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October 28, 2016





**OLIGARCH
WATCH**

Ihor Kolomoisky: Still Throwing His Weight Around

In Banking  Airlines 
Energy  & Media 

**The sometimes ruthless and rude
billionaire, accused of raiding
businesses and large-scale tax
evasion, came to Ukraine's
defense against Russia at a critical
time and gives to Jewish causes.
Story starts on page 14.**

Oligarch Watch Series

Part 1	Oct. 7	Petro Poroshenko: All In The Family – Again
Part 2	Oct. 14	Victor Pinchuk: Ukraine's Friend Or Foe?
Part 3	Oct. 21	Rinat Akhmeov: Too Big To Tame
Part 4	Oct. 28	Ihor Kolomoisky: Still Throwing His Weight Around

Ihor Kolomoisky, owner of the Dnipro football club, sits at a meeting of the Football Federation of Ukraine in Kyiv on March 6, 2015. (UNIAN)

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CURRENCY WATCH
Hr 25.9 to \$1
Oct. 27 market rate



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Shuster says he may run out of money, go off air

BY BRIAN BONNER
BONNER@KYIVPOST.COM

Savik Shuster, who revolutionized TV political talk shows in Ukraine in the last decade, is facing economic, political and even legal troubles that may force him off the air at the end of the year. Such a fate, he thinks, would fulfill one of President Petro Poroshenko's aims.

Economically, Shuster said that he's got less than \$1 million in the bank, a payroll of 170 people and expenses of \$250,000 monthly for his internet 3S.tv station. He's sold 20,000 memberships, starting at Hr 100 (less than \$4). But the club dues cover only 7 percent of the budget for Savik Shuster Studios.

"Finances are the greatest concern," Shuster told the Kyiv Post in an interview on Oct. 21. "In the last years we have saved some money because we were working on commercial channels. We have no inflow. The advertising market is non-existent. Now we have enough money to go until the end of the year."

He believes his economic troubles are linked to his political and legal ones.

Two other striking numbers emerged from the interview – 46 and 0; 46 is the number of times that Poroshenko appeared on his shows before taking office on June 7, 2014, while 0 is the number since becoming president.

"The president, it's a long story, because he is a person who attended our show most of all," Shuster said. "When we were working on Inter TV, I would get a lot of pressure not to take him" from ex-President Viktor Yanukovich's administration.

Poroshenko's enemy?

Shuster said Poroshenko no longer treats him as a journalist but as an enemy trying to block his re-election



Political TV talk show host Savik Shuster is feeling embattled financially, politically and economically. (3S.TV)

in 2019 in a bid to get ex-Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko elected.

Even more troubling, Shuster said, is his suspicion that Poroshenko and fellow billionaire oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky are using their loyalist in charge of the State Fiscal Service, Roman Nasirov, to harass him, potential investors, advertisers and guests with the prospect of tax inspections for associating with Shuster.

Poroshenko: 'not true'

Poroshenko's press service said that "these accusations are not true. President Poroshenko emphasized repeatedly that freedom of speech is one of the founding pillars of Ukrainian democracy, which was protected during the Revolution of Dignity. The president has defended and will defend freedom of speech as one of the core norms of the Constitution of Ukraine."

Shuster's fans see him as a brave voice of journalistic independence. The fact that he's been kicked off almost every oligarch's TV channel is proof to his supporters that the

powerful elite are trying to censor journalists like him who give platforms to dissenting voices.

What critics say

The view of his critics can be summarized this way: Shuster's big ego is the reason he can't find a TV station to host him for long. He is suspected not only of tax evasion, but selling air time on his show, denting his reputation and leading to loss of viewers. He has only himself to blame. Moreover, his four-hour Friday night shows have become political mud wrestling events – with more shouting than enlightenment.

Shuster was also among a group of journalists who harmed their credibility by accepting a controlled tour of Yanukovich's Mezhyhyria estate and appearing to play along with the official story line that the disgraced fugitive ex-president lived in a modest residence. The public now knows Mezhyhyria as an extravagantly luxurious compound.

Otar Dovzhenko, a lecturer at the School of Journalism at Ukrainian

Catholic University and a former editor at Telekritika media watchdog, is also not sympathetic.

"In times of Yanukovich he was always easily making agreements with those in power. He initially worked at (billionaire Rinat) Akhmetov's Ukraina TV channel, then he was moved to the 1st National TV channel, which was at that time controlled by (ex-Yanukovich chief of staff Serhiy) Lyovochkin. Later he was moved to Inter, owned by (billionaire Dmytro) Firtash-Lyovochkin and then again to the 1st National."

Dovzhenko noted that Shuster "never had problems with the authorities even though it was a non-democratic and violent time (during Yanukovich's rule from 2010-2014). And now he says he's being pressured. It's just ridiculous. Of course, the authorities don't like that Shuster gives – most likely by contract agreement – a platform for Tymoshenko and other people, whom those in power wouldn't like to see on TV. But this is not in the style of Poroshenko and his team to shut up someone."

Another person who is not a fan of Shuster is Eugen Fedchenko, director of the Kyiv Mohyla Academy's School of Journalism.

"I find his show to be problematic from a journalistic point of view – quite manipulating the political agenda in Ukraine, making serious issues just a matter of infotainment, also being self-centered and very selective in the choice of those who are invited to participate," Fedchenko said.

Shuster's view

One by one, Shuster rebutted allegations against him as bogus.

The tax evasion charges are false, he said, but so humiliating that he

more Shuster on page 19

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Editorials

Leeching oligarchs

Billionaire Ihor Kolomoisky may be Exhibit A for why Ukraine needs to defang its oligarchs. But Rinat Akhmetov, Victor Pinchuk and Petro Poroshenko are in competition with him, or certainly reasons B, C and D. These four men, the subjects of the Kyiv Post's "Oligarch Watch" in the last four editions, vaulted to wealth and power during Ukraine's lawless 1990s. More than 25 years after national independence, they refuse to let go of their power and privileges.

Kolomoisky, whose estimated net worth is \$1.46 billion, is known to be especially aggressive when it comes to protecting his interests, standing out even among the sharks. In 2014, he tried on a mask of a savior, taking charge of a region that bordered the war-torn Donbas. He maintained the flattering role for a year - until the authorities tried to remove his grip of Ukranafta. That's when he bared his teeth, showing he was as ready to bite off a piece of the country's wealth as ever.

The ability of Ukrainian society and friends abroad to defeat the oligarchy will remain the nation's defining internal challenge. Akhmetov, Pinchuk, Poroshenko and Kolomoisky are young enough to dominate Ukrainian society for decades to come. They are, collectively, not showing enough signs of socially redeeming traits. They act as if they are in constant fear that someone is going to take away their wealth and throw them in jail. Considering how they got rich in the first place, these are valid fears and explain a lot about why Ukraine's rule of law is the rule of the jungle -- only the strongest thrives.

But a more reasonable outcome is a divestiture of some of their largest holdings, which include too many monopolies, and an end to their strangehold over the media. Further political changes -- including public financing of elections, an end to parliamentary immunity, strict campaign spending limits -- will help break their grip over lawmakers. President Poroshenko is arguably the greatest threat today to perpetuation of the oligarchy, but at least he has to face the voters in 2019. The others aren't accountable to anyone.

Weight of evidence

Every outrage or atrocity committed by the regime in Moscow, whether it be the seizure of territory from Russia's neighbors, the shooting down of a civilian aircraft, or the bombing of schools, hospitals and a United Nations aid convoy in Syria, is met first by the Kremlin with denials, and then the cry: "Show us the evidence."

Yet the body of evidence about the Kremlin's crimes is growing. The latest piece came in the form of leaked e-mails from Vladislav Surkov, Russian President Vladimir Putin's adviser on Ukraine and other former Soviet states. Several of the e-mails indicate that Surkov was involved in creating and running the "separatist republics" in eastern Ukraine.

The e-mails, released by a Ukrainian hacker group calling itself "Cyber Hunta," come from the account prm_surkova@gov.ru, and seem to be genuine, according to an analysis by the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab. Crucially, the hackers released the .PST Outlook data file for the e-mail account, which would be difficult to fake convincingly.

One e-mail, in which Surkov is requested to edit a document put out several days later by "local citizens in the Donbas," backs up claims of high-level Kremlin involvement in managing the conflict in Ukraine.

So does the report to Surkov from Denis Pushilin -- the former "separatist" leader, Russian citizen, and Ponzi scheme manager -- on the deaths of local and Russian proxy fighters in Ukraine, and the spreadsheet Pushilin sent to Surkov with the expenses of a Donetsk-based press center. Surkov was also sent a list of proposed "separatist" leaders to review -- before their appointments were even announced.

These latest revelations only add a few grams to the already existing mass of proof of the Kremlin's meddling in the Donbas. To those following events in Ukraine, they are minor details in a picture of events that has long been clear.

And it's unlikely that the ever-growing weight of evidence of its wrongdoing will prove burdensome for the Moscow regime -- Kremlin officials divorced themselves from reality some time ago.

But they should reinforce the conclusion among those outside the Kremlin's bubble of mendacity that Moscow's denials should not be trusted, its version of events in Ukraine is deceitful and its claim that there is "no evidence" of its crimes is false.

NEWS ITEM: Until recently Svitlana Ryzhenko, a retiree who used to work as an accountant for the wife of Prosecutor General Yuriy Lutsenko, owned eight luxury apartments in downtown Kyiv that are leased out by Lutsenko's son, as well as a \$1 million apartment in Russian-annexed Crimea, according to an investigation by the Nashi Groshi anti-graft watchdog and the corporate register. Lutsenko, who has been accused of failing to declare the real estate and using a figurehead to control it, said he had nothing to do with the apartments.



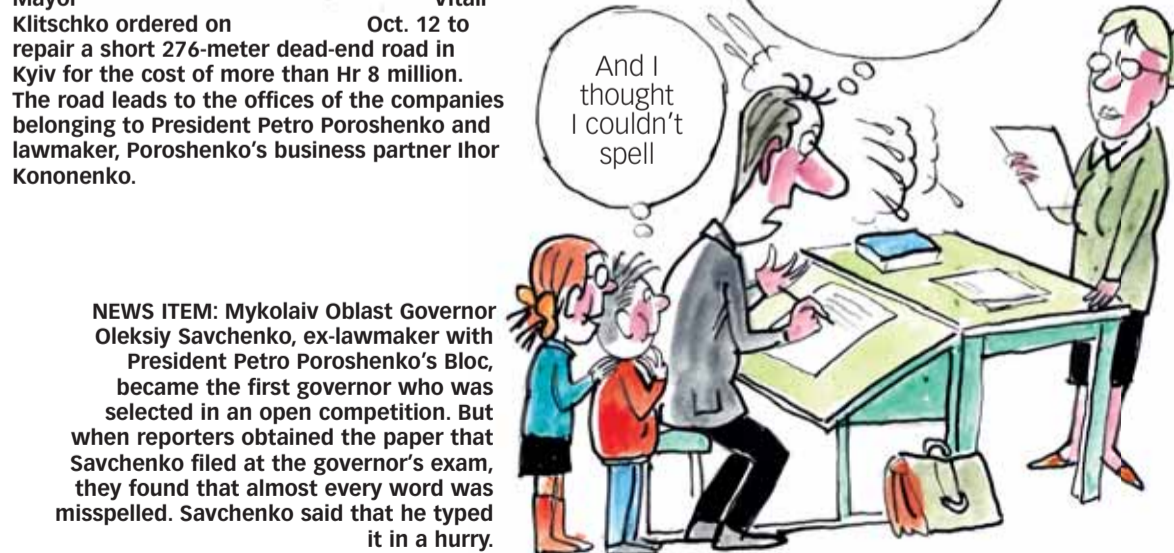
NEWS ITEM: Parliament voted to raise the lawmakers' wages from Hr 17,000 to Hr 36,000 on Oct. 20. However, both the parliament speaker Andriy Parubiy and Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman spoke in favor of canceling the raise.



NEWS ITEM: Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko ordered on Oct. 12 to repair a short 276-meter dead-end road in Kyiv for the cost of more than Hr 8 million. The road leads to the offices of the companies belonging to President Petro Poroshenko and lawmaker, Poroshenko's business partner Ihor Kononenko.



NEWS ITEM: Mykolaiv Oblast Governor Oleksiy Savchenko, ex-lawmaker with President Petro Poroshenko's Bloc, became the first governor who was selected in an open competition. But when reporters obtained the paper that Savchenko filed at the governor's exam, they found that almost every word was misspelled. Savchenko said that he typed it in a hurry.



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Turkey: Ukraine should investigate Gülenist ties

BY BERMET TALANT AND VERONIKA MELKOZEROVA
BERMET.TALANT@GMAIL.COM AND MELKOZEROVA@KYIVPOST.COM

Since the failed coup attempt in Turkey on July 15, the Turkish government has been calling on the Ukrainian authorities to investigate the legal and financial affairs of educational and cultural institutions in Ukraine that it says are linked to Fethullah Gülen, the man Turkey alleges was behind the coup plot.

As a spiritual leader of millions of people around the world, Gülen is accused by Turkey of undermining its secular democracy. Members of his movement have been accused by the Turkish government of attempting to infiltrate the government, police, and army in Turkey.

Last year the Turkish government declared the movement a terrorist organization, which it has dubbed FETÖ (a Turkish acronym for "Fethullah's Terrorist Organization"), and Turkey's leaders have claimed it poses a danger to international security.

Gülen's movement is a broad



Fethullah Gülen

Turkey at a glance

Total area: 783,562 square kilometers
Population: 80,274,604
Government type: Parliamentary republic
Head of state: Recep Tayyip Erdogan
Head of government: Binali Yildirim
GDP: \$1.589 trillion (2015)
GDP per capita: \$20,400 (2015)
Main economic sectors: Textiles, food processing, car manufacturing, mining, petroleum
Ukraine-Turkey relations
Trade: \$4 billion
Exports from Ukraine to Turkey: Wheat, iron, wood, steel products
Exports from Turkey to Ukraine: Machinery, petrochemical products, plastics, automobiles
Turkish foreign direct investment in Ukraine: \$198.7 million



A man approaches Turkish military with his hands up at the entrance to the Bosphorus Bridge in Istanbul on the night of a military coup attempt in Turkey on July 15. (AFP)

educational, cultural and business network spanning 140 countries. Although he himself doesn't have any formal relation to any of the institutions, Turkey claims they are founded and run by Gülen's loyal followers and members of his movement, known as "Hizmet" (Service) or "Cemaat" (Assembly).

Gülen links in Ukraine?

Although Gülen and his supporters seem to be an internal problem for Turkey, the aftermath of the failed coup have impacted countries around the world due to concerns that Turkish schools and cultural centers abroad might be tied to the Gülenist network.

In Ukraine, there are at least two institutions that have been claimed to be Gülen-linked: the Kyiv-based Meridian International School and the Isik (Syaivo) Ukrainian-Turkish Cultural Center. Other sources also mention the Black Sea High School in Odesa and the Simferopol International School in now-annexed Crimea.

After claims appeared in Turkish media in July that Meridian had Gülenist ties, its principal, Natalia Lyamar, denied this connection in an interview with the Kyiv Post. She said that the media reports caused minimal damage to the school, as only four Turkish families had taken their kids out of the school before the start of the new academic year. Meridian remains one of the most popular schools among expatriates and local business people with a curriculum focused on foreign languages, sciences and math, she said.

On Oct. 27, Lyamar said that the



Parents and children enter the Meridian International School in Kyiv on Sept. 1. (Anastasia Vlasova)

school was continuing to work as normal. "No official notifications from Turkish or Ukrainian law enforcers have come to us yet. We're just trying to forget about those accusations and move on," she said.

The school's fees are quite high: Hr 162,000 (\$6,300) per year for a class with English-language instruction, Hr 112,500 (\$4,300) per year for a class with Ukrainian as the teaching language, and Hr 99,000 (\$3,800) per year for a place in the school's kindergarten.

"We have no international donors and no other financing apart from the tuition our parents pay for the school," said Lyamar. "Every hryvnia counts. All the money goes to buying food supplies, books, trips for students, and other needs."

Meanwhile, Volodymyr Serhiychuk, the co-founder of Isik

(Syaivo), the Ukrainian-Turkish Cultural Center, said he was outraged by the accusations, adding that the Turkish Embassy in Ukraine had itself help in the opening of the center three years ago.

Both Meridian and Syaivo claimed they have nothing to do with politics, and merely promote Turkish culture through providing language classes and organizing events such as the Turkish Olympiad – a Turkish language and culture competition.

Although articles referring to Meridian and Syaivo can be easily found on Hizmet News, a website covering the activities of Gülen's Hizmet movement and its followers around the world, there is no firm evidence available publicly that they are indeed linked to Gülen's movement.

Lofty ambitions confront reality in Turkish Stream pipeline

BY JOSH KOVENSKY
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Russia and Turkey signed an agreement to build a gas pipeline early this month, provoking worry that the Turkish Stream pipeline could render Ukraine obsolete as a gas conduit to Europe.

Ankara appears to have ambitions to become a gas transit hub connecting Central Asia, the Black Sea region and the Middle East to Europe. Those ambitions, however, may be tempered by reality as experts cast doubt on the project amid fears that it could change the balance of power in Europe's energy trade.

Big ambitions

Turkey and Russia began negotiations in 2009, four years after the completion of the Blue Stream gas pipeline. As envisioned, Turkish Stream will consist of two separate pipes - one that will deliver gas from Russia to Turkey, and another that will deliver gas onwards to the European Union.

It's this second pipeline that has Ukraine worried. If built out to full capacity, the transit pipeline would have an annual capacity of roughly 60 billion cubic meters of gas - enough to totally replace the amount that goes from Russia across Ukraine to Europe.

After remaining steady at about 112-121 billion cubic meters per year from 2005 to 2008, Ukraine's transiting of Russian gas to Europe has dipped sharply in recent years. In 2014, when Russia started its war on Ukraine, it dropped to 62.25 billion cubic meters, according to figures reported by Ukrainian newspaper Zerkalo Nedeli.

But Turkish Ambassador Yonet Can Tezel argues that the Turkish pipeline is only part of a larger effort to provide his country with more sources of energy.

"Like Ukraine, we need to diversify our sources. We don't want to depend on one supplier," the ambassador said, adding that the "main project" is a bid to pipe gas from the Caspian Sea across Turkey.

"I think Ukraine would understand," Tezel added, noting that Russia supplies Turkey with 55 percent of its natural gas imports.

Some analysts, however, see the move as part of a larger bid to establish Turkish hegemony in the region. If Russia and Middle Eastern nations have to depend on Turkey for energy transit to the European market, the thinking goes, Turkey will have a powerful lever.

Yusuf Cinar, the president of Turkish think tank Strategic Outlook, said that the pipeline fits into a larger Turkish bid to secure its position as a regional power.

'Golden age' ahead in Ukraine-Turkey ties?

BY NATALIE VIKHROV
NATALIE.VIKHROV@GMAIL.COM

Bilateral trade between Turkey and Ukraine is still well off its pre-Euro-Maidan Revolution mark of almost \$7 billion, down to \$4 billion, and negotiations for a free trade agreement are dragging on.

But there's still hope of stronger ties if the trade agreement is signed when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visits Ukraine next year. In fact, both countries hope to boost trade turnover to \$20 billion by 2020.

"The negotiations weren't moving as fast as we wanted," Turkish Ambassador to Ukraine Yönet Can Tezel told the Kyiv Post in a recent interview.

In 2015, Turkey was the second largest importer of Ukrainian goods and fifth largest trading partner, despite the recent downturn after the revolution that drove President Viktor Yanukovich from power on Feb. 22, 2014.

Tezel said the agreement would boost Turkish investment in Ukraine. "We try to tell our Ukrainian colleagues to view the agreement as a sign of (Turkey's) belief, its confidence in the Ukrainian economy," he said.

Burak Pehlivan, chairman of the International Turkish Ukrainian Business Association, also emphasized the importance of signing the free trade agreement, but said one of the major barriers has been Ukraine's position in the agricultural sector.

He said that the agricultural industry has been excluded from more than 30 free trade agreements

signed by Turkey, while Ukraine wants agricultural goods to be part of the deal.

According to Pehlivan, the countries are currently negotiating over quotas of agricultural goods that fall within the scope of the deal.

Golden age

Despite the slow pace of negotiations, Pehlivan said Ukraine and Turkey were currently in a "golden age" of economic and political relations.

With 600 Turkish companies working in Ukraine, Pehlivan said Turkey was much more likely to invest in Ukraine than Western countries.

In May, Ankara and Kyiv signed off on a joint manufacturing agreement under which three aircraft models – two freight and one passenger – will be produced at Ukraine's Antonov State Enterprise for Turkish use.

Another of the series of agreements signed in 2016 sees Turkey providing Ukraine with consultancy services on the safety of nuclear power plants.

This agreement would see Turkey provide training to nuclear plant employees, while Turkish students would have the opportunity to take up internships in Ukraine.

Defense cooperation

Most recently, Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine Oleksandr Turchynov announced plans to boost the defense partnership between the two countries.

Turchynov met with Ismail Demir, director of the Secretariat for Defense



Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan welcomes Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko in Ankara on March 9. (AFP)

Industries of Turkey, in late October to discuss cooperation. Earlier in the year the parties signed a memorandum of cooperation.

"We're working towards the implementation of specific projects: producing armored vehicles, rocket and missile engineering, aircraft engineering and others," Turchynov said.

This follows a deal signed earlier in October between Ukrainian state company Ukrimash and Turkey's Havelsan Hava Elektronik Sanayi to jointly manufacture a passive radio-location system. The system will be sold abroad.

Travel

While Ukraine has a small business footprint in Turkey, the country does receive a large influx of Ukrainian tourists.

Earlier in October, Halyna Vynarchyk, who heads the aviation department of Ukraine's Infrastructure Ministry, announced that the countries had agreed to increase the number of flights between Istanbul and Ukrainian

cities, adding 26 new flights to the 35 flights that are already operating. Kyiv-Ankara flights will be introduced as well.

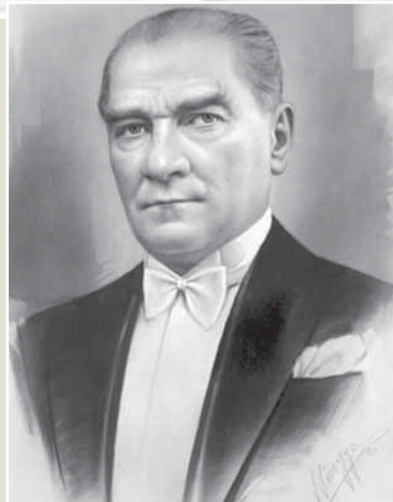
Tezel said there is demand for the increase from both sides.

"The number of tourists coming to Turkey has dropped, except for the tourists from one country – Ukraine," he said, adding that their number has actually increased in 2016. ■



Turkey celebrates Republic Day

(Top) Young people march with the Turkish national flag during a ceremony marking the 92nd anniversary of the founding of the modern Turkish Republic at the Ataturk Cultural Center on Oct. 29, 2015 in Ankara. Turkey starts celebrating its Republic Day at 1 p.m. on Oct. 28. The full public holiday is on Oct. 29. This year, celebrations will take place amid a continuing state of emergency after the failed coup against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in July. Republic Day commemorates the official proclamation on Oct. 29, 1923, by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (right, undated portrait), of the Turkish Republic, with Ankara as its capital. Atatürk (1881-1938) was the first president of the Republic of Turkey and he is called "the father of the Turkish nation." Atatürk's proclamation abolished the Turkish Sultanate after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (1299-1923). Following the Battle of Gallipoli during World War I, the Turkish National Movement fought against foreign occupation. The Treaty of Lausanne on July 24, 1923, set the borders of the modern Turkish Republic. (AFP)





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Turkish soap operas hook viewers with beautiful actors, simple plots

BY VERONIKA MELKOZEROVA
MELKOZEROVA@KYIVPOST.COM

Take a tall, handsome, dark-haired man. Make him passionately in love with a beautiful woman. Place them in a historical or modern setting. Add a dash of intra-family strife, or a betrayal by friends that puts lives and livelihoods in danger.

There you have the recipe for a modern Turkish soap opera – and Ukrainians love them.

Since the 2000s, Turkey has become a leading producer and exporter of soap operas. According to Turkish news website Anadolu, the country supplies TV dramas to 90 countries, making it the second-largest soap opera exporter after the United States. Turkish TV drama exports were worth \$250 million in 2015, according to Anadolu.

Ukraine started importing Turkish dramas in 2013. Since then, Turkish-made stories of love, treason and politics have become a staple for Ukrainian soap opera consumers.

“The Turks know what their viewers need,” Liliya Molodetskaya, a

screenwriter and journalist at Detector Media watchdog, told the Kyiv Post. “Unlike Ukrainian filmmakers, who are always trying to amaze the audience with something new, (the Turks) place their bets on a well-trying method – a simple and emotional story, and beautiful actors.”

Emotions and close ties

In Ukraine, 10 Turkish soap operas have been shown on the 1+1, Bigudi, TET TV channels, all of which have 9-11 percent TV audience share, Andriy Koval, programming director at the 1+1 Media Group, said.

“As with all good things, Turkish soaps appeared on Ukrainian TV by accident. The first experiment was ‘One Thousand and One Nights’ – shown during the day, it had rather average ratings (of 4-9 percent). But then there came ‘The Magnificent Century,’ which won the hearts of Ukrainians,” said Koval.

Yevgenia Olenikova, a translator based in Kyiv, started watching Turkish soap operas to improve her language skills. But she soon got

hooked on the plots. “They win over the audience with their high quality and beautiful cinematography, and strong emotions,” Olenikova said.

She likes “Ezel” – the story of a man betrayed by the woman he loved. She has also watched Turkish adaptations of U.S. shows, and the most popular Turkish historical drama “Muhtesem Yuzyl,” or “The Magnificent Century.”

Connections to Ukraine are strong.

“The Magnificent Century” is the tale of a Ukrainian woman, Nastya Lisovska, who was kidnapped and enslaved in the Ottoman Empire, but then became Roxelana or Hurrem Sultan, the chief consort of Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent.

Olenikova also is a fan of some Turkish actors.

“I would mention actresses Nebahat Cehre and Beren Saat, and actors Halit Ergenc and Kivanc Tatlitug. And of course Meryem Uzerli – her body language is awesome,” said Olenikova.

Turkish-German actress Uzerli has become popular after starring in the role of Roxelana.

“Ukrainians are deeply involved in their family environments. Most of the Turkish shows tell the stories of family values, conflicts and intrigues,” said Molodetskaya. “That is interesting for Ukrainian viewers, despite the differences in culture and mentality between our nations.”

People get easily addicted to soaps when their heroes have simple and familiar values, goals and problems.

“Turks always take care to put beautiful actors on screen. At home, women control the TV remote, so beauty works,” she said.

Pylyp Illenko, the head of Ukraine’s State Film Agency, told the Kyiv Post that Turkish soap operas frequently win a more mature and female audience because of the

melodrama. Many – like “Kinglet, the Songbird” (made in 2013) – are remakes of series made in the 1970s.

“Those were the first soap operas shown in the Soviet Union, so they remind some Ukrainians of their younger days,” said Illenko.

Media expert Otar Dovzhenko said, Turkish soaps, like Latin American ones “have a full package to lure their target audience: romantic love, a pinch of exotica, the core theme of Cinderella and Prince Charming, and, of course, traditional and sometimes conservative values”

International love story

On the big screen, cooperation between Turkey and Ukraine amounts to only one co-produced movie. The romantic comedy “Love Me,” made in 2013 by Ukrainian-Turkish couple Maryna Er Horbach and Mehmed Bahadir Er, could be the start of Ukrainian-Turkish joint filmmaking, Illenko hopes.

The story is that of Turkish man Cemal, played by Ushan Cakir, who comes to Kyiv seeking a last one-night stand with a gorgeous Ukrainian woman before his arranged wedding back home. In Kyiv, he falls in love with Sasha, played by Ukrainian actress Victoria Spesivtseva, the mistress of a married Moscow businessman.

Cakir won the best leading actor award at the Odessa International Film Festival in 2015 for his role.

Er Horbach said that, despite different religions, the Ukrainian and Turkish mentalities are close and deeply interested in each other. Yet despite that interest, no further major joint productions are in the pipeline.

“We’re interested in further cooperation,” said Koval. “But Turkish filmmakers are so busy and so oriented to their domestic viewers. We haven’t found a contact point yet.” ■



Turkish Ambassador to Ukraine Yonet C. Tezel.

Ukraine wary over plans for new Turkish Stream pipeline

Pipeline from page 6

“Turkish Stream would put Turkey in an important position,” Cinar said, explaining that Ankara would like to use the pipeline as part of a larger strategy to become a regional gas conduit to Europe.

“Turkey wants to be at the center, and this could help,” Cinar added.

20 percent threat

The agreement to launch the pipeline has provoked worry in Kyiv. Naftogaz CEO Andriy Kobolev called it a threat and added that Ukrainian diplomacy should create “maximum preconditions” to ensure that the pipeline is not built.

But analysts said that even if the pipeline goes ahead, it’s unlikely to deal a fatal blow to Ukraine’s gas transit.

“The main threat is in the reduction of gas deliveries to Romania,” said Gennadiy Kobal, an analyst with oil and gas consultancy UPEKO. The South Stream pipeline, cancelled in 2014, would have linked Turkey to the rest of Europe via Bulgaria. But without that project, Kobal said, Turkey’s ability to deliver gas is limited.

Kobal placed the total amount that Ukraine would lose from a completed Turkish Stream at 20 percent of the volume of gas currently transiting Ukraine.

Furthermore, a number of uncertainties could still prevent the deal from going into effect.

Russia-Turkish relations, although warmer after Russia strongly supported the Tayyip Erdogan regime during the July coup attempt, have been historically unstable. Turkey remains part of NATO and still wants to join the EU.

The two countries have also only agreed to build a part of the pipeline, the transit capacity of which would fail to render Ukraine’s obsolete.

And finally, EU approval will be needed for the crucial portion of the pipeline that brings gas into Europe.

“The EU has the option to put up bureaucratic barriers against Turkstream,” said Cinar.

Kobolev echoed Cinar’s comments, saying that he hoped the EU would be as “harsh as it was on South Stream.”

Kobal added that even if the pipeline is built to specifications, the EU would have to “completely give up Ukrainian gas” for it to be real threat.

“I see more of a threat from the expansion of the Nord Stream (Baltic undersea pipeline from Russia to Germany),” Kobal added. ■



From left, Ottoman Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (Halit Ergenc) and Roxelana (Meryem Uzerli) welcome their baby in the scene from Turkish soap opera “The Magnificent Century.” (Courtesy)

Turkey remains in state of emergency as probe expands into attempted coup in July; Gülen movement targeted

Turkey from page 6

The Turkish authorities, however, say they have provided undeniable evidence of such links to Ukrainian officials, and that Ukraine should now investigate the legal and financial grounds of Meridian and Syaivo’s activities.

“We believe that Gülen’s structures, including those in Ukraine, are not legitimate,” Turkish Ambassador to Ukraine Yonet Can Tezel told the Kyiv Post. “There are direct links to Gülen movement which raises questions on how these institutions were established, how they operate, who the founders and teachers are, where their startup capital came from, and where the revenues go. We saw many contradictions with Ukrainian law, and these violations have to be investigated by the Ukrainian authorities.”

Post-coup crackdown

In a post-coup crackdown, Turkey within a few weeks closed more

than 1,000 Gülen-affiliated private schools around the country, including 15 universities, and revoked the licenses of 21,000 teachers. The Turkish Higher Education Council also demanded the resignation of 1,577 university deans.

In other countries, however, the Turkish government is unable to act against Gülen-affiliated schools directly, since most of them are private. Instead, it has been calling for their closure.

Some countries, like Azerbaijan, Niger and Somalia, shut down the schools at the request of the Turkish government and declared their support for Turkey in its fight against FETÖ. Others, like Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, said they had found nothing illegal in the schools’ activities.

However, some countries did suspect the Gülen global network of having a hidden agenda and being involved in business malpractice long before the failed Turkish coup attempt in 2016.

In the United States, for example,

Gülen-affiliated charter schools have been accused of money laundering, visa fraud and the misuse of taxpayers’ money. In former Soviet republics with Muslim populations, Turkish schools have been suspected of having a religious influence on students. Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan shut them down in the 2000s.

A solution?

At the same time, Turkish schools have gained a reputation of providing high-quality education and giving scholarships to talented kids whose families couldn’t afford tuition. They are considered prestigious in Central Asia, the Balkans and Africa.

Tezel said the Gülen-affiliated schools and centers in Ukraine don’t necessarily need to be closed. Instead, they could be transferred to the Turkish Education Foundation for operation, as happened in Guinea, or be taken over by a local nongovernmental orga-

nization with a more transparent policy.

“It’s crucial not to harm the students and local staff, who had good intentions,” said Tezel. “Like us in the past, they were shown only the positive side of Gülen structures. But the innocence of these Ukrainians does not make the Gülenist institutions in Ukraine innocent.”

In attempt to regain the Turkish government’s influence in Ukraine, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, a state body, last week opened a Crimean Tatar cultural center and launched Turkish language classes at Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv.

“Until now, in countries like Ukraine, FETÖ hid behind the Turkish language and the colors of the Turkish flag to open language courses and schools, and used their incomes to commit betrayal,” said Mahmut Çevik of the agency.

“Nobody has the right to use Turkish flag and language for their own businesses and purposes.” ■



TİKA inaugurates five projects in a day in Ukraine



Director of Department of the Balkans and East Europe at TİKA **Mahmut Çevik** together with Ukraine Program Coordinator of TİKA **Hacı Bayram Bolat**



Mustafa Abduldzhemil Qırımoğlu; National leader of Crimean Tatars and Member of Ukrainian Parliament



Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) has been operating in Ukraine since 1997 and has implemented more than 300 projects so far with a budget of approximately 40 million US Dollars. TİKA carries on with success supporting projects at educational and cultural sectors in Ukraine.

Several educational and cultural centers renovated and equipped by TİKA have been entered into service in Kiev, capital of Ukraine. The exhibition hall named as "Underground Treasures of Ukraine" at National Museum of Natural History under National Academy of Science of Ukraine has been unveiled by Mahmut Çevik, Director of Department of the Balkans and East Europe at TİKA, Hacı Bayram Bolat, Ukraine Program Coordinator of TİKA and Özgün Talu, counsellor at Turkish Embassy in Ukraine. The exhibition hall, badly damaged after fire disaster and looking for rebuilding for a long time, has been completely repaired and modernized by the contributions of TİKA."

At the ceremony Igor Emelyanov, Director of the Museum, expressed his thanks and stated "We are really grateful. By the means of your support, the exhibition hall damaged by the catastrophic fire has been completely renewed and achieved modern look".

Mahmut Çevik, Director of Department

of the Balkans and East Europe at TİKA expressed his thanks to authorities of Museum due to their close cooperation with TİKA and stated "Regarding that we operate in over 50 countries and we have a great deal of diversity in projects, this project represents the first in terms of museology. Hereby, I would like to thank to our Coordinator of TİKA in Ukraine and Counsellor of Embassy for their great efforts. We have hundreds of projects in Balkans and Eastern Europe, particularly in Ukraine, in the fields of education and health. Thanks to Ukrainian state for their collaboration as well. You succeeded to transform an important Museum of Nature in Europe from a ruined form to a new one.

Afterwards, the delegation moving to National Taras Şevçenko University, the most prestige university in Ukraine, has been welcomed with an enthusiastic show by the students with traditional clothes.

Vice Chancellor Petro Beh, who received the TİKA delegation, stated: "It is a great honor for me to accept such a high level delegation. TİKA is an organization of great value for us. In 2003 we opened up the Turkish Information and Cultural Centre. Wife of the Turkish President of that period also took part in the opening ceremony.

We've been constantly receiving material and moral support from you since that time. I thank you for your contribution to the promotion of the Turkish language and strengthening of our infrastructure. In the scope of our today's meeting we'd like to express our hope for the further profound cooperation. We also hope that cooperation between Ukrainian and Turkish universities will strengthen. Number of Turkish students accepted into our university increases each year".

Qırımoğlu: "This cultural center will strengthen ties between Turkey and Ukraine".

Subsequently the delegation, accompanied by the national leader of Crimean Tatars and member of Ukrainian Parliament Mustafa Abduldzhemil Qırımoğlu, inaugurated the Laboratory for Intensive Foreign Languages Studying, established in the Taras Shevchenko University with the support of TİKA. After the ceremony the delegation visited Turkology Research Centre, classrooms for learning the Turkish language and Turkology Department of the university.

Qırımoğlu said: "Opening of such a cultural center is of a great importance not only to those Crimean Tatars, who left Crimea, but also to those, who stayed there. Crimean Tatar is the language closest to Turkish. Once I

told as a joke, that the Turkish language was somewhat a spoiled version of the Crimean Tatar language. This center will contribute to strengthening ties between Turkey and Ukraine as well. On behalf of my people I thank you for the support you provided".

Later on the delegation took part in the opening ceremony of the interactive class, renovated and equipped by TİKA, in the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

TİKA Program Coordinator in Ukraine Hacı Bayram Bolat said: "Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine is one of our major strategic partners. We'd also like to open a Turkology Department here in the upcoming term. Besides, I think that there are a lot of other projects we could implement together. TİKA conducts its activities in Kharkiv, Dnipro, Zaporozhye, Kherson, Mykolayiv, Ivano Frankovsk, Ujgorod, Lviv oblasts and in all regions of Ukraine. I believe we will hereafter put our signature under the great projects in educational and healthcare sectors of Ukraine".

Finally, the delegation took part in the opening ceremony within the scope of the TİKA's project of constituting a digital library in the National Academy for Public Administration under the President of Ukraine.



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 or call 591-7788.

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Estonia ditches paper with model e-governance services

BY DENYS KRASNIKOV
KRASNIKOV@KYIVPOST.COM

The internet in the least-populous member of the European Union, Estