Once upon a time, Japanese companies dominated consumer electronics. But not anymore.

Stiff competition from regional rivals led Japan, once Asia's biggest economy, to be overtaken by China in 2010. The gadgets one buys in an electronic store are now as likely to have been made in China or South Korea as they are to have been produced in Japan.

But amid the reports from renowned Japanese corporations of staggering financial losses and gloomy forecasts for the future, Panasonic is one of the few leading Japanese companies that expects growth.

The global electronics giant, headquartered in Osaka, saw profits last year of \$1.3 billion, which was more than forecast, but still 10 percent less than in 2015.

Panasonic hopes to celebrate its 100th anniversary next year with increased sales and profits as a result of new consolidations and the expansion of its automotive-related and home appliance businesses.

According to the company's latest financial report, which was released in May, net profit in fiscal year 2018 is projected at \$1.4 billion – up 7 percent. Sales are also expected to rise, to \$69.4 billion. This 6-percent year-on-year rise would be the first increase in the company's sales for four years.

However, the company's current sales in Europe are still weak, and increased only slightly compared to the Japanese domestic market, the Asian market and the markets of the Americas. Sales in Europe were buoyed mainly by the company's air conditioner division.



Koji Terajima, director of Panasonic Ukraine, speaks in the company's office in Kyiv on May 16 in front of drawings of participants of Eco Ideas 2013 contest, organized by Panasonic and the Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko Foundation. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)

And in Ukraine, 2014 and 2015 in particular weren't easy for Panasonic: political turmoil and Russia's subsequent war on Ukraine hit the hryvnia hard, the currency losing two-thirds of its value since 2014. That, and the wider economic recession, has reduced consumer demand and depressed sales in 2014 and 2015.

But, the Ukrainian economy is returning to growth, and now electronics sales are rising too, which is good news for Panasonic.

Koji Terajima, the director of Panasonic Ukraine, said sales in Ukraine last year were positive for the first time since 2014. Growth is forecast to be at least 10 percent this year, but he wouldn't discuss sales figures or profits for the division in Ukraine.

But given that Panasonic has just 40 employees in Ukraine, who also cover Moldova, the Caucasus and Central Asia, while it has 257,533 globally, obviously Ukraine is only a minuscule part of the company's revenues.

## New technology

According to the Nikkei Asian Review, Panasonic's president, Kazuhiro Tsuga, said on May 12 that the company is shifting resources to high-growth areas.

The company, which made its name by mainly producing home and office appliances, has turned its attention to the automotive industry and sustainable energy.

For instance, it recently partnered with U.S. electric car manufacturer Tesla.

In January, Panasonic and Tesla announced that the two companies had started jointly making lithium-ion batteries for Tesla's energy storage products and Model 3 electric car at the Tesla Gigafactory in Nevada. Several months later, in April, Panasonic established another lithium-ion battery factory, this time in Dalian, China.

In addition, Panasonic is extending its collaboration with Tesla to the production of high-efficiency photovoltaic cells and modules for solar panels at a factory in Buffalo, New York.

## Better investment

Two years ago, Panasonic became the first, and so far the only Japanese company to introduce residential solar modules to the Ukrainian market, but demand has been rather low.

"We offer high-quality solar panels with 25 years of workmanship warranty, which makes the price higher than that of competitors, but means it's a better investment in the long run," said Panasonic Ukraine's Terajima.

Although the Japanese manufacturer has been developing residential solar panels for years, sales are still sluggish, even in Japan. This contributed to overall losses, the company's annual report states.

Terajima added that besides solar panels, Panasonic markets a range of energy-efficient goods such as air conditioners, refrigerators, and uninterruptible power supply (UPS) devices with lower electricity consumption.

This year, another two new products particularly suitable to the Ukrainian market will hit the shelves. The first is a low-energy heat pump, designed to keep homes warm even in extremely low temperatures. The second is an air purifier, which

will help counter the detrimental effects of Ukraine's high levels of air pollution.

## Customers first

Ukraine's efforts to fight the shadow economy should help boost Panasonic's fortunes as well. Starting from May 8, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine changed its regulations on sales of sophisticated electronic goods that are subject to warranty. The list of goods affected by the change includes refrigerators, air conditioners, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, laptops, television sets and other home and office appliances – many of the staples of Panasonic's trade.

Now electronics retailers are obliged to issue receipts for goods using cash registers – a measure the government hopes will aid in the fight against the gray economy. The law will mainly affect small retail stores and individual sellers of electronics.

Panasonic welcomes the new law, as it protects manufacturers from illegal retailers and ensures customers' right to warranty and repair service.

"We always recommend that customers make purchases in official retail stores. However, in Ukraine many electronic products are imported unofficially. In this case we, as the manufacturer, can't guarantee these goods' quality and safety," said Terajima.

"We always think about our Ukrainian customers, providing full support in the local language, doing repairs and providing replacements. And to deliver a better experience with Panasonic, we've extended the warranty period on all of our products to three years, up from one year." ■

Panasonic recommends Windows 10 Pro

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# Ukraine, Japan closer than they seem

BY TOMA ISTOMINA  
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Strong diplomatic relations and cultural exchanges are helping to bridge the 8,000-kilometer distance between Ukraine and Japan.

Since early 2014, when Russia annexed the Ukrainian territory of Crimea and unleashed war in the Donbas, Japan has provided Ukraine with \$1.86 billion in aid, and it stands alone among Asian nations in slapping economic sanctions on Russia.

So it's no wonder that Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko made 2017 the Year of Japan in Ukraine, dedicated to the 25th anniversary of bilateral relations



A mother takes a picture of her daughter at the Bonsai exhibition in Hryshko National Botanical Garden in Kyiv on May 17. (Oleg Petrusiuk)

## Similar nations

Ukrainians living in Japan note similarities between the nations. Olga Khomenko, who graduated from the University of Tokyo, has lived in Japan for 12 years. "We're far away geographically, but emotionally and maybe culturally (Japan) is a pretty close nation to us," Khomenko said.

Both nations, Khomenko said, are sentimental yet don't show this to strangers. They love nature and beau-

ty. They like to study and are open to the world, but at the same time try to preserve their own cultures.

Japanese people living in Ukraine have come to love their adopted country. Hiroshi Kataoka, a professor of Japanese at Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv, who has lived in Ukraine for 14 years, says he now feels at home here. He says that while all expatriates from Japan

struggle to get used to the country and criticize it, they eventually fall in love with it.

"We love the nature, the food and the mentality of Ukrainians," he said.

There are many elements of Japanese culture that Ukrainians encounter in ordinary life – sudoku, karaoke, origami, tea, sushi, kendo, sumo, aikido, and karate. They don't see them as foreign anymore.

## Year of Japan

Apart from trying to attract investment and advance visa liberalization, Ukrainian authorities plan to promote Japanese culture, traditions and customs this year.

The Embassy of Japan, in cooperation with National Art Museum of Ukraine, has already conducted numerous events, including exhibitions of Japanese engravings and origami, cultural lectures and Japanese language lessons.

The embassy has also started the 2,500 sakura, or cherry blossom, trees campaign. While the citizens of Kyiv and Uzhhorod enjoy the beauty of blooming sakura every spring, many other Ukrainians have never seen them. The project includes planting trees in 22 Ukrainian cities.

