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December 6, 2013

## Splintering Nation

### Kyiv's riot police brutal, 'begrudging'

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Whether in their blue urban camouflage or pitch-black uniforms, their faces masked or unmasked beneath large black helmets, their presence can be intimidating.

The rubber truncheons hanging at their sides or carried in their hands as their heavyboots stomp in sync only adds to the fear factor.

"They are a 'chip-on-your-shoulder' class of people, certainly begrudging toward latte drinking, smartphone using... young intelligent types. They are the best and fiercest of those who made it through military training," said Mark Galeotti, a New York University professor and post-Soviet security affairs expert who has researched security forces in Russia and Ukraine.

They are the Berkut, or Golden Eagles, the special riot police of Ukraine's Interior Ministry. Images out of Kyiv over the past week have shown them violently and indiscriminately bludgeoning masked civilians believed to be hired thugs, peaceful activ- →8

### Capital outflows to outweigh any 'friendly' money from Russia, China

BY MARK RACHKEVYCH  
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Investors didn't take kindly to Ukraine's rejection of a far-reaching free trade deal with the European Union. Immediately after the debacle in Vilnius on Nov. 28-29, and continuing this week, prices for Ukrainian eurobonds – rated as "junk" by credit worthiness agencies – dropped as their yields spiked keeping Ukraine's sovereign debt the third most expensive in the world after Argentina and Venezuela.

Yield-to-maturity on Ukrainian eurobonds were as high as 19 percent, but were down to above 12 percent as of Dec. 4. →2



Protesters wave Ukrainian flags during a protest in front of Ukraine's Parliament on Dec. 3. The Ukrainian government survived a no-confidence vote after a brutal police crackdown on protests that were sparked by the government's rejection of a historic EU pact. However, the vote failed to quell civil unrest in the country, as protesters continue to occupy government buildings in Kyiv. (AFP)

BY KATYA GORCHINSKAYA  
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On Dec. 3, when the government survived a no-confidence vote in parliament, thousands of infuriated protesters marched towards the presidential administration. A key demand of theirs was for the government to resign after it rejected a far-reaching political and trade deal with the European Union at the last moment. Undeterred, the protesters met face-to-face with rows of riot police, who were just as determined to protect the nation's top officeholders as the strikers were to

defend their rights and rebel against government policies.

There were no clashes that day, unlike previous days in which dozens on both sides have been injured. The two groups just stood there on opposite sides. The gap between them symbolized a country that is unraveling. Divisions are appearing, cracks in the nation are beginning to show. But, unlike the traditional linguistic divides between Russian and Ukrainian, the cracks in national cohesion are many, and the ways to bridge them are few and distant – at least for the moment.

The most visible crack is between

the government and its people. "Yes, we have legitimate power but a crisis of legitimacy," says Daniel Bilak, Managing Partner of CMS Cameron McKenna in Kyiv. "There is an enormous disconnect between the government and the people."

Perhaps the most telling symbol was President Viktor Yanukovich's departure to China on Dec. 3 as thousands continued to protest on the streets against his government's failure to sign an association agreement with the European Union, triggering the EuroMaidan protests on Nov. 21 and a police crackdown on Nov. 30 that

breathed renewed energy, commitment and anger into the anti-government demonstrations.

"It was not an easy decision by the president to leave Kyiv now," says Foreign Minister Leonid Kozhara. But he said it was needed to raise money and attract business. However, photos of the president examining the Terracotta Army in a museum on the first day of this visit as a political crisis continued to unroll at home, was taken as a mockery by many of the protesters.

Groups at home and abroad are saying that only negotiations →3

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**Hr 8.28 to \$1**  
Dec. 5 market rate



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# Short-term financial planning no longer sustainable for government

→1 "Investors would've preferred for the Vilnius (association) agreement to be signed," Tomas Fiala, chief executive officer of Dragon Capital, said at a conference on Dec. 3 organized by the Kyiv Post. "There's no country in Africa that borrows more expensively than Ukraine."

The gloomy investor sentiment is a reflection of what Kyiv-based investment boutique Investment Capital Ukraine calls a "painful extension of the status quo," or a muddling through policy that favors decisions that focus mostly of bonds – to keep the dollar-pegged hryvnia currency stable.

The policy runs counter to what other countries have done to recover from the so-called Great Recession that reached a global scale in 2008-2009. Instead of loosening monetary policy and letting the hryvnia reach a realistic level of around Hr 10 to \$1, and promoting foreign direct investment which would in the mid- to long-term lessen the burden to borrow, Ukraine has gone against the grain.

The idea is that by enticing investors to park their money in Ukraine, production capacity would blossom in the mid-term for local and export markets, which in the long-run would balance out Ukraine's \$13 billion current account deficit.

Already in its fifth consecutive quarter of recession, Kyiv faces \$9 billion in foreign debt repayments next year, according to Fiala. Foreign reserves at the end of November are near \$19 billion, enough to barely cover less than three months of imports. Meanwhile, the nation also is slated to import about \$13 billion more than it exports next year, said Fiala.

He noted that in the first 10 months of this year foreign direct investment (FDI) sunk by more than 50 percent to \$2.4 billion whereas last year it stood at \$5.4 billion in the same period. Next year, investors are expected to follow a wait-and-see policy with the presidential election campaign kicking into gear.

Moreover, said Serhiy Yevtushenko, director of the state-run InvestUkraine agency, investor trust has tanked fol-



Tomas Fiala, chief executive officer of Dragon Capital, and Serhiy Yevtushenko, director of InvestUkraine, a state-owned agency to facilitate investment projects, at the Kyiv Post Tiger conference on Dec. 3. (Anastasiya Vlasova)

lowing Ukraine's last-minute decision to postpone signing the EU treaty.

"As a person who deals with investors and investments... Trust and predictability are two key items that are absolutely necessary for positive investment decisions," said Yevtushenko. "Perhaps this was the right decision, but the fact that it was made in the last week (before the Vilnius summit), was the biggest mistake which will seriously place doubt on Ukraine's trustworthiness in the investment community, among international partners, and towards the nation's economic policy."

Thus, Ukraine must make clearly visible and short-term fiscal decisions that investors will understand to "create a bit of a positive window for the next year," said Fiala, adding not much time remains before a level will be reached "when the spiral will be difficult to stop."

Fully realizing this, Kyiv's leadership has gone "shopping" for cash, said Oleg Ustenko of The Bleyzer Foundation at the Kyiv Post Dec. 3 conference.

Delegations have gone to China and the EU with Russia next on the list.

Reuters reported on Dec. 5 that Yanukovich signed a potential \$8 billion deal with China during his three-day visit there, but this is mostly long-term agreements, not the short-term cash that Kyiv needs in the range of \$10-\$15 billion.

But even if Ukraine gets money from Russia or China, it won't be enough to cover the wave of capital flight that is expected after the summit in Vilnius, said Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski.

"I'm surprised to hear that Ukraine expects funding from a country that introduced economic sanctions (Russia)," said Sikorski in Vilnius. "Well, good luck. I'm willing to bet that an outflow of capital from Ukraine will be greater than any financial support (from Russia)."

In a note to investors this week, ICU stated that any new loans from either the Kremlin or China "would provide little improvement to the economic

fundamentals that have been long deteriorating."

Fiala also added that any "friendly" money Kyiv gets from Russia "will be only government or political money which won't be sufficient to balance out the outflow of private investment both local and international."

That prospect was not lost on Deputy Prime Minister Oleksandr Vilkul who stated the nation is looking to shore up its macroeconomic outlook. Vilkul said the nation is pursuing a "road map" which entails resuming talks to unlock a cheap loan from the International Monetary Fund.

Whatever choice Kyiv makes by the end of the year, must be clear to investors, "otherwise business just won't understand," said Yevtushenko. "Everybody will wait, and we'll have investment postponed (indefinitely), and this will last until Ukraine makes a determinant decision."

Kyiv Post editor Mark Rachkevych can be reached at rachkevych@kyivpost.com.

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# Looking for a way out

→1 can resolve the political crisis. Ukraine's first three presidents Leonid Kravchuk, Leonid Kuchma and Viktor Yushchenko expressed support for roundtable talk in their letter of appeal on Dec. 4.

"The way out has to be found through an open dialogue with civic society. The solution to the political crisis needs to be urgently found in the format of a national round table," their joint statement reads.

But it's easier said than done. There is an acute lack of communication inside the political elite. "How do you communicate with them (political elite) if they can't talk to each other? (It's) easier to meet ambassadors than honorable members of the Verkhovna Rada," said Marek Siwec, a Polish Member of the European Parliament.

The political opposition and the government alike are each stuck in their respective bubbles and exchange accusations from there — another major crack in society.

"The two sides are becoming increasingly entrenched in their positions and in a very high stakes game where the room for compromise is narrowing. Both view the current conflict as a 'winner-takes-it-all' scenario," Timothy Ash of Standard Bank wrote in a note from London.

It's still a question of who will agree to and be able to mediate the process. On Dec. 5, when many European foreign ministers arrived to Kyiv for a conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Poland's Radoslaw Sikorski and Sweden's Carl

Bildt were asked to mediate. It was not clear whether there is a chance they will agree.

But even if a mediator is found, the sides are still many miles apart in their positions. Thousands in the streets are demanding the president's resignation. Impeachment is not an option as the procedure is not even clearly outlined in legislation, and in any case it would have to involve the parliament, which failed to even convene on Dec. 5, the date of the latest scheduled plenary session.

But Arseniy Yatseniuk, one of the opposition leaders, says the state of the parliament is just a symptom. "This is not a parliamentary crisis, this is a general political and economic crisis, it cannot be solved in parliament because decisions are made elsewhere," he said at a briefing.

The opposition's demands, he said, were resignation of the government, release and rehabilitation of political prisoners and the arrest of riot policemen who took part in beating peaceful demonstrators and journalists on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1.

But the Party of Regions categorically disagrees. "This suggestion is catastrophic for our state," said Oleksandr Yefremov, leader of its faction in parliament. He says the government and the opposition need to "find consensus for taking decisions."

Another crack that is getting more visible is the divide between the opposition and the people. Over the past week as the political crisis became critical, leaders of the opposition were



Regular and special riot police officers beat up a protester on Dec. 1 near the Presidential Administration building. Hundreds more were beaten and hospitalized on that day, including at least 40 journalists. (UNIAN)

accused of failing to lead and come up with a workable plan, frequently failing to be at the epicenter of events and formulating a coherent set of demands.

Student strike leaders, for example, are saying that opposition leaders just show up on Independence Square and other areas where protesters are to give orders and disappear. They pick up the phone, ask for a call back and then switch off their phones.

"Nobody listens to us," says Bogodar Kovaliv, one of the leaders of the student strikes. This disconnect has led to demands that EuroMaidan, the

epicenter of protests, should be free of politicians and their symbols — and this is one of the major differences between the current uprising and the 2004 Orange Revolution that overturned a rigged presidential election.

Siwec, the Polish member of the European Parliament, called it "the Spanish syndrome."

"People in the street don't care about politicians, leaders... they don't want to listen to politicians," says Siwec. He says this is a protest against both the Orange government and the White-and-Blue, the colors of the Party of

Regions. People are now disappointed in both.

In this chaos, some people are already starting to see silver linings, though. Yaroslav Hrytsak, a prominent historian, says he sees the beginning of Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation, hence the number of Polish politicians involved in Ukraine's political processes. He says it's similar to the German-Polish reconciliation of the past decade, which gave new momentum to the European Union.

But "before Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation, we must reach Ukrainian-Ukrainian reconciliation," Hrytsak says. And that means bridging the many divides that are yet growing and are starting to hurt the economy.

Bankers said there is evidence that the central bank is trying to manage a weaker currency to conserve foreign reserves in anticipation of things to come. In the streets, the exchange rate jumped to Hr 8.5 per dollar, hitting a new low since the 2008 global financial crisis. The demand for hard currency tripled over the week.

Ukrainian news agency reported that PrivatBank, Ukraine's biggest by assets, limited the sale of dollars to \$100 per day, but the report was swiftly refuted by the bank. All these panic signs will have to be confronted once a national compromise is reached — and that day still seems to be a long way off at the moment.

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## Google: philosophy & values



**DMYTRO SHOLOMKO**  
Country Manager,  
Google Ukraine,  
EBA Board Member

**Can we start with an introduction of yourself and an overview of your company?  
What is your company's strategic positioning on Ukraine's market?**

In Ukraine, the positioning of Google does not differ from our global stance. Our mission in Ukraine is the same as everywhere: organize the world's information and make it accessible to everyone. With that, we're aiming to make all Google products and services, available to our users globally, to be localized for Ukrainians. By localization I mean not only interface translation, but complex compliance to all local laws and requirements.

I've been working in Google since 2006, firstly as Business Development Manager, analysing the perspectives of development for Google in Ukraine, then, from 2009 — as Country Manager, leading the team of people who manage our relations with clients and partners in the country.

**Google is one of the most innovative and successful companies in the world. Could you please share the main steps for getting this success?**

There is one very short simple rule behind it: focus on your users, not on your financial results. Google simply creates its services to fit the maximum needs of internet users, in most cases — without an aim to make them profitable. Google also creates own technological ecosystem, where its new offers are fitting perfectly into the set of existing services, making user's experience seamless.

**What key market drivers are positively impacting your business?**

Ukraine has one of the best data transfer backbone systems in the world, Internet here is very

fast and quite cheap, comparative to other countries. In addition, Ukraine has an extremely high literacy rate, and our people are actively embracing new technologies. Besides, more and more businesses, especially in the regions and SMBs, are digitalizing themselves, making the Internet in Ukraine not only a communications and entertainment platform, but also a business mechanism. These are most important external drivers for us.

**How can you compare the latest trading figures to the same period last year?  
What do you attribute the upturn/downturn?**

Unfortunately I cannot share with you our detailed numbers, but all I can say that our local revenues and usage figures for the most important products have been growing with double digits for several years in a row, and there is no sign of slowing down. The potential of the Internet for both users and businesses here isn't depleted and won't be in the nearest future. Also many Ukrainian companies, big and small, are export-focused, so when their products and services created inside Ukraine are being sold outside of the country, this gives them additional potential to develop and expand, and we're helping them in this task.

**Have you launched any new initiatives to combat the current challenges?**

In current situation in Ukraine, our main mission is to make sure that all our products are working properly, without interruptions, so everyone in this country can share their thoughts and get information from others, to have an unbiased understanding of what's going on. For example, recently we've increased the capacity of Youtube for Ukraine, and we see that this service is now one of most important tools for Ukrainians for getting and exchanging information and opinions of the situation in the country.

**If you look ahead five years, how do you see the future of Google?**

Very bright :). Google is on the frontline of innovations in the world, making revolutionary products and services that change the lives of people, giving them better conditions. I expect we will continue to work in this fashion — launch new products, contribute to in-

frastructure development around the world, launch social initiatives that will help people to embrace new technologies faster, and so on. As I said earlier, our main goal for Ukraine is to make all Google products and services localized for Ukrainian users. And I hope to achieve this much faster, within 5 years.

**What are your top three priorities for the next 12 months?**

We are planning to expand our team, and I want to make sure that we will hire best people for us here. Besides, we saw very strong interest in educational programs around new technologies for business and society in Ukraine, so we will launch several interesting initiatives on this front. Besides, we will continue to launch new products for Ukraine, but unfortunately I cannot announce the new launches before they officially happen, so please wait for announcements from us soon :).

**How do you cooperate with your colleagues from different countries and do you all have the same philosophy and values despite different mentality?**

This is core of Google's philosophy — we operate without boundaries, and create the teams for special tasks from different people around the world. We don't keep in Ukraine all the people responsible for operations in Ukraine, and specialists from Dublin, London, Paris, Zurich, Warsaw and Moscow are supporting us here on a daily basis. Besides, for special projects and new launches, more people are joining us. As an example, when we were launching a local billing system for Ukraine, engineers from Sydney, Bangalore and California were actively participating in the project. So this involves the cooperation of different people with different mentalities — but sharing same values and the way how Google lives — and we like this :).

**What has been the most important management lesson you have learned?**

Always hire people so good for the job you won't fire them later. Terminating somebody's contract is an extremely painful situation for the person who is responsible for that, and I, as a people manager, really hate to do it. But my team

is very good, I'm really confident this won't happen in the part of Google I'm responsible for.

**Who do you most admire as a business leader and why? Do you have role models?**

I don't have admirations in the business environment, I'm trying to get inspiration from other parts of world society and culture, like from musicians and artists. But there are a lot of people I simply respect, because I know them personally and I know they're genius: I've met Larry Page a few times in my life, and I believe he is genius, I also have most respect for Eric Schmidt, whom I know personally quite well. But, as I said, businessmen aren't role models for me.

**What inspires you? Do you have a kind of a 'dream' project?**

At Google I really like the fact that I can change the world for people around me, with launches of new services and initiatives. I like the feeling that something I've done is very good for people, that feeling inspires me a lot. I also like to travel to new places and meet new people, my work gives me the opportunity to do that and I'm very grateful to Google for that.

To make Ukraine a part of the modern world's technological society is my 'dream' project.

**Could you share the main methods for motivating your team?**

Firstly, I'm trying to hire people with strong self-motivation, so they won't need to be motivated additionally :) Then I'm trying to give my team the biggest level of freedom they can have, so they will have full responsibility for their work's results and enjoy their success. And also I'm trying to mentor people to have big goals and dreams in their lives, not only in career, and to work towards achieving these big goals in life. I think these are the main methods.



More on [www.eba.com.ua](http://www.eba.com.ua)

## Editorial

## Back from brink

There is only one way forward for the nation: through a roundtable consensus that is mediated. The idea, despite being mindlessly repeated by all sides, has not really caught on with both the opposition and the government issuing ultimatums in a display of reality detachment.

But it looked the same during the Orange Revolution, a peaceful uprising in 2004 that reversed a flawed election. Mediators were found, accepted by both sides, and a compromise was reached by setting up a new vote in which Viktor Yushchenko beat the cheater, Viktor Yanukovich, to lead the country for five years.

History will have to repeat again. Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt and Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski have been named as potential mediators. We urge top European officials to take up this challenge.

It won't be easy to bridge the huge divides. The opposition wants the president and government to resign. The government has refused, however, especially after Prime Minister Mykola Azarov and his Cabinet survived a no-confidence vote in parliament on Dec. 3.

But time is against them. Every day that the protests persist, political risks increase, and the economy, already in recession, suffers more and more. The government's debts, such as wage and pension arrears, which already amount to some \$10 billion, are increasing, diminishing the government's chances for survival.

Business has not viewed attempts to shop for cash in China, Russia and the EU very optimistically. The economic challenges are now getting to the point where even a competent and experienced set of policy-makers would have a hard time handling them, let alone the current team led by First Deputy Prime Minister Serhiy Arbuzov.

Considering the aforementioned, all sides should stop digging themselves and the nation into the ground and regroup. They should set aside personal ambitions, choose a set of mediators and get down to work. There are thousands in the streets who are waiting for that to happen.

## Provocateurs

Over the past two weeks the words provocation and provocateur have been used a lot, without precise definition and frequently used to justify unjustifiable responses.

Prime Minister Mykola Azarov is among those guilty of blaming "provocateurs" for everything from the disorder that led to the police crackdown on Nov. 30 to the violence during the Dec. 1 demonstrations to the subsequent takeover of Kyiv City Hall.

Azarov throws the word around as if calling something "a provocation" entitles the authorities to do whatever they want.

It is much better to be precise, since merely insulting someone or passing them on the street can be labeled a "provocation" by whoever takes offense.

On Nov. 30, all the evidence shows that police were the instigators of a deliberate and violent crackdown on 400 or so demonstrators. Eyewitnesses and video showed indiscriminate beatings. If there were "provocations," such as the throwing of bottles or stones at the attacking police, more likely demonstrators were trying to defend themselves. If the demonstrators launched the attacks on police, then the response – chasing people down the street and beating them indiscriminately – is entirely out of proportion to the "provocation."

As for Dec. 1, we'd definitely like to know who commandeered a bulldozer and three Molotov cocktails at police. Those are illegal, violent and potentially dangerous acts that can be punished, not merely "provocations." But were the thugs state-sponsored, merely renegades or opposition-backed? It appears that the violence against police that day was designed for disorder, not to break police lines, suggesting that the opposition had nothing to do with the instigators.

As for the takeover of City Hall, it is indeed a "provocation" of sorts, seemingly sanctioned by the opposition. But the same word "provocation" can be used to describe President Viktor Yanukovich's decision to keep an unelected mayor in office for years and block scheduling – through parliament – of an election.

Azarov, it may be said, is Ukraine's chief "provocateur" when he threatens to cut off financing to three western Ukrainian regions for exercising their free speech and free association rights in support of the EuroMaidan, which enter their 16th day on Dec. 6.

Azarov continues to "provoke" by offering negotiation without compromise and denigrating the motives of people on the street.

Only straight talk and compromises on both sides will help this nation out of the tense and dangerous stalemate in which it now finds itself – a made-at-home conflict that now Ukraine's failing and uncompromising leaders can't seem to solve themselves without outside help.

One way to start is by stop using the word "provocation" so loosely and as if it justifies any response the offended party wants to take.

**NEWS ITEM:** First Deputy Prime Minister Serhiy Arbuzov said on Dec. 2 that Ukraine needs 10 billion euros worth of loans to mitigate the risks from European integration, and hopes to sign a road map that would address this issue. His assessment of Ukraine's financial needs came as a surprise because for the past several weeks Ukraine's top officials, including President Viktor Yanukovich, said the nation needs 160 billion euros to address all the risks.



**NEWS ITEM:** Leaving behind chaos at home and thousands of people protesting in the streets against government policies, President Viktor Yanukovich left for China on Dec. 3 to seek loans and business deals. He examined the Terracotta Army and visited an aircraft factory on the first day of his three-day visit, leaving government buildings blocked at home and parliament paralyzed by infighting.

## Euro Parliament recognizes people as true owners of nation's European future



JACEK SARYUSZ-WOLSKI

Next week the European Parliament is meeting for its last plenary session this year. The pre-Christmas mood will be, however, overshadowed by events in Ukraine, which we have followed with great intensity across the whole EU. The pictures from EuroMaidan brought back vivid memories of the Orange Revolution and the mobilization of masses for a better future for Ukraine. It is of course sad that within such a relatively short time the Ukrainian people had to once again bring their anger and frustration to the streets, but I praise them for their insistence, courage and determination.

Upon my request, the European Parliament is going to hold a debate on Dec. 10 and adopt a resolution on Dec. 12, taking a strong stance against the brutal and absolutely inadmissible use of force by the authorities against peaceful protesters, who took to the streets to express their strong

disapproval of President Yanukovich's decision to withdraw from signing the association agreement with the EU. We as the European Parliament deplore this turn of events, though few of us can say that we were surprised by the final outcome of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius. For some months doubts about the Yanukovich administration's true intentions regarding the EU association were only growing, and the cat-and-mouse game with releasing (or not) former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, and then moving to financial claims in negotiations with the EU, was a part of a cold calculation to keep things in a stalemate.

Yanukovich, as incumbent president, remains maybe the official interlocutor for his counterparts in other countries and international organizations. But it is now the people, those people in the streets, resisting violence, fighting the cold, sacrificing days and nights to stand by their EU aspirations, which have become the true owner of Ukraine's fate and the conveyer of its will.

It is them we should listen to and support.

The European Parliament is going to underline the importance of giving Ukraine a European perspective and insist on the strategic dimension of deepening mutual relations. By doing so, it wants to make clear that the offer of association is still on the table, as initialed, and that the EU is ready → 6

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# Why Yanukovych could never sign an EU deal



HALYNA SENYK

There is a private reason why President Viktor Yanukovych would not sign an association agreement with the European Union. For him, closer ties with Europe mean more risk to lose assets he has acquired during his presidency.

Until the year 2007, Yanukovych, then a member of parliament, officially lived in a 140-square-meter penthouse in Kyiv. He then sold his apartment to Serhiy Klyuev, now a lawmaker and head of the banking regulation committee, and a member of supervisory board of the central bank.

The apartment fetched a ridiculously high price of \$ 7 million, or \$50,000 per square meter. By comparison, ex-Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko bought his sprawling 20-room home mansion in Novato, Calif. for \$6.75 million. Now old news, Lazarenko was convicted in the U.S. of money laundering, extortion, tax evasion and had his house seized.

To dress the deal up somewhat, the official deed said that the apartment was actually 380 square meters in area – despite the fact that his 2007 declaration stated that he only owned 140 square meters.

Despite numerous media reports on this phenomenal real-estate deal, the Prosecutor General Office did not find it suspicious. Both sides have denied wrongdoing.

Since the start of his presidency in 2010, Yanukovych has resided in a former national reserve area called Mezhyhirya, a vast estate sprawling more than 137 hectares of land.

This land was privatized through a chain of murky operations, which the



In this March 2012 file photo a man wearing a death mask protests against rampant government corruption. The inscription on the left says Mezhyhirya, the name of the president's lavish estate north of Kyiv, which has become synonymous with corruption and abuse of power. (UNIAN)

now jailed Yulia Tymoshenko tried to challenge in court as prime minister.

The president claims that he lives on only 1.76 hectares of land there that he purchased from the local government. Neither the president nor the Vyshhorod District Administration have ever disclosed how much was paid for the land. The remaining land 135 hectares belonged Tantalit, which bought the parcel of land in 2007. Tantalit was founded by a UK-based firm Blythe Europe, Ltd, run by Reinhard Proksch.

Interestingly, Serhiy Kluev in July 2009 also sold his prosperous solar energy business Activ Solar to Proksch, whose home address doubles as the address of registration of P&A

Corporate Trust – the official owner of Activ Solar.

Activ Solar is a successful near-monopoly in producing solar energy in Ukraine. Since Serhiy Kluev's brother, Andriy Kluev – a co-owner of Activ Solar – held the office of Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine, Active Solar received state bank interest-free loans, tax exemptions, extremely low prices on land leases (3 percent of the value per year), duty-free import of equipment, and one of the highest green tariffs in Europe.

Moreover, even the European Union's direct budgetary support in 2011 was spent on hooking Activ Solar plants to the energy grid, instead of being spent on energy-saving

projects, as required by the Europeans. As a result of the violation, the European Commission halted direct budget support to Ukraine.

In 2008, Tantalit signed a 49-year land lease at a very low rate and started developing Mezhyhirya, turning it into a royal-class luxury estate.

In just three years, two former old state dachas and shabby service buildings located in Mezhyhirya's wild forest were transformed into a huge 5-storied palace, 3-storied guest house, a golf course, a yacht club, a helicopter pad and hangars, and a racetrack with horse stables. Neither Tantalit revenue documents nor Blythe Europe's tax reports have ever provided a clue to the origin of the money invested in the development of Mezhyhirya.

In September 2013, Blythe Europe Ltd. suddenly decided to sell Mezhyhirya to Serhiy Kluev, who

became the honored neighbor of President Yanukovych in his estate.

Mezhyhirya is surrounded by a five or six-meter fence, and has no public access. It is guarded by a the state special police force, and nobody except Yanukovych, his family and visitors are allowed to enter.

It seems that the only person who benefits from using Mezhyhirya is Yanukovych, which would suggest that he is the beneficial owner of a luxurious estate located in a pristine forest on the bank of the Dnipro River. He has only admitted to owning a tiny part of that estate, though.

On top of being a landlord, Yanukovych is a successful writer. In 2011 he claimed to have received \$2.5 million for writing a book called "A Year in Opposition." In 2012, he said he received royalties worth \$2 million for "Opportunity Ukraine", which was published by "Mandelbaum Verlag" in Austria. However, few people (if any) have seen his books in Ukraine.

Yanukovych's older son, who has a background in dentistry, during the term of his father's presidency became one of the most successful business persons in Ukraine, whose wealth in 2013 was estimated by Forbes at \$187 million. Oleksandr Yanukovych is successfully engaged in the coal-mining industry, construction business and banks. His VBR bank (Oleksandr Yanukovych owns 100 percent of its stock) in 3 years of its existence increased its capital by 20 times.

All the above would not be possible if Ukraine was a part of the EU. Yanukovych would positively feel more comfortable in the company of Russian President Vladimir Putin (17 years in power), Belarus President Oleksandr Lukashenko (25 years in power) or Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who often seem to confuse national wealth with that of their own.

Halyna Senyk is a lawyer specializing in international law, and CEO of PEPWatch, a nongovernmental organization which is currently undergoing the registration process.

## VOX populi

WITH MARIIA SHAMOTA

### How is the political crisis in Ukraine affecting business and economy?



**Oleg Ustenko,**  
Executive Director of The Bleyzer Foundation  
"Investors were talking about corruption and administrative barriers for doing business. Now

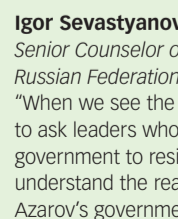
they will see there are political risks. Political risks will top the list. Now the country is going to be watched more carefully."



**Dimitri Podoliev,**  
Chairman of Seed Forum Ukraine  
"In the short term it could have some negative macro-economic consequences. But I think both international and national players understand that in the



**Wojciech Bajda,**  
Ericsson, KAM Eastern Europe Country Manager Ukraine  
"So far we haven't seen any impact on business. We are going to wait and observe the situation. We continue to cooperate and to support our customers, which are mainly mobile operators."



**Igor Sevastyanov,**  
Senior Counselor of the Embassy of the Russian Federation  
"When we see the protests, we want to ask leaders who are demanding the government to resign how deeply they understand the reasons why (Mykola Azarov's government delayed the sign-



ing of the association agreement (with the EU). Is the opposition ready to take the responsibility for the crisis that could come after the association agreement will be signed?"



**Andrey Kolodyuk,**  
Managing Partner at AVentures Capital  
"From the point of view of the venture business, these events pushed some investors to press the 'hold' button. Everyone wants to understand what kind of result we will have. But from the point of view of IT business, we do not strongly depend on the situation in the country. Ukrainian companies are focused more on world markets."



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# Government makes case for its geopolitical choice

BY KATERYNA KAPLIUK  
KAPLIUK@KYIVPOST.COM

After rejecting to sign the association agreement on Nov. 28-29 in Vilnius, officials in Kyiv said its fragile, antiquated economy wasn't ready to enter into a free trade deal with the 28-nation bloc and withstand trade sanctions from Russia where roughly a quarter of its exports go.

Prime Minister Mykola Azarov called it a "tactical" move, not a strategic retreat. President Viktor Yanukovich said the country will stay on the pro-European path yet still cooperate with the Kremlin-led Customs Union with whom it enjoys import-free duty trade within the Commonwealth of Independent States. Few believe him.

So despite initialing and supporting a deal with the EU negotiated for three years, Yanukovich and other officials justified their last-minute rejection of it as protecting the best interests of the nation. How can that be?

The potential landmark treaty with the EU, according to top officials, doesn't take into account that Kyiv stands to lose up to \$50-\$60 billion in trade with Russia, they say.

"What accusations we've heard from Russia recently? Russia accused us that we do not consider their interests in negotiations with the European Union," said Yanukovich in an interview with four Ukrainian TV channels on Dec. 2. He also believes that Russia had reason to be outraged that Ukraine didn't consult with it during negotiations with the EU.

"Is this point fair? For sure it is. We do not want to lose trade with Russia, and Russia does not want to lose it with us," he added.

The reason why Russia's opinion is so important for Ukraine is quite simple to Yanukovich, who mentioned that higher value-added products go to Russia, including high-technology. In contrast, commodities mostly go to the EU.

Another point Yanukovich stressed

is that if trade with Russia deteriorates, jobs would be lost. This year 85,000 people lost their jobs in industry, 32,000 in trade, 17,000 in transport and 15,000 in construction, he said.

The State Statistics Service shows similar figures. In the first nine months of 2013, export to Russia decreased by 13.4 percent compared to the same period in 2012. In terms of money, Ukraine exported \$1.6 billion less than in 2012. In general, the Commonwealth of Independent States – made up of several former Soviet republics – accounted for 36.2 percent of total Ukrainian exports and 35.9 percent of total imports during the first nine months of 2013. For EU countries, these numbers are 26 percent and 34.7 percent, respectively.

The most significant export deliveries of such products as ferrous metals, machinery and railway locomotives went to Russia, which alone gets almost a quarter of Ukraine's export.

However, this year has shown that together with a slight decrease of trade with CIS countries, Ukraine intensified its trade with the EU. Official statistics show that its export increased by almost 2 percent, and imports by 4.3 percent.

Anatoliy Kinakh, head of the Association of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Ukraine, whose members were the first to ask Yanukovich to postpone signing the association agreement, also understands the difference in trade structure with the Customs Union and the EU.

A minimum of 60 percent of what Ukraine imports from the Customs Union are raw materials such as oil and gas, whereas 40 percent of what comes from the EU are new technologies and equipment, said Kinakh, according to his organization's website. He added that "we need so much to modernize our economy."

Meanwhile, if relations worsen with Russia, exports there will slow down,

Kinakh warns. It may particularly hit Ukrainian machine building since the country exports 52 percent of the industry's products to Russia.

Despite the fact that European integration is a civilizational choice for Ukraine – incorporating not just economic issues but values such as rule of law, human rights and democracy – politicians should be pragmatic in their decisions, Deputy Prime Minister Oleksandr Vilkul believes.

"Euro-pragmatists want to preserve what there is today and to find new opportunities and they don't want to go through shock therapy connected to the state of enterprises, unemployment, inflation, and higher utility prices," he said on Dec. 3 at the Tiger Conference organized by the Kyiv Post.

The official said that, in particular, the production of machinery, especially heavy machinery, rockets, ships and locomotives would suffer. If such enterprises were to slow or shut down, the fallout might hit entire regions, he believes. "One can't have a European standard of living in a poor country (like Ukraine). And a poor country isn't the right market for their (EU) products," Vilkul added.

However, officials should think not only about companies that are afraid of European competitors, but also about those that are ready to modernize for the EU market, experts say.

"There are businesses that want to go to Europe, and there are large businesses that have not taken elementary steps to be able to go to Europe... They're struggling, they think that by joining the Customs Union they could still be able to do that, although they don't realize they don't have a comparable advantage in that market," Vice Rector for Strategy and Program Development of Ukrainian Catholic University George Logush emphasized.

Kyiv Post staff writer Kateryna Kapliuk can be reached at kapliuk@kyivpost.com.



Massive crowds took to the streets on Dec. 1 to protest against police brutality and demand the president's and government's resignation. Anti-government, pro-European protests have entered their third week now. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)

## Saryusz-Wolski: We must not forget Ukrainians

→4 to sign it, of course on condition that Ukraine – with current or new authorities – commits to its European aspirations and then swiftly acts upon its words. The European Parliament will strongly defend the association agreement as a strictly bilateral matter between Ukraine and the EU. Therefore, it will strongly oppose any interference by third parties, condemning all means of political and economic pressure exerted upon Ukraine so far. The EU should also reinforce its macroeconomic support for Ukraine, provide help in negotiating the scope and conditions of assistance with the IMF and carry on its engagement for Ukraine's full inclusion into the EU internal energy market. To this aim, the EU should send a special, high-level mission to Ukraine to help mediate a peaceful solution between the protesters and the authorities. Finally, we will call for a generous and robust opening of all possible types of contacts and involvement between the EU and the civil society, a swift agreement on a visa free movement, stronger scientific cooperation and youth exchanges.

People have been protesting in EuroMaidan demonstrations across Ukraine for 16 days now. During this time, not once has president Yanukovich

→ Europe should provide mediation, financing

confronted the people. Instead, he went abroad to pursue business as usual. Maybe he hopes that the weather will be his ally, driving away people whose determination might fade in view of the cold. Maybe he counts on international attention to soon subside and turn elsewhere. This must not happen. This is why I am going to come to Kyiv to be with protesters and opposition at EuroMaidan and convey the message from the Eastern Partnership and European Parliament of strong support for the European cause for which they are so adamantly standing up.

Jacek Saryusz-Wolski is a member of the European Parliament and the vice president of the Eastern Partnership Project.

Advertisement

## GIDE BOOSTS ITS KIEV OFFICE

with the arrival of nine lawyers, including two partners, from Beiten Burkhardt



A team of nine lawyers including two partners, Julian Ries and Oleksiy Feliv, from German law firm Beiten Burkhardt will join Gide's Kiev office on 1 January 2014.

Julian Ries joined Beiten Burkhardt in 2004, and was promoted to partner in 2009. As managing partner of the Kiev office, he advises national and international companies in the agricultural and renewable energy sectors on corporate, tax and restructuring issues, as well as in large commercial real estate transactions. Julian is a seasoned corporate lawyer.

Oleksiy Feliv is a leading Ukrainian real estate lawyer recognised for his results-oriented advice to international investors and is known for his litigation and arbitration practice. Oleksiy Feliv joined Beiten Burkhardt in 2005. Over the years, he has advised a wide variety of foreign clients active in the construction and renewable energy sectors, as well as investment funds, on real estate operations and investments. During his time with Beiten Burkhardt, he worked in the firm's Munich and Frankfurt offices.

The two partners will join Gide together with seven Ukrainian lawyers from Beiten Burkhardt: Oleg Zagnitko, Daniyil Fedorchuk, Vasyl Yurmanovych, Olesya Stolyarska, Khrystyna Fedunyshyn, Nika Varvayuk and Olena Nagorianska.

Oleg Zagnitko, head of Beiten's Ukrainian banking practice, will become Gide's Banking & Finance co-head together with Igor Kasovskiy. Gide Kiev has established a reputable banking prac-

tice and belongs to the very few firms with a strong practice of infrastructure and PPP and benefits from its integrated UK law capability through its London office.

Karl Hepp de Sevelinges, a French and German qualified partner who opened Gide's Kiev office in 2006, said: "We have been looking to grow and this project makes a lot of sense as we have known the lawyers joining us for years. Their practice complements ours perfectly, will boost our expertise in real estate, M&A / Corporate and banking, and will facilitate our access to German and Austrian investors".

Stéphane Puel, Gide's managing partner, adds: "Gide's strategy in Central and Eastern Europe is to achieve a leading market position in countries with strong investment potential. Despite the current economic context, we believe in further growth and are delighted to welcome such a recognised and experienced team. The German and Ukrainian lawyers will contribute to ascertain Gide's position in Central & Eastern Europe as a leading European player."

Gide's Kiev office, comprising 20 lawyers and legal consultants, will be headed both by Julian Ries and the current partner in charge of the Gide office, Bertrand Barrier. Karl Hepp de Sevelinges, now based in Paris, will stay involved in the future activities of Gide in Eastern Europe and particularly in Ukraine.

# GIDE

GIDE LOYRETTE NOUËL

## → On the move

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**DENYS VERGELES** has joined **NOBLES'** lawyers team as Senior Associate. He focuses on corporate, commercial and labor law for German and other international clients. **NOBLES** started its operation in 2007 as Kiev office of international law firm Noerr and continued as independent cooperation partner of Noerr since August 2013. Today both firms continue to work in close cooperation with each other ensuring the high standard of service and quality for international clients.

Prior to joining Nobles, Mr. Vergeles worked 8 years in the Kiev office of "BEITEN BURKHARDT". He is fluent in German and English and has obtained a LL.M. from the University of Kiel/Germany.

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# The Tiger Conference



The Kyiv Post offers our heartfelt thanks for the invaluable support we received from our special guests, sponsors, partners, panelists and participants at the second annual Tiger Conference “Ukraine’s Future After the Vilnius Summit” on Dec. 3.

Despite the extraordinary events taking place in the country, we are honoured to see that the nation’s business leaders, government officials and top diplomatic representatives recognized the value of such a forum for dialogue and debate.

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# Berkut quick to turn to force

→ **1** ists and journalists alike, paying particular attention to those with cameras and smartphones.

There are 900 of them in Kyiv, says Galeotti, and a total of 3,250 across the country. But there are thousands of other types of special forces. Some of them, especially in western Ukraine, have reportedly supported anti-government riots.

"(The Berkut) are taught and told to control the media. They are told, 'If you see someone filming... it's an image that could be used for propaganda, and it must be destroyed,'" Galeotti said.

"Precisely, they target media because they also want to control the images in the media, which you can't do in this day and age," he added.

The results of their handiwork in Kyiv have been brutal – hundreds of protesters and at least 40 journalists have been injured. At the same time more than 100 officers of special police units, including some from the Berkut, were injured in bloody clashes with protesters who exchanged blows with them on Kyiv's Bankova Street near the presidential administration, and then by the Lenin monument on Dec. 1.

The violence that occurred there, which the Interior Ministry said was not the fault of the Berkut but was incited by some 200 masked civilians believed to be paid, was stirred by the brutal assault on peaceful demonstrators in the early morning hours of Nov. 30.

Just after 4 a.m. several hundred Berkut officers violently dispersed a group of about 400 peaceful protesters who were camped on Independence Square in central Kyiv. They were brought in specially from

Crimea, Luhansk, Dnipropetrovsk and Cherkasy, according to results of journalistic investigations over the past few days.

Videos of the incident show the riot police indiscriminately whacking protesters and journalists with rubber batons, even kicking some in the face after they had already been knocked down. Police continued to pursue many in the group even after they'd dispersed, chasing them down and bludgeoning them in the streets. Some of them followed protesters to St. Michael's where many had sought sanctuary from the violence.

One eyewitness told the Kyiv Post that the riot police were like "a machine cleaning the street." Another said that the event left steps on the public square "covered in blood." In a statement the Ministry of Interior said that protesters were to be blamed for provoking the actions of the Berkut. A Kyiv police spokeswoman told the Kyiv Post that the protesters had damaged equipment being used to erect the city's Christmas tree. The event sparked international outrage.

Kyiv Police Chief Valeriy Koriak admitted to ordering the attack on Nov. 30. He tendered his resignation on Dec. 1, but it was not accepted by the time Kyiv Post went to print. Interior Minister Vitaliy Zakharchenko said he had no intention to resign, though.

It is unclear who exactly gave the order for Berkut to attack. Speculation ranges from President Viktor Yanukovich and Interior Minister Vitaliy Zakharchenko, to the possibility that it was Andriy Klyuyev in Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, who may have in turn been told by Kremlin lackey and

pal of Russian President Vladimir Putin Viktor Medvedchuk to crackdown on the demonstration.

The press services of Yanukovich, Zakharchenko, Klyuyev and Medvedchuk did not respond to requests for comments.

Whatever the case, the Nov. 30 Berkut assault is the most blatant case of non-lethal police brutality in Ukraine in recent memory.

Kyiv's chief doctor of emergencies Anatoliy Vershygora said that 35 people were admitted to area emergency rooms with injuries suffered during the attack. Scores more took sanctuary at nearby St. Michael's monastery, where they were treated for less serious wounds.

Human rights activist Yevhen Zakharov told the Kyiv Post on Nov. 30 that "police have never attacked peaceful demonstrators at such a large scale with so many people hospitalized."

"There were fights between protesters in 2001, during the Ukraine Without (ex-President Leonid) Kuchma protests, but not one-sided attacks like this morning on such a big scale," he said.

Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjorn Jagland called on the Ukrainian government to hold a thorough investigation into the dispersal of the demonstration on Nov. 30. "All violence has to be stopped. All sides have to do the utmost for this," he said on Dec. 3.

Human Rights Watch asked that authorities also make sure police stop assaulting peaceful protesters and hold those responsible to account.

Outrage over both the Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 incidences of violence spurred Zakharchenko on Dec. 4 to order law

enforcement authorities to refrain from using force on participants of peaceful protests, Interfax-Ukraine news agency reported.

"Rally organizers are responsible for organizing and holding events and their consequences as well," Zakharchenko added, according to the news agency.

Taking protesters to task, Kyiv's Shevchenkivsky District Court as of Dec. 5 had decided to detain for two months 10 protesters who are suspected of inciting the mass riot on Bankova Street near the presidential administration on Dec. 1, Kyiv prosecutor's spokeswoman Yana Sobolevska, told Interfax-Ukraine.

There have been no arrests of Berkut officers involved in the Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 incidents, but police received 26 reports about journalists being beaten during the incidents and criminal cases were opened in all of them, "most being submitted to the public prosecutor's office, while two are being investigated by Ukraine's Interior Ministry," reads a police report, citing Oleh Tatarov, deputy chief of the Foreign Ministry's investigative department.

Having lost faith in the justice system, protesters on their own have identified and published the personal information of Berkut officers, including a man they believe is responsible for the brutal beating of a Reuters photojournalist. Another man who heads Kyiv's Berkut unit and may be responsible, protesters say, for inciting violence between police forces and radical protesters on Bankova Street has also been identified.

Protesters and activists say the man in a video leading a front-end loader

to police lines in an attempt to break through is none other than Col. Sergei Kussyuk, who was seen in another video leading Berkut officers. The video evidence has inspired numerous other theories as to who was behind the orders given to the Berkut and why that person or persons gave them.

It is possible that the person responsible for giving orders to the Berkut that day and the exact orders themselves may never be brought to light. But Galeotti, the New York University professor, says he has a pretty good idea of what they could have been.

"Firstly, (the Berkut) are to obey orders," Galeotti said. But as opposed to police and the National Guard, "the Berkut are much quicker to turn to rubber clubs and blunt force. They are much less constrained."

From the onset of riots, the Berkut target the mob's leaders, according to Galeotti. "They focus on those who are egging on the crowd, those who would hurl the first stones, throw the first punches and incite violence from others in the crowd," he said.

He says that Berkut officers are also taught not to let the mob get momentum. "On (Dec. 1, in front of the Presidential Administration) it went so badly because they didn't control momentum," Galeotti said. "In that case, they will be extra keen to make sure it doesn't happen again."

When push comes to shove, Galeotti said, people are willing to do things they might not normally do. "When things go badly for (the Berkut), it's in their nature – it is human nature – to overcompensate."

Kyiv Post editor Christopher J. Miller can be reached at [miller@kyivpost.com](mailto:miller@kyivpost.com).



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Dec. 10

### Christian rock by Skillet

Christian rock band Skillet comes to Kyiv on Dec. 10 to perform in Stereo Plaza music hall. The show will feature songs from the band's new album, "Rise." The band's vocalist John Cooper claims that "Rise" is the best work of the band's nine albums. The songs on the album include themes of redemption and ambition. **Skillet. Dec. 10. 8 p.m. Stereoplaza (119 Chervonozoriansky Ave.). Hr 400-800**

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Dec. 9

### Patricia Kaas to sing Edith Piaf hits

French singer and actress Patricia Kaas, 46, is a frequent guest in Kyiv. But this time, the singer will not perform her own hits, but only the songs by another French diva Edith Piaf. The set list of this two-hour long show will include "La Vie En Rose," "Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien," "Padam Padam" and 20 more Piaf hits, all adapted by Kaas.

**Patricia Kaas sings Edith Piaf. Dec. 9. 7 p.m. Palats Ukraina (103 VelykaVasylkivska St.) Hr 390-3,890**

### Best Food Fest & Health 2013

Dec. 7-8

Another food festival is coming to Kyiv. Vegans and healthy lifestyle fans are invited to lectures and workshops conducted by top athletes, dietitians and fitness coaches. Attendees will have a chance to improve their cooking skills by learning from a number of top chefs from Kyiv restaurants like Sam's Steak House, Il Molino, Buddha Bar and more.

**Best Food Fest & Health 2013. Dec. 7-8. Olympic Stadium (55 VelykaVasylkivska St.). Hr 200 per day, Hr250 for two-day ticket**



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### Christmas fair

This year the area near the Friendship of Nations Arch will be the best place to search for Christmas presents. More than 80 booths will be selling handmade toys, Christmas tree decorations and sweets. Children will be able to try one of the numerous workshops overseen by local craftsmen. The program also includes a performance by circus artists and tastings of Christmas food of different nations. Sport lovers will also enjoy the skating rink under the Arch. The grand opening is scheduled for Dec. 14.

**Christmas Fair. Dec. 14 - Jan 14. Friendship of Nations Arch. Free**

Dec. 14 - Jan 14



Courtesy



Dec. 7

### Lyapis Trubetskoy in concert

The Belarusian rock band will hit Kyiv's scene with its new concert program "Lyapis Crew." The group will play well-known hit songs as well as five new ones from its album set to be released in early spring 2014.

**LyapisTrubetskoy. Dec. 7, 7 p.m. Stereo Plaza (119 Chervonozoriansky Ave.). Hr 150-350**

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# Local businesses lend helping hands to EuroMaidan

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

While protesters in Kyiv hunker down on central Maidan Nezalezhnosti and inside a few administrative buildings nearby, local businesses and the community are stepping up to help them. Various venues, companies and common Kyivans have expressed their solidarity with EuroMaidan participants, by offering them places to stay, free food and even legal assistance.

Even those who need help are providing what they can offer to others. "A lady in her 80s came this week and donated Hr 5 (less than \$1) for the needs of protesters, her hands trembling," says Liudmyla Hrintsova, a volunteer at one of the protesters' bases at the House of Trade Unions in Kyiv. To understand the meaning of this gesture, many pensioners in Ukraine live on a monthly pension that is a little over Hr 1,000.

The biggest donation Maidan protesters have gotten from individuals has been Hr 10,000, Hrintsova says.

Besides money, people bring a lot of warm clothes, including socks, gloves, hats, scarves, coats and sleeping bags, says Roman Yasulchak, a postgraduate student at the Lviv Polytechnic University and a volunteer security guard of EuroMaidan. Everyone is invited to come to the improvised second-hand store in the Kyiv center and take warm clothes, some of them brand new.

Medicine is another thing in high demand among protesters. Thanks to donations, there is no lack of it.

"People bring all kinds of medicines. I don't even have time to sort this stuff," says physician Olga Fedotova, a volunteer at Maidan. "One day we found ourselves in need of an expensive tonometer, and the following day we got one," the doctor says.

The seized City Hall and House of Trade Unions, which normally are filled with cold bureaucratic spirit, are now filled with delicious scents of food. There's



Volunteers cook and give out food to protesters at Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) on Dec. 4. There are several improvised kitchens where volunteers prepare meals for protesters, including one in the square and several more inside the seized City Hall and Trade Union buildings. The food is donated by supporters. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)

also an outdoor kitchen on the Maidan. Food and hot beverages are offered here day and night. According to opposition lawmaker Ostap Semerak, there are around 1,200 volunteers working at the EuroMaidan's kitchen preparing 63,000 servings a day.

Iryna Muzyka, a student from Vinnytsia protesting in Kyiv, is very happy about how the kitchen is arranged. The girl says the food there is better than in some cafes.

"It is very tasty and the portions are very big. I can't finish one without help," Muzyka says.

Free basic necessities are not the only things offered to protesters.

Nearly 50 lawyers provide legal assistance to those who need it. At least 30 people ask for lawyers daily, says public activist Zoryana Khrystyna. Most of them are students under threat of being expelled from universities for taking part in recent rallies and people injured by riot police in the violent police raid on protesters on Nov. 30.

Khrystyna says that some of the lawyers that offered their help turned out to be working for the ruling Party of Regions and didn't actually intend to help protesters. So Khrystyna maintains a list of "good" and "bad" lawyers.

One volunteer work option for EuroMaidan is being a security guard.

The guards are set to ensure public order. Oleksandr Tokarchuk is one of nearly 300 young men guarding the protest grounds.

"We are here to protect the people from provocateurs and from drunks," Tokarchuk said.

Even though Maidan Nezalezhnosti is now a rather safe place, many believe one should not bring little kids there, says Oksana Khrystenko, manager of children center FamilyArtClub. For those parents who want to join the protests but do not have anyone to leave their kids with she is ready to take care of the children at her center from 9 a.m. till 9 p.m. for free. → 14

## Art Critic



WITH OLGA RUDENKO  
[RUDENKO@KYIVPOST.COM](mailto:RUDENKO@KYIVPOST.COM)

## Works of surrealist Russian artist on display

The first thought that enters the mind when seeing Russian painter Nikas Safronov's 70 displayed pieces is how these cheesy paintings, with their toxic green forests, clear blue skies and massive frames of fake gold ever got to the height of fame.

But a closer look reveals the more subtle sides of his work. The painting of a kitchen-garden features a strange bubble flying above some lettuce, the painted forest turns out to be inhabited by pixies, and the city scenery shows the translucent figure of a giant.

These bits of surrealism are, in fact, the only feature that distinguishes the works by Russia's most famous and highest-paid artist from the decorative tailings of art that are offered to tourists on the corner of Andriyivskiy Uzviz and Volodymyrska Street.

Safronov, 57, is best known as a portraitist of the rich and powerful. He never reveals the price of his pieces, but Russian media claim that one fetches up to \$200,000. The artist's medieval-style apartment in central Moscow reportedly costs around \$70 million, which could serve as indirect proof of his sky-high prices.

There is hardly anyone in Russia's and Ukraine's top-flight politics, business world and show business who has not commissioned a portrait from this phenomenal artist. His show in Kyiv includes portraits of several prominent Russian actors, Ukraine's former president Leonid Kuchma, singer Oleh Skrypka, Russian director Nikita Mikhalkov and some Western celebrities like Robert De Niro, Nicole Kidman and even British Prince William.

Some subjects of his portraits wear medieval clothes, mimicking classical portraits of the 15-17th centuries, and are a part of Safronov's famous The River of Time series. Painstakingly detailed and obviously highly skillful, those portraits nevertheless look a lot like they were manipulated. Moreover, they are wacky and tasteless.

But some surreal details on Safronov's pictures leave an even worse impression. To anyone who as much as glanced at a couple of Salvador Dali's works, the careful but meaningless surrealism of Safronov looks roughly the equivalent of a track suit at a Viennese ball.

That doesn't bother Safronov's fans. Around 100 art lovers → 13

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Visitors observe the paintings by Russian artist Nikas Safronov exhibited in the Museum of Kyiv history on Dec. 4. (Anastasia Vlasova)

## Safronov's paintings reportedly fetch up to \$200,000 a piece

→ 12 attended the Dec. 4 opening of the exhibition at the Kyiv History Museum – almost all of them women who came within the first hour.

One was Alina Koniayeva, a private painting tutor, who considers Safronov a genius and says that seeing the exhibits gives her “a lump in the throat.”

“His work is a mix of Salvador Dali, Flemish painting and early impressionism,” she says, adding that it’s still very subtle and not vulgar at all.

The rich “golden” frames, Koniayeva says, prove that Safronov has respect for his work. Some don’t agree.

Another woman told the Kyiv Post that the frames are “a clear bourgeois style,” which appeals to his potential clients. The woman, who said she was an art historian who works in another Kyiv museum, refused to give her name, saying that her fellow art critics will laugh at her for visiting Safronov’s exhibition. She carefully added that she likes “some of the

composition tricks,” meaning the surrealistic details in the paintings, but explained that Safronov’s works are certainly unoriginal.

Nina Khorodach, a publishing house employee and art enthusiast, was equally unimpressed by the exhibition. Safronov, she says, certainly has talent, but what he paints is “not really sincere.”

“I think sometimes he manages to find that moment of candidness, you can see it in some of his works. But often it looks like he wants to satisfy the audience, not express his view,” Khorodach says.

“On the other hand,” she continues, “what if Safronov just naturally sees everything so decorative? We all want to see beautiful things, after all. Maybe he does.”

The show runs through Feb. 16 at the Kyiv History Museum on 7 Bohdana Khmelnytskoho Street near the Teatralna metro station.

*Kyiv Post Lifestyle editor Olga Rudenko can be reached at rudenko@kyivpost.com.*

# Finding new joy in life

BY NATALIYA TRACH  
TRACH@KYIVPOST.COM

Many people in Ukraine dread retirement. A paltry state pension that averages \$130 per month is one reason why. Other reasons are more universal: failing health, loneliness, isolation.

But most people try to make the last stage of their lives truly the golden years. Some Ukrainian senior citizens have taken up studying, painting, dancing and even mountain climbing in a bid to remain active.

### Never too late to learn

The University of the Third Age in Kyiv is not an average college. It is for elderly who have the time and desire to keep learning. The school enrolls 1,600 students. Zhanna Sabrilova, the head of the university, there is a waiting list to get in.

Tetyana Shulhina, 76, has been attending classes there for three years. The first two years she took law and computer science classes. Now she studies regional ethnography.

“I have learned a lot of useful information here,” she said. “Although the law is violated in our country, everyone needs to know the housing code in order to know how to deal with housing and communal services.”

Shulhina is an experienced computer user. She knows how to use Yandex and Google search engines, and browses the internet for news and favorite books. “I am not a computer geek, but I spend at least several hours a day at a computer,” Shulhina said.

Psychologist Oleh Pokalchuk believes that human behavior is not determined by age. Active people remain active throughout their lives, Pokalchuk said, adding that such people choose to do what they like best without paying attention to social stereotypes.

Most of the retirees who attend this university are looking for companionship also. “My husband and my son died. I am very lonely. I really miss communication,” Halyna Vershyhora, 74, said. She has made many new friends with whom she goes to museums, exhibitions and theaters.

“Earlier they stayed home feeling lonely, but now our students pay visits to each other and communicate,” Sabrilova said. She said older people are sometimes shy about going out,



Attendees enjoy the dance class in Ruta fitness club for elderly people in Kyiv on Nov. 17. (Anastasia Vlasova)

but not her students, who like going to McDonalds, cafes and restaurants. They even started celebrating each others’ birthdays.

Love even struck some of them, with four matches that Sabrilova knows about.

### Dancing queens

While some conquer loneliness with university classes, others lean toward physical activities. Nearly 30 women attend dancing classes in a fitness club for the elderly in Kyiv. The club called Ruta in the capital’s Obolon district has one special rule – men are not allowed there. “If men appear here, there would be a completely different atmosphere. An atmosphere of competition,” said the club’s instructor Tetyana Shchytkivska.

The attendees like the women’s-only atmosphere. “I would mind men coming here. I feel more relaxed without men,” says Tetyana Oleksandrova, 64.

Dancing classes begin with a short warm-up. Then ladies practice dancing the cha-cha-cha, waltz, rock-n-roll and belly dance.

Liudmyla Kucher, 62, loves dancing and used to be a folk dancer in her youth. “I feel happy when I dance,” Kucher said. While some learn to dance, others simply want to lose weight and keep fit.

Others just come to socialize. “These are not just dances for me, but communication with people,” says Valentyna Zabriovska, 54.

### Discovering talents

Liliya Sokolyk, 72, has always dreamed of learning to paint. She recently started attending drawing classes at “Natkhnennya” (Inspiration) in Kyiv. “Only now, when my children and grandchildren have grown up, can I dedicate time to this hobby,” she said.

Her colleague, Valentyna Haman, 57, has been attending drawing classes for a year. Her three kids believe their mother rediscovered herself as a talented painter. Haman’s paintings have become really popular in her extended family. She likes to paint portraits the most and has completed around 50 paintings. It costs Hr 250 per class there, but pensioners get a discount and pay only Hr 50 per session.

### Climbing to the top

Serhiy Bezliudny, 58, has been mountain climbing for the last 12 years. Earlier this year, he decided to attend a climbing gym to gain more skills. Bezliudny goes for a two-week expedition to the Crimean Mountains twice a year. “During my expeditions I regularly meet men and women of my age and older who do mountaineering,” the climber said.

His family is not very happy about his adventurous and somewhat risky hobby, but tries to be understanding and supportive, Bezliudny said.

*Kyiv Post staff writer Nataliya Trach can be reached at trach@kyivpost.com.*

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EuroMaidan brings with it a sense of pride and community

→ **12** These days the club accepts on average five kids a day, but can host up to 40 children.

The community around Maidan Nezalezhnosti helps protesters as well. Kyivans offer their apartments for protesters from other regions. On Dec. 2 Internet provider company Volia called on people to make their WiFi internet free for protesters and opened a half dozen free WiFi spots in the city center.

Some churches in central Kyiv offer protesters places to sleep.

"The accommodation in our monastery is far from comfortable, but it is open for everyone to sleep, have tea and recharge their mobile phones," says Roman Shubyany, a priest at St. Vasyl the Great Greek Catholic Monastery.

Tens of Kyiv cafes and restaurants around Maidan Nezalezhnosti offer free coffee and tea. People can also come in there to warm up, recharge their mobile phones and use toilets.

SushiYa restaurant chain in Kyiv is among those that opened their doors to protesters. "We could not stay away from people who remain on the streets in such cold weather," says Olesya Mudzhyri, Shushiya's PR manager. "Everyone should be humane."

Kyiv Post staff writer Nataliya Trach can be reached at [trach@kyivpost.com](mailto:trach@kyivpost.com).

#### Venues that provide EuroMaidan protesters with free eats

**Foodtourist Bar** (5 Velyka Vasylkivska St.) offers free tea and coffee.

**SushiYa** restaurants give out free coffee, tea, offer to charge mobile phones. See locations at [www.sushiya.ua](http://www.sushiya.ua).

**Prego** (2 Shevchenko Blvd.) offers free tea.

**Art Club 44** (44B Khreshchatyk St.) offers tea, coffee and sandwiches.

**Porter Pub** (4 Kostelna St.) offers tea.

**Baraban** (4A Prorizna St.) offers tea.

**Babai** (4 Sofiivska st.) offers tea and boiling water.

**Shtany** (11 Pushkinska St.) offers tea.

**Casta** (19 Khreshchatyk St.) offers tea, coffee and sandwiches.

# Revolution comes into fashion

BY IAN BATESON  
[IAN.BATESON@GMAIL.COM](mailto:IAN.BATESON@GMAIL.COM)

EuroMaidan has now entered its third week and already the protesters have acquired a distinctive look.

With temperatures just above freezing most protesters are wearing their winter coats to keep their revolutionary passions burning on the inside and Ukrainian flags over those coats to show their patriotism externally.

A Ukrainian flag will set you back Hr 40 and sellers have moved in on the walk to Maidan Nezalezhnosti, the center of the protest, to meet the demand.

Unwilling to talk about what brought them to the Maidan to sell flags it seems money and not political activism is their main motivator.

Opposition activists have also been giving out miniature flags, ribbons with the colors of the Ukrainian flag and the stars of the EU flag printed on top, and on one day even balloons.

The most ornate and colorful protest outfits on the Maidan, however, have been exhibited by representatives of the various Cossack organizations.

**Roman Bachinsky**, 58, came to the Maidan in a traditional papakha hat he made himself and was carry-

**Protester Anya Petrashchuk** got her hooded "EuroMaidan" sweatshirt from other activists. (Anastasia Vlasova)

**Andrei Kalash** wears an embroidered shirt made by a relative in Ivano-Franivsk region while filming a rap music video at Maidan Nezalezhnosti on Dec. 4. (Anastasia Vlasova)

ing the flag of his native Slavuta, located in the western Khmelnytskyi region.

"Our (Cossack) organization voted no confidence in President Yanukovich and we came to Kyiv and to the Maidan to have people listen to our voices," he said.

**Mariyan Stepanovich**, 49, also came to Kyiv with his Cossack organization from Zhovkva in Western Ukraine near Lviv.

Stepanovich was wearing a red beret green and black camouflage with patches adorned with Cossack motifs sewn on.

With the cold weather there have been few people wearing the traditional embroidered shirts associated with Ukraine, but **Andrei Kalash**, 26, was one of the exceptions.

Standing on the cement platform used by cameramen to film the Maidan, the Kyiv native was wearing an embroidered shirt made by a relative in Ivano-Franivsk region while filming a rap music video.

Kalash supports the ousting of Yanukovich, but in his lyrics said it was important that "the West doesn't laugh at us."



Roman Bachinsky (top) wears a traditional papakha hat he made himself. Mariyan Stepanovich (bottom) wears a green and black camouflage uniform adorned with patches and Cossack motifs. (Anastasia Vlasova)

**Vladislava Ponomaryova**, 18, at first seemed to be just wearing a Ukrainian flag over her coat while playing soccer, but then revealed that hers had fabric handles sewn on inside that allowed her to hold it in place.

Vladislava is from Kyiv Oblast and has been participating in a student strike at her university in Kyiv. She comes to the Maidan during the day

and then goes back to the dormitory to spend the night.

**Anya Petrashchuk**, 19, was also taking part in a student strike and had come from the National Music Academy in her native Lviv to join protests on the Maidan.

She was wearing a blue hooded sweatshirt activists had been handing out with the words "Euro Maidan" on it. "I really like it," she said smiling.



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