## Higher priority

While Tokyo has become one of Ukraine's most important and reliable strategic partners, it wasn't always like this. Relations during much of the time of Ukraine's nationhood could be described as stable, but inactive.

The Ukrainian authorities didn't make the relationship a priority.

After the 2004 Orange Revolution, Japan financed a couple of projects, including the reconstruction of Kyiv Boryspil International Airport.

However, the partnership didn't flourish, as Ukraine made little headway in democracy, rule of law and fighting corruption – values important to Japan, the world's third largest economy and a member of the Group of Seven industrial democracies. Ex-President Viktor Yanukovich instead emphasized Ukraine's relations with communist China.

There was also a scandal involving the misuse of 470 million euros given by Japan in 2009–2010 under the Kyoto Protocol climate change agreement. Ukraine was supposed to spend the funds on reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, but failed to do so. According to a later agreement with Japan in 2015, Ukraine returned 2.5 million euros and reallocated the rest of the unused money to new projects.

After the EuroMaidan Revolution drove Yanukovich from power on Feb. 22, 2014, relations have become more active, thanks largely to Japan's generosity and unwavering support for Ukraine. ■

# Sumi: 'Very important' for Ukrainians to retain their revolutionary passions

Ambassador from page 6

\$130 million in Ukraine cumulatively by the end of 2016, a slight dip from the previous year, while Japanese companies employ thousands of Ukrainians.

But there are built-in limitations. Japan and Ukraine are 8,000 kilometers apart and the number of Ukrainians in Japan and Japanese in Ukraine are counted most likely in the hundreds, rather than thousands.

Visa liberalization lies ahead, Sumi predicted. Also, Ukrainians with marketable skills can readily get work visas in Japan while business travelers only have to get visas on their first trips. He expects visa-free travel for short-term stays by Ukrainian tourists is not out of the question in the future.

## Spurring investment

Explaining the low level of trade and investment between the two nations, Sumi said that "the reason is very simple. Ukraine does not know Japan and Japan does not know Ukraine. That is changing."

In a competitive world environment for investment, Ukraine should "increase its public relations and increase its publicity," he said. "Ukraine can't sit and relax and wait for investment to come."

He said Ukrainians "have to promote themselves more" and go to Japan and "sell the advantages of Ukraine."

While, broadly speaking, Ukraine is "moving in the right direction" in fighting corruption and establishing rule of law, too many incidents of arbitrary abuses of government power are harming the investment

Ukraine's Ambassador to Japan Shigeaki Sumi speaks with the Kyiv Post on May 16 in his office at the Japanese Embassy in Kyiv. He arrived for duty in Kyiv on Oct. 22, 2014. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)



climate, Sumi said.

While not naming companies, he said that it's clear that some Ukrainian companies or vested interests are out to hurt Japanese competitors. Unexpected problems usually arise during licensing renewals or in disputes over taxation. While his intervention often helps Japanese companies prevail, "imagine how much money and energy we spend on this," the ambassador said. "It's not good for the business reputation of Ukraine."

## Big aid

More than \$1 billion of Japan's aid comes in the form of a no-interest loan to overhaul Kyiv's Bortnytska sewage treatment

plant to clean the Dnipro River, the prime source of drinking water for Ukrainians

"It's making very good progress," the ambassador said. Feasibility studies are "more or less finished" and competitive bids for construction should be held this year. If all goes well, construction could start next year and end by 2022.

Japan has also given some \$400 million directly to Ukraine's budget.

The rest of the \$1.86 billion in post-revolution aid includes money for the purchase of 1,500 Toyota Prius police squad cars and new metro trains as well as humanitarian assistance, including help to hospitals.

## Health issues

"Japan gives a lot of humanitarian assistance to hospitals and is interested in the area of health reform. It's a must," Sumi said. "Ukraine has still a very old-fashioned communist system. Regardless of the quality of the hospital, you get the same money from government. That's strange. Very few nations in the world have this system."

A much better allocation of insurance or government money is "payments for service," he said. "I visited many hospitals in many areas. The conditions are very, very bad."

The consequences are obvious. Japanese have one of the highest life expectancies in the world, at least 83 years, while Ukraine has among the lowest in Europe, at 71 years.

"There are many reasons," the ambassador said. "One of the reasons is that Japan has a very good health care system" – one that focuses on prevention of illness and disease.

## Other concerns

Sumi started his tenure on Oct. 22, 2014, eight months after the EuroMaidan Revolution ended on Feb. 22, 2014. When he arrived, he felt the passion and the will that drove the nation to depose a dictator.

"Sometimes I feel that passion has a little bit evaporated," Sumi said. "Sometimes people do forget what they fought for. It's very important to keep that passion and the will to be better."

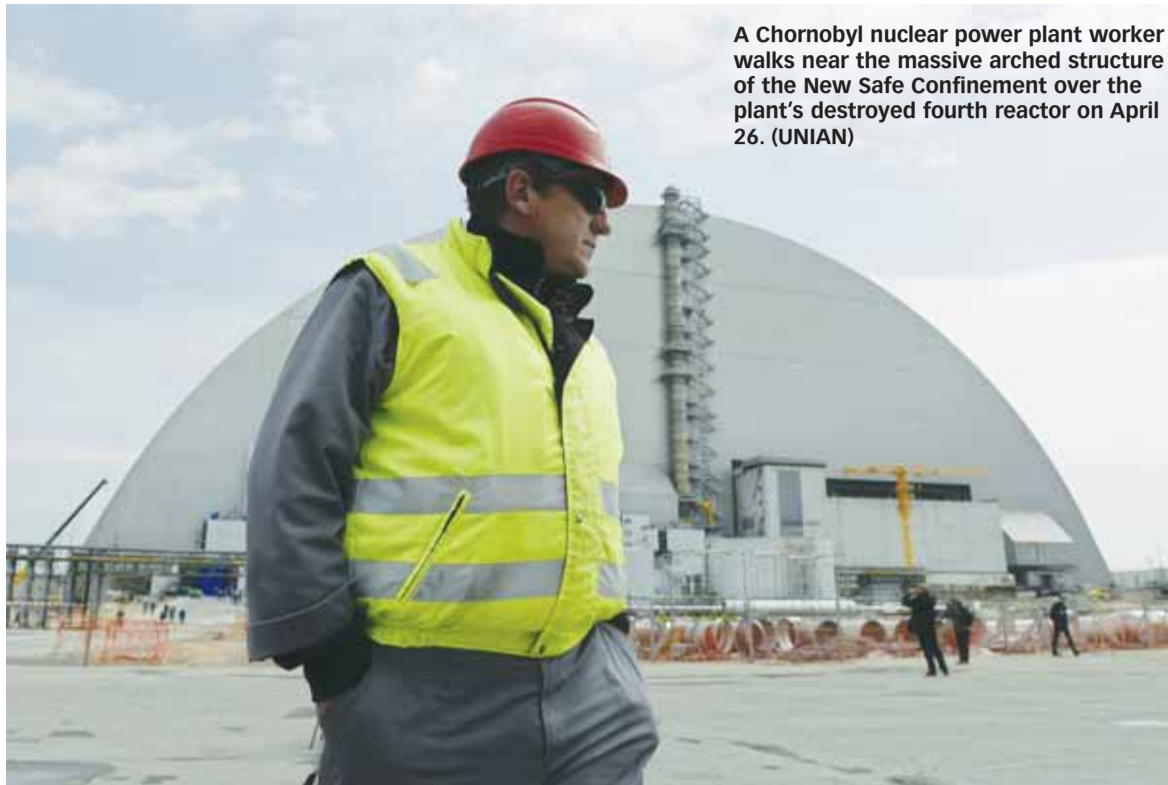
Another concern is the future of young people. He fears that many of the best and brightest Ukrainians have gone abroad for work or are looking for jobs elsewhere. If Ukraine's economy can't stop the exodus, he said, the consequences will be unfortunate for the future of the nation.

## Enjoying his stay

Aside from the "endless common issues" he discusses with his Ukrainian counterparts, Sumi and his wife relax by enjoying music – operas, ballets and concerts. They can also be found walking in Kyiv's botanical gardens or traveling to Sofiya Garden in the central Ukrainian city of Uman, 210 kilometers south of Kyiv.

"I don't have many problems so far or any complaints," Sumi said. "People are always very kind. We're enjoying our time here." ■





A Chernobyl nuclear power plant worker walks near the massive arched structure of the New Safe Confinement over the plant's destroyed fourth reactor on April 26. (UNIAN)

## Japanese experts come to aid Chernobyl cleanup

BY VERONIKA MELKOZEROVA  
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**CHORNOBYL ZONE, Ukraine** — American Yasuo Onishi poses for a photo against the giant white steel arch of the New Safe Confinement, smiling proudly.

Onishi has a good reason to be proud. Back in the early 2000s, the nuclear waste management consultant helped design the confinement that in November finally covered the Chernobyl nuclear power plant's entombed fourth reactor. After the explosion and fire in 1986, the ruined reactor had been hastily covered with a steel and concrete shelter, which is crumbling and unstable.

"It's so wonderful to see (the new confinement) finally being made," Onishi told the Kyiv Post on May 17.

Onishi came to Chernobyl from Washington with a delegation of Japanese scientists from the Fukushima nuclear power plant and Japan's Atomic Energy Agency to deepen cooperation on nuclear waste management.

A program funded by NATO's Science for Peace and Security Program brings together scientists from Ukraine, the United States and Japan to figure out how to manage the radioactive fallout from the Chernobyl disaster. It is estimated that more than 100 tons of nuclear waste, in the form of dust and molten core materials, still remain in the fourth reactor.

The program is the next step in cleaning up after the biggest nuclear power plant disaster in history.

Experts will analyze the New Safe Confinement and decide whether it is safe for people to dismantle the highly radioactive steel constructions covering the ruined reactor, and remove the remains of nuclear fuel elements from the reactor.

One of the Japanese experts, Tadahiro Washiya, the head of the fuel debris and analysis division of Japan Atomic Energy Agency, said this program could be just the start.

"Our nations could learn a lot from each other, share their experiences in radioactive waste management, and even create a mechanism

for disposing of nuclear waste in the future," Washiya said.

### Waste disposal

In 2018, the French construction consortium Novarka will finish the inside of the New Safe Confinement.

While the 36,000-ton arched structure covered the fourth power block in November, construction inside continues: Novarka is building an intricate system of hydraulic cranes that will help to dismantle the unstable metal constructions of the old shelter, as well as remove the remains of nuclear fuel elements.

The New Safe Confinement cost 1.5 billion euros and has taken more than 10 years to build. More than 40 countries contributed to a special Chernobyl Shelter Fund created in 1997. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development provided more than 500 million euros of its own resources to support the construction.

Ukraine is responsible for the radioactive waste disposal process.

The Japanese are natural partners. They faced the same challenge after an earthquake and subsequent tsunami caused the Fukushima Daichi nuclear disaster in 2011, the worst incident since Chernobyl's explosion in 1986.

The tsunami caused by the earthquake flooded the emergency generators that would have provided power to control and operate the pumps necessary to cool the Fukushima reactors. The lack of cooling led to three nuclear meltdowns, hydrogen-air chemical explosions, and the release of radioactive material from the plant.

Onishi, who was a consultant in both Chernobyl and Fukushima, said the disasters had been different in nature. The Japanese, unlike the Ukrainians, had to start the process of removing the nuclear material immediately after the disaster to prevent radioactive contaminants from getting into the sea.

### Make it safe

Now that the New Safe Confinement has covered the reactor, the task is

to disassemble by 2023 the temporary shelter that was built over the ruined reactor in the first seven months after the disaster. The parts of the shelter will be buried in nuclear waste depositories in the nearby village of Buryakivka.

That will help the Chernobyl workers reduce the possibility of the old constructions collapsing, and will clear space for the next stage of work — the recovery and disposal of the remaining nuclear fuel.

As explained by Sergiy Paskevych, a radioecologist from the Institute for Safety of Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, the cranes that are being constructed inside the New Safe Confinement structure "are basically a system of remotely operated cutting tools that will chop up the old steel constructions, while a special dust extractor will remove the radioactive dust."

"So it is a sort of a gigantic robot that will dismantle the dangerous nuclear waste, while an operator manages and controls the work, sitting at a safe distance," said Paskevych.

Ukrainian scientists have created a plan to dismantle only one metal construction so far.

"We will start cutting as soon as Novarka finishes the system," Paskevych added.

Radiation levels are still high in the Chernobyl zone. They range from 500 to 1,000 micro-roentgens per hour — while as safe does is considered to be only 30 micro-roentgens per hour. So scientists will have to figure out how to ensure maximum safety for the workers that will be involved in the decommissioning process.

Onishi said nowadays nuclear reactor decommissioning procedures are going on in many countries of the world, including in Japan, the United States, and countries in Europe. The particular problems faced in each case is unique.

"But by cooperating, the scientists of these nations will help each other to achieve their own countries' goals," Onishi said. ■

### BUSINESS ADVISER

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## Why do changes lead to great opportunities?



Natalya Kots  
Solution Product  
Manager

We had a talk about changes, digitalization, and project implementations in terms of companies' workflows transformation with Serhij Ivashchenko - ECM - Manager and Natalya Kots - Solution Product Manager, both representatives of Konica Minolta Ukraine.

Konica Minolta Ukraine is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Konica Minolta Inc., Tokyo, Japan, forming part of its Business Technologies business area. As a leading global services provider in the field of IT- and document processes as well as digital production printing solutions, the company excels in services-led business consulting, implementation and management and also provides a range of world-leading printing systems and solutions.



Serhij Ivashchenko  
ECM - Manager

### IT-transformation and workflows digitalization

Not long ago, it was customary to visit a friend of yours on the way home without warning them because of landline phone absence. Nowadays, even a phone call is considered as a 'mauvais ton'. When you have messengers and other quick-reply services you could ask about convenient time to make a call or describe your questions. Frequently, business is much less agile than individuals. Your child plays on the tablet before learning how to speak, the navigator is looking for the road without traffic jams, and Facebook has a face recognition. On-line shop offer you to buy clothes as on the picture you liked and app can find coffeemates for you near your real-time location. Sometimes, strangers that follow you on Instagram know you better than closest friends.

Without a doubt, today's technologies affect not only our everyday life, but change our business workflows as well. If there is still no personalization, big data, remote diagnostics or artificial intelligence in Ukrainian offices, it doesn't mean that some other way exists. "Adapt or die". It's just a matter of time and business survival. But it is better for you and for us to "adapt and succeed".

### Company changes are carried out by people in order to become leaders of these changes

The environment is fast changing, but whether business adapts to it or not depends entirely on workflows within the company. Workflows depends entirely on its people and employers which interact with each other, support changes or sabotage. Using opinion leaders in marketing is a common thing, but today there are no specific people or enthusiasts to win over them. Everybody can become an enthusiast within your company by certain circumstances. It's not a type of person, but a personal choice.

For example the management approach of coaching and attention to employees' soft-competencies lead to qualitative changes within a company. It's not in vain that flexible methodologies such as customer engaging at the design stage have become quite popular nowadays.

Behind the company changes often stands the personal developments of employees and often it begins from one individual to sometimes up to a dozen, latterly occupying the ones, who's chosen the way of changes. This is the main reason why Konica Minolta holds their events in the format of Innovation institute for highlighting the audiences (it can be vertical market representatives, for example: logistics or agricultural sector or field like human resources, etc.). On such events, we invite third-party speakers to talk about the exact interests aimed for a specific audience. We gladly respond if requests come from the market, for example from professional associations. If you are interested in such a meeting format, then please feel free to contact Konica Minolta Ukraine event-managers.

On the other hand, if we are speaking about working with a particular client, there is a necessity to involve a client representative or several of them at the first stage of the process analysis. There is only one way to implement the changes and the project can then become a reality. Changes within the company are possible only from insiders.

### Simple steps. Simple strategy.

How do we implement changes in order to optimize proper workflows? We have invested much efforts in order to collect crucial information, analysis, hours of strategic sessions and long-term planning. It is necessary especially if you are seen as pioneer when it comes to implementing such actions by using the trial and error method in order to change your company's internal workflows.

To change a company's workflow, there needs to be a clear description starting with the most obvious pain points. Konica Minolta Ukraine has developed a simple, but proven procedure and mechanic for such analysis. The next step includes following a well designed architectural development platform. We have chosen the most flexible methodologies with several interactions, stand-up meetings and client representative participation. When the project is considered ready, the changes within it do not end up.

Solution are tested mainly with MFP in order to examine the overall work process within the client's infrastructure. Then, we gather feedback in order to refine the processes. Sometimes it happens that the IT-department describes an algorithm from its point of view and the final user offers a more optimal version which is more on point. First of all, we are testing our solution and only after successful testing phase we are ready to implement the installation part according to the agreement.

It is important to note that we strive to look closely at the workflow optimization as widely as possible. We not only offer printing, scanning, text recognition and documents routing, but searching, archiving, content automation and even personal computers and servers service. It is not our goal to become a classical IT-integrator who deals with everything, but we aim to provide related services where we can be useful in terms of our project as a leading global services provider. Our main goal is to become a strategic partner for our clients. We can be contacted not only for the classical solutions, but more specifically for the important and delicate stage of identifying pain points in workflows and business growth potentials. Partnerships of this sort are radically different from the generalized customer-seller format.

### The breakthrough will come, but how and when

In conclusion, I am reminded of a metaphorical story about Sumo wrestler that I would like to share with you. I do not know whether it is true or not if speaking about sport, but from a philosophy perspective it suits perfectly. Large Sumo men are hugging for a while, but without obvious movements and suddenly one of them has flown up into the atmosphere. How could this happen? Their task is to ensure that an opponent is lifted off of his heels from the floor. And then you are able to make the throw easier. This is about how a small change makes a breakthrough possible, about inertia that holds us until a personal decision is made — a butterfly effect shall we say. Small changes in process may have consequences that have a significant impact on business and then you need to rely on experience, intuition, expertise and faith in people and your business. "Giving shape to ideas" is a Konica Minolta motto that has a relevance of which only has grown for the last couple of years. We are looking forward to a meaningful and long lasting collaboration!

To increase the efficiency of your company workflows, we invite you for ECM-audit your office printing systems and business processes as a part of a pilot project in one of your company offices at no charge. Once the audit is completed, you will receive an expert evaluation which includes a description of the advantages and disadvantages of existing workflows in your organization, the amount of expenditure on them and solutions for their reduction.



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# Secret plea bargains see Yanukovich allies avoid jail time, pay low fines

Yanukovich from page 3

criminal case into the crackdown on and murder of EuroMaidan protesters in February 2014.

## Secret ruling

Apart from being accused of letting some suspects off the hook completely, critics say the Prosecutor General's Office has also struck shady deals with others.

On March 28, the Kramatorsk City Court concluded a plea bargain with Arkady Kashkin, the nominal owner of a firm linked to Yanukovich associate Serhiy Kurchenko. The plea bargain allowed the court to confiscate money and state bonds worth \$1.5 billion linked to Kurchenko's firms.

But critics have dismissed the confiscation hearings as a political show trial. Both the investigation and the trial were conducted in secret and in just two weeks.

The Prosecutor General's Office and the Kramatorsk City Court have refused to publish the ruling, in what critics believe to be an effort to conceal violations of the law and behind-closed-door deals.

The prosecutor's office told the Kyiv Post that the ruling cannot be

divulged because it is allegedly a "secret of the investigation."

Vitaly Tytych, a lawyer for the families of slain EuroMaidan protesters, said this was illegal because there could be no secrets in an investigation after a court verdict is passed, and all court rulings must be published.

The Kramatorsk City Court cited an entirely different reason, claiming that the March 28 decision cannot be published because the presiding judge is on vacation. Under Ukrainian law, the short version of a court ruling must be published immediately after it is issued, while the full text must be divulged no more than five days after the ruling.

Two pages of the text have been leaked to the strana.ua news website. Based on these pages, Tytych characterized the ruling as "outright trash that will have very dangerous consequences." The text does not even make it clear if it's a regular or in absentia trial, and whether the judge even considered the case at all, while the accused is misnamed as a "suspect," Tytych said.

## Plea bargains

The Prosecutor General's Office closed an embezzlement case

against Yanukovich's Ecology Minister Mykola Zlochevsky in January, and in February concluded plea bargains with Oleksandr Katsuba, the former deputy head of Naftogaz, Andriy Holovach, an ex-deputy head of the tax agency, and former Deputy Economy Minister Oleksandr Sukhomlyn.

The content of the plea bargains is unclear because they have been made secret, in violation of the law, Tytych said. He also said that the amounts the officials paid back to the state under the deals are far less than the losses incurred.

Losses attributed to Katsuba are estimated at Hr 12 billion, but he only paid Hr 100 million to the budget, according to statements by Prosecutor General Lutsenko. Sukhomlyn and Holovach paid a total of Hr 150 million to the budget. They caused losses worth Hr 4 billion and Hr 3 billion, respectively.

Zlochevsky paid Hr 180 million to the budget, though the losses attributed to him totaled Hr 1 billion.

"These (plea bargains) are very prone to corruption," Tytych said. "The less they contributed to the budget, the more in bribes they could have paid." ■



Children play twister game on the map of Europe on Sofiyivska square in Kyiv during celebration of Europe Day on May 14. (Oleg Petراسиuk)

# Europe seems a lot closer as EU finally OKs visa-free travel

Visa from page 1

## 'Farewell' Soviet empire

"Today is a historic day for Ukraine, for my nation of 45 million," Poroshenko said. "Ukraine is returning to the European family. Ukraine says a final farewell to the Soviet and Russian empire."

Ukrainians today can travel to 87 nations without visas or by obtaining visas upon arrival. The agreement will add another 34 European countries to the list, including four non-EU countries — Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Only the formalities remain: The agreement will be published in the Journal of the European Union on May 21 and comes into force 20 days after publication — Sunday, June 11.

The agreement allows Ukrainians to stay 90 days within a 180-day period. Ukrainians need biometric passports to enjoy the benefits, something that at least 3.5 million citizens have obtained.

Even those who don't plan to visit Europe will still benefit, said Iryna Sushko, head of NGO Europe Without Barriers, which promotes freedom of movement, migration rights and border management.

"For the majority of people, the important consequence of the visa-free regime is modernization, reform of the security system, migration, the fight against corruption and discrimination, and many other issues related to human rights," Sushko said.

The agreement comes after years of tedious negotiations in which the hopes of Ukrainians ebbed and flowed.

Finally, EU ambassadors gave their approval on April 26, after Ukraine methodically met its requirements, leading to the signing ceremony with Poroshenko and European Parliament President Antonio Tajani and Maltese Interior Minister Carmelo Abela. Malta currently holds the rotating EU presidency.

## Business boost

The greater ease of travel will inevitably reduce the insularity of

Ukrainians, bring them personal benefits and give an immediate boost to the travel business — airlines, airports and tourist agencies.

According to a survey by the Sociological Group Rating, a non-governmental research organization, 80 percent of Ukrainians have not traveled out of their city or oblast in the past five years. The same survey found that only 27 percent of Kyivans, 19 percent of Odesans, 8 percent of Kharkiv residents and 6 percent of people in Zaporizhzhya visited Europe.

"Because of the visa-free regime, Ukrainians will be traveling abroad, in particular to Europe, more frequently," Infrastructure Minister Volodymyr Omelyan told the Kyiv Post.

Tetyana Prokopenko, head of Coral Travel agency, said that already more Ukrainians are buying and booking tours, mainly to Spain, Greece and the Greek island of Crete. "We expect an increased number of tourists to Europe on weekend tours and tours for families with children," Prokopenko said.

This year Coral Travel also plans to increase its charter flights and pre-booked seats on regular flights.

Ukrainian airports and airlines are preparing for an increase in travelers.

Ukraine International Airlines, the nation's largest airline, expects more passengers this year, building on last year's 5 million passengers — or 200,000 more than 2015.


Ukraine International Airline spokesperson Maksym Arslanov said this year the carrier plans to launch new several flights: from Kyiv to Budapest, Kyiv to Bergamo, Chernivtsi to Bergamo, Zaporizhzhya to Tel Aviv and Zaporizhzhya to Batumi.

"Generally, the company's plans for this year envisage an increase in the frequency of flights to existing destinations," Arslanov added.

Kyiv's Boryspil International Airport is also preparing for an

more Visa on page 11

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THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK,  
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TO: Audrey Cooper, Esq., Assistant Attorney General  
Unknowns (whose names and whereabouts are unknown), hereby intending to designate the distributees of the late Zoia Lytwynec, legal representatives, assigns and all persons who by purchase, inheritance or otherwise have or claim to have an interest in the estate of Zoia Lytwynec

A petition having been duly filed by Elena F. Cariola, Esq. who is/are domiciled at 14 West Ham Circle, North Chili, New York 14514

YOU ARE HEREBY CITED TO SHOW CAUSE before the Surrogate's Court, Monroe County, at 99 Exchange Blvd., Room 533, Hall of Justice, Rochester New York, on June 1, 2017 at 9:30 o'clock in the Fore noon of that day, why a decree should not be made in the estate of Zoia Lytwynec lately domiciled at 26 Brookdale Park, Rochester, New York 14609 in the County of Monroe, New York, granting Letters of Administration upon the estate of the decedent to Frank B. Iacovangelo, Esq., Monroe County Public Administrator or to such other person as may be entitled thereto.

Further relief sought (if any):

Dated, Attested and Sealed,  
April 18, 2017

HON. John M. Owens  
Surrogate  
Mark L. Annunziata  
Chief Clerk  
Frank B. Iacovangelo, Esq.  
Print Name of Attorney  
(585) 454-7145  
Telephone

Gallo & Iacovangelo  
Firm  
180 Canal View Boulevard; Suite 100, Rochester, New York 14623  
Address

NOTE: This citation is served upon you as required by law. You are not required to appear. If you fail to appear it will be assumed you do not object to the relief requested. You have a right to have an attorney-at-law appear for you.

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MONROE COUNTY, NY

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# Survey: 80% of Ukrainians have not traveled abroad in 5 years

Visa from page 10

increase in passengers. In 2016, the country's main airport serviced 8.65 million passengers. This year it expects passenger throughput to reach 10 million.

Yevhen Dykhne, Boryspil airport's deputy director, said that to improve services in 2017, the airport is expanding its transfer zone. In the next few years, the airport will install automated baggage and passenger check-in systems to speed up check-in.

Some 12 million Ukrainians have

valid foreign passports, including 3.5 million biometric passports, said Maksym Sokoliuk Head of the State Migration Center of Ukraine. The EU-standard passports include biometric data stored in a chip.

Still, visa-free travel to the EU might not be hassle-free. Sushko from Europe Without Barriers said that "the percentage of refusals of entry might be significant."

### Lowering costs

Of course, being able to travel without a visa doesn't mean one

can afford to do so. The spending power of Ukrainians has been hurt by severe recession since 2014 and a cut in purchasing power with the two-thirds devaluation of the hryvnia.

Ukrainians will be encouraged to travel if more low-cost airlines go on the market.

The Dublin-based low-cost carrier Ryanair, Europe's biggest, has announced the launch of flights to Kyiv and Lviv, Omelyan said. "Ryanair highly appreciates the Ukrainian market, and the visa-free

factor, which implies that Ukrainians will travel more, is also taken into account," Omelyan said.

In October, Ryanair plans to launch 15 flights a week to Kyiv from four European airports – Eindhoven, London Stansted, Manchester and Stockholm. From September, Lviv airport will accept 16 weekly Ryanair flights from Berlin, Budapest, Eindhoven, Krakow, London, Munich, Memmingen and Wroclaw.

Ryanair plans to serve 250,000 customers in Kyiv and 260,000 customers in Lviv per year.

According to Omelyan, only about 4 percent of Ukrainians currently fly abroad each year, and the arrival of new carriers will help significantly reduce ticket prices. "The flights must cost between 20 and 40 euros, and then we hope that Ukrainians will travel more," the infrastructure minister said.

His goal is to get at least 10 to 15 percent of Ukrainians to travel by air this year.

Traveling to Europe by train, a much cheaper option, could also become more popular among Ukrainians. A train ticket from Kyiv to Przemysl in southeastern Poland costs only Hr 406 to Hr 574 (\$15.29 to \$21.62), while a ticket from Lviv to Przemysl is only Hr 172 to Hr 235 (\$6.48 to \$8.85). Omelyan says the trains are usually 90 percent full.

"We see the Polish destination is a success, and plan to launch new train routes to Poland, Slovakia and Romania," the minister said.

If Ukrainians will consider finances first and foremost, they will mainly choose neighboring countries that are cheaper, including Poland, Hungary or Slovakia. "Countries that have cheap air links to Ukraine – Italy, Spain and Greece – will also be popular this year," Omelyan said. ■

### What documents do Ukrainians need to enter the Schengen Area visa-free?



**Biometric passport**  
Only those who have new biometric passports can enter the Schengen Area visa-free.



### Return tickets / hotel booking / invitation

Ukrainians entering the Schengen Area will have to prove they have booked accommodation in Europe, and can stay no longer than 90 days every 180-day period.



### Insurance

Ukrainians will have to have insurance coverage for the whole period of their stay in the Schengen Area, with minimum coverage of 30,000 euros.



### Money

Customs officers can ask Ukrainian visitors to the Schengen Area to prove they have enough money to fund their stay in the European Union. Visitors from Ukraine should expect to spend between 30 and 90 euros per day in Europe.

By Kyiv Post. Source: Europe Without Barriers

## VOX populi

### How will you take advantage of visa-free travel to EU nations?



**Nataliya Parkulab,**  
*market analyst*  
"Visa-free travel will give the possibility to our family to travel throughout Europe spontaneously. I am

happy that my children will be able to see European culture and lifestyle and I think that we will often go on weekend tours to Europe."

Of God, Meshuggah, The Devin Townsend Project do not come to Ukraine, so my first visit to Europe will be to one of their concerts."



**Dmytro Nabytovych,**  
*economist*

"I got my biometric passport in December when there was no fuss. Visa-free regime will give me the advantage of

traveling across Europe and visiting local historical reconstruction festivals. Besides I do mountaineering so once the visa-free travel is introduced, I plan to first of all reach Alpine peaks."

(Last time) I visited Schengen countries 17 years ago. I did not consider travels to European countries because of bureaucratic drag. I just did not want to go to a consulate to prove that I am not an unemployed homeless prostitute who goes one way for easy money. If the visa-free travel is introduced I will travel to Europe more. One can go somewhere spontaneously if there are cheap tickets or friends would offer to join the trip."



**Mikheil Kerchaqmadze,**  
*political analyst from Georgia, which got visa-free travel with the EU in March*  
"I visited France in late April. With

me, I had only a biometric passport, the booking for hotel, the round-trip flight tickets, medical insurance and the information about my account from the bank. The visa officer checked my documents for maximum 30 seconds. Now I feel much stronger than I, as a citizen of Georgia, am a full member of wider Europe."



**Mykhaylo Kalyukin,**  
*journalist*

"I plan to get a biometric passport to go to Europe without visas. I have not been to Europe before. I chose

to travel to the countries where visas for Ukrainians are not required instead because I did not want to be bothered with all this visa bustle. I am a hard rock music lover but unfortunately such bands as Revocation, Between The Buried And Me, Lamb



**Zinaida Krivosheeva,**  
*freelancer*

"I plan to get a biometric passport because of the expected visa-free regime. Our family's first trip without visas will be to Portugal. Afterwards we plan to go to Poland.

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## Ukraine wins praise for great Eurovision

### City Life

WITH TOMA ISTOMINA  
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#### 4 German fans dress up as Eurovision stars of past

Guests at this year's Eurovision Song Contest in Kyiv often spotted Ukrainian singer Verka Serduchka and her gang hanging out around the main venue of the contest, dressed the same as they were at the Eurovision in 2007, where the singer came second.

But this wasn't the real Serduchka and her entourage – it was a group of four German Eurovision fans who every year dress up as Eurovision stars.

The four, Andreas Goesmann, Daniel Reding, Thorsten Driller and Diddy Ebbert, caught Eurovision mania several years ago, and have never gotten over it.

This is the sixth time they have come to watch the song contest live, meet foreign fans, and explore the host country. And each time they stand out from the crowd, dressing up like Eurovision legends, always picking a look that is easy to identify.

"If you're going to make a costume, you want people to recognize it," Goesmann said.

#### Big in Germany

Previously the friends have dressed up as Jedward, the famous duo from Ireland, and the Buranovskiye Babushki (the Buranovo Grannies) who represented Russia at the 2012 contest.

This time they chose to dress up as Verka Serduchka and her gang, who, they said, are very popular in Germany.

"If we have a Eurovision party, we always dress up as Serduchka," Goesmann said. "Over the last 15 years she has been one of our favorites."

Goesmann co-owns a bridal and evening dress shop. In winter, his tailors don't get many orders and he uses this time to design and make new costumes for his friends and himself.

To recreate Serduchka's famous hat with the star on top, they used a Christmas decoration. They also had to surf the internet to buy a pair of large-sized high-heeled shoes.

The four come from the small town of Warstein in central Germany, and had been friends for a while before finding they had a shared passion for impersonation.

After German singer Lena won the contest with her song "Satellite" in 2010, Eurovision 2011 was held in Düsseldorf, which is only 150 kilometers away from their hometown. It



A Eurovision staff member reacts as he prepares the stage for the next performer during a May 12 dress rehearsal of the grand final of the Eurovision Song Contest in the International Exhibition Centre in Kyiv. (Kostyantyn Chchernichkin)

BY ANNA YAKUTENKO,  
OLENA GONCHAROVA  
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The reviews are in: Ukraine hosted a successful, some even said flawless, Eurovision 2017.

While it faced its share of skepticism and scandals, including Russia's withdrawal from this year's contest after its entrant was banned for performing in Russian-annexed Crimea, the show met the expectations of many - from local businesses to tourists and TV watchers.

"Each year we have certain

remarks or complaints: about transport or logistics, security or other aspects. But the Eurovision in Kyiv was held flawlessly," Jon Ola San, the executive supervisor of the Eurovision Song Contest in 2017, was quoted as saying by the official Eurovision website.

The nation's public broadcaster, First National channel, said Ukraine sold 64,000 out of the 70,000 tickets for all nine Eurovision shows, including dress rehearsals, while 230 million viewers tuned in to watch the contest broadcast live from Kyiv all over the world.

#### Money comes in

The \$32 million budgeted for the contest was also aimed at boosting the nation's image abroad and attracting tourists.

As many as 20,000 foreigners came to Kyiv during the period of May 5-9, when the Eurovision was held, not including journalists and the [participant countries' delegations, according to the State Border Service.

Some 40,000 visitors from other Ukrainian cities also flocked to the capital during the contest.

Oleksiy Reznikov of the tourism department of Kyiv City

Administration told the Kyiv Post that Ukraine proved it "is able to conduct a high-level international event. Now the world sees us not only as a country with a hybrid war, but as a strong nation and state."

Kyiv city officials allocated \$7.6 million to the state budget to host the contest, but it's too early to say how much was made, Iryna Zolotar of the Kyiv City Administration said. Each tourist was expected to spend at least \$500 in Ukraine, which would be \$10 million in revenues if 20,000 visitors did, indeed, arrive.

more Eurovision on page 13

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more Fans on page 13





Eurovision fan, Germany's Andreas Goesmann, poses in Kyiv on May 13, dressed up like Ukrainian singer Verka Serduchka.

## City Life: Time to dress up as stars

Fans from page 12

was a great opportunity to start watching the shows live, and they haven't skipped a single year since then.

### Here for fun

The four are not big fans of ballads. This year they preferred the energetic performances of the Romanian and Belarusian contestants to the winning song of Portugal's Salvador Sobral.

Nevertheless, they understand why Sobral charmed the audience.

"He (Sobral) made me cry, it was really nice," Driller said.

Germany, for the third time in a row, did poorly in the contest, coming second last with only six points. However, the fans said Eurovision is not about winning - it's about having fun.

"We (Germans) don't really compete. We watch the show and enjoy it," Driller said.

The fans said that organization of the song contest in Kyiv had been perfect - apart from the ticket sales.

"It was a disaster with the tickets, because it wasn't easy to get them," Goesmann said.

They said they had enjoyed visiting Ukraine, as people are friendly and welcoming here. They were impressed by the Pyrohovo Folk Architecture and Life Museum, and also adored Ukrainian borscht and dumplings.

And while this time next year the group of friends is going to Lisbon, they said they hope to come back to Ukraine again soon. ■

# Tourists, fans, businesses say Eurovision met expectations

Eurovision from page 12

But Eurovision clearly gave a temporary boost to local businesses.

Kirill Kislyakov, co-owner of three bars in the heart of Kyiv, said that he profited from Eurovision. More patrons came to his bars and two large groups of foreigners threw big "generous" parties.

Ukrainian restaurateur Dmytro Borysov, whose family of restaurants includes 12 venues, shares the sentiment.

"Our clientele increased at least by 30 percent," Borysov explains. "Also, since we had a food court in the fan zone on Sofiyska Square that started working from late April, the number of the visitors increased drastically, since there were 10,000-12,000 people who tried our food there."

Borysov says that the foreigners enjoyed their cuisine.

"Visitors ate 3.5 tons of borscht served in a cabbage in one of our restaurants over 10 days," Borysov recalls. "They were happy with our Mediterranean oysters served with viburnum sauce for 3.5 euros, which is two times cheaper than anywhere else in Europe, as well as our Chicken Kyiv and varenyky stuffed with cherries."

City hotels said they didn't see more guests than usual, with May always being a busy month. However, the clientele was different this time.

Lyudmila Rebikova, the head of sales in a 300-room Tourist hotel near the Eurovision venue said that, during the time of the contest, around 95 percent of their guests were Eurovision fans.

### Visitors' feedback

The Ukrainian capital also won the hearts of the Eurovision performers: most of the contestants shared their excitement about the city during the huge carpet event on May 7.



Girls play as people enjoy the opening ceremony for a Eurovision 2017 fan zone on Sofiyska Square in Kyiv on April 30. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)

"It's a nice city with a lot of beautiful people," Naviband from Belarus said.

Israeli contestant Imri Ziv called Kyiv "a different kind of European" city, adding that he loved it and will "definitely come back."

For Eugeniu Popovici, a TV editor at Moldova 1 TV Channel, it was his second Eurovision. He was in Stockholm last year, and said it was interesting to see how everything was organized in Kyiv. He is now planning his next visits to the Ukrainian capital. He said, however, that he felt there was a lack of a "Eurovision atmosphere" in the city.

"It was a beautiful (contest) and I liked that the organizers tried to bring national identity into the spotlight," Popovici told the Kyiv Post. "However, I felt a bit uncomfortable with the huge police presence. And it was dif-

ficult to get around the city, because many streets close to the arena were closed."

At the same time, Kyiv's metro - the main means of transportation for many locals - was praised by Eurovision fans.

Nataliya Makogon, a representative of Kyiv subway, said they were "surprised" to learn that visitors enjoyed their rides in the metro and the fact that they worked late hours.

During the Eurovision, Kyiv promoted itself as a "safe, beautiful, tourist city."

According to Kyiv city police, more than 10,000 police officers ensured safety during the contest. Police said only 10 tourists reported theft or fraud. However, some say police lacked competence and English language skills to help visitors.

Pavel Duganov from Chisinau in Moldova, who has traveled to every Eurovision contest since 2012, said that police officers often failed to provide instructions to the tourists. "At the same time, they closed their eyes on a number of minor traffic violations," Duganov said.

Oleksandr Kharebin, the former executive producer of Eurovision, who was a part of team who quit amid scandal three months before the contest, said that the contest had not been properly promoted.

According to Kharebin, almost half as many Ukrainians watched the show this year as in 2005. Also, "many seats were free during the rehearsals, while the final was sold out."

"Basically, Eurovision was held despite the top managers, not thanks to them," he said. ■



# Gregory Porter



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May 22



### Night of Serenades on the Roof

(Courtesy)

A chamber orchestra will perform serenades by Mozart, Tchaikovsky and more at the opening party of the club Roof, located on the rooftop of a building in Kyiv. A glass of wine will suit the concert perfectly.

**Night of Serenades on the Roof. May 22, 7 p.m. Roof outdoor club (37-41 Sichovyh Striltsiv St.) Hr 150-300**

May 17-21



(Oleg Petrasjuk)

### Arsenal International Book Festival

The Arsenal International Book Festival is an annual fair that lasts for almost a week. Visitors will be able to buy books in Ukrainian, English and Russian, and attend workshops and discussions. The international part of the festival includes lectures by world-famous writers, illustrators, and editors from 26 countries.

**Arsenal International Book Festival. May 17-21 (12 Lavrska St.) Hr 60-200 For detailed schedule go to [www.artarsenal.in.ua/en/visit](http://www.artarsenal.in.ua/en/visit)**



May 25

(Courtesy of the Queen of Ukraine)

### Queen of Ukraine Beauty Pageant

Even though the Queen of Ukraine pageant is mostly about beauty, this year every participant will have to introduce a project called "Stop War and Violence." Also, for the first time in the competition's history, the men's magazine Playboy will also select its own winner.

**Queen of Ukraine Beauty Pageant. May 25, 7 p.m. Freedom Event Hall (134 Kyrylivska St.) Hr 300-1,500**



May 27

### Kyiv Euro Marathon 2017

Runners from more than 10 countries are to take part in the Kyiv Euro Marathon 2017 – a series of events of different distances including, a 1-mile (1.8-kilometer) charity run, and 6-kilometer, 12-kilometer, half marathon (21 kilometers) and marathon (42 kilometers) races. The start and finish are near Kyiv's Olympiyskiy stadium.

**Kyiv Euro Marathon 2017. May 27, NSC Olympiyskiy (55 Velyka Vasylkivska St.) Hr 100 – 2,000 To register go to [www.athletic-events.com/en/events/337](http://www.athletic-events.com/en/events/337)**

### Craft Beer Fest

Every day of this festival will be packed with different activities, but all with a unifying theme – a love of good beer. Festival visitors will be able to ample beer and learn to distinguish bad beer from good, and discover brewing methods. Well-known beer makers will tell interesting stories and let visitors in on professional brewers' secrets.

**Craft Beer Fest. May 26, 4 p.m. – 11 p.m. May 27, 11 a.m. – 11 p.m. May 28, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. VDNH (1 Akademika Glushkova Ave.) Hr 100**



(Courtesy)

May 26

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**Country Director  
 Donau Soja Organization**

**Location: Kyiv, Ukraine; Full time position**

**Donau Soja (DS)** is establishing a legal entity – representative office in Kiev and is seeking for Country Director who will be responsible for further development of the organization in Ukraine. DS is a non-profit association which has subscribed itself to increase the production, processing and use of soya in Europe. DS currently has more than 270 members in 21 European countries who are all devoted to increasing cultivation and use of high-quality non-GM soya in Europe. More information about DS here - <http://www.donausoja.org/en/home/>

**Tasks:** The DS Country Director shall coordinate for the DS Organisation all necessary tasks in relation to the activities of DS Organisation in Ukraine, which include (but are not limited to): Servicing, maintaining and increasing DS business activities; Development and implementation of strategic plan for Ukraine; Introducing of existing and/or new partners and business associates to the Donau/ Europe Soya quality standards and quality system; Increasing number of new DS members; Networking with the agricultural and business leaders, government, associations and NGO sector, research and scientific institutions; Monitoring the situation in the areas of the DS relevant topics; Building up association image in the country.

**Qualifications:** 10 years of experience in related industry sector (agro and /or food/feed sector); 7 years of proven working experience at senior/leading positions; experience in business development and trade/sales, planning and strategy development, process improvement; Good network in Ukraine and experience in work with agriculture/food/feed companies, Ukrainian institutions and organisations; Prior knowledge and experience in food, agribusiness or trade-related activities; Representative person with integrity, result oriented, with business developer/entrepreneurial and communication skills; Very good knowledge of English language; Advanced computer user.

More details on the link: <https://www.kyivpost.com/classifieds/jobs/country-director>  
 Deadline for applications – May 31, 2017; [ukraine@donausoja.org](mailto:ukraine@donausoja.org); + 38 073 481 20 08 (Inna Ilienکو)



**Professionals for Reform Support Mechanism (PRSM)** provides human resource support – from managers to technical experts - to critical reform initiatives undertaken by national governmental agencies. PRSM is currently seeking candidates to fill the following expert positions for the Government of Ukraine.

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Please visit: <https://www.kyivpost.com/classifieds/jobs/finance-assistant-3> for more details.

Candidates are asked to submit a CV and cover letter in English to [RecruitmentFST@dai.com](mailto:RecruitmentFST@dai.com). Applications will be reviewed and interviews held on the rolling basis. Please reference the job for which you are applying in your e-mail's subject line.

Only applicants selected for interviews will be contacted. No telephone inquiries will be accepted.



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# Life with Ukraine's elite soldiers

War from page 2

"All right boys, give them some hell," the company's commander, Captain Andriy Shkurobskiy, code name "Shaman," says into his walkie-talkie. "It's time to shut them up at last."

A Ukrainian grenade launcher opens up, and the exchange of fire gradually fades away. The fighting is over — for now.

## Outgunned

"The militants have no shortage of weapons and ammo," the company commander says. "Anti-tank guided missile systems, armored vehicles, machine guns, bazookas, large caliber mortars — anything you like. Recently, they apparently got the AGS-30 automatic grenade guns, so they can easily hit us from distances of up to 1,800 meters. We don't have such weaponry yet."

Like most of the soldiers under his command, Captain Shkurobskiy has fought in all of the main battles of Russia's war in the Donbas, serving in the war zone from the start. In three years of war, his unit has endured many tragedies, including treason. Some of the captain's fellow paratroopers went over to the enemy in the chaotic start of the war in 2014.

"There was a time when we used to overhear the militant's radio traffic, hearing someone's commands in pure Ukrainian. Try to imagine how freaked out we were then," he says.

## Deadly games

The militant forces standing against the Shaman's company are now led by a warlord calling himself "Rambo" in radio communications. He senselessly throws his troops against Ukrainian machine guns and minefields, the soldiers say.

"We stand here in defense," says Nazar Petruk, a scout platoon commander. "So we're always ready for uninvited guests from the other side — the militant commandos are trying to knock us out from here. The local topography here makes it



A Ukrainian soldier from the 25th Dnipropetrovsk Airborne Brigade guards positions near Donetsk Oblast's Mayorsk, more than 600 kilometers southeast of Kyiv, on May 14. (Volodymyr Petrov)

difficult for us to detect and destroy them easily all the time. There are lots of places to hide from fire."

Almost every night, or even during days when there is mist, the paratroopers come up against infiltration groups trying to get across the minefield to take over Ukrainian positions, Petruk says.

"Sometimes we detect their movement via thermal scopes — and then me and my scouts secretly go out to ambush them, avoiding our own traps in the night."

Very often the militant infiltrators fail — and are blown up by Ukrainian

mines and trip wires in no man's land. In this case the paratrooper scouts have even more dangerous mission — to protect their mine layers as they reset traps.

"The mine layer actually walks through the minefield with just a thin stick in his hand, trying to find any traps left by the militants. It's a deadly cat-and-mouse game, and also immensely psychologically stressful for everyone," Petruk says.

## 'Mostly going well'

As the situation stabilizes and the guns go silent, the soldiers relax a bit.

"Things are mostly going well here at the frontline," soldier Oleksandr Kuznetsov says. "We have enough weapons, food, equipment. However, there are problems with leave — a lot of us haven't been home for many months."

Almost all of the soldiers are around 20 years old and proud to belong to an elite Ukrainian paratroop brigade. "Our army has taken a terrific step forward during these three years of war," Shkurobskiy says. "For instance, all the soldiers in my company have collimating sights on their rifles. Back in 2014 we couldn't even dream about that."

Since the spring of 2015, the situation with weapons, medicine, and food supplies for the army has improved greatly, Shkurobskiy says, and it sounds odd when some army units complain about shortages.

## Trench life

When silence falls, it's a good time for commanders to check on the men under their command. Shkurobskiy goes along his company positions, peering into bunkers and trenches. He sees a soldier without a helmet.

"Hey, get your pot on your head!" he shouts angrily. "Where do you think you are, on the beach?"

The soldier forces a smile and puts on his helmet.

The company's network of trenches, dugouts and firing positions lead for a hundred meters along the frontline. As the stalemated war drags into its fourth year, the paratroopers, trained to enter battle from the sky, have had to get used to digging into the ground.

When off duty, soldiers sleep and rest on wooden bunk beds they have constructed for themselves inside dugouts, which are lit

dimly with lanterns. The air inside one dugout is warm and moist — someone is drying his washing on a cast-iron stove.

Sometimes they sleep right in the heavy machine gun nest so when an attack starts, soldiers can be back in combat within seconds.

Soldiers have started to make their underground shelters more homey. On the wooden walls of their dugouts, where they hang their grenade launchers and Kalashnikov rifles, they also put photos of their loved ones and children's drawings. Those lucky enough to have a better-equipped, larger dugout with an electricity supply have TV sets (although these only receive Russian channels) and sometimes even an automatic washing machine.

But they eat well.

"Our cook is actually a former restaurant chef," the captain explains. "So we're fed fabulously. And mind you, being an army cook is even harder than being a soldier." The cook has to prepare three meals for the whole company and then goes to bed at midnight, waking up at 4 a.m. to make breakfast.

Apart from battling the Russian-backed forces, the paratroopers in Mayorsk are fighting the trench soldier's perennial foes — rain and mud.

Soldiers often have to sweep muddy water off the wooden floors of their emplacements — at times conditions are reminiscent of those in the World War I trenches.

The soldiers meet the adverse elements with some military philosophy. "A paratrooper doesn't get wet in the rain," one soldier says while walking through a pouring spring shower at the frontline on May 14.

"It just braces him up." ■



Soldiers from the 25th Dnipropetrovsk Airborne Brigade take their defensive positions in dugouts near Mayorsk, Ukraine, some 600 kilometers southeast of Kyiv and only a few hundred meters from Russian-backed enemy soldiers. (Volodymyr Petrov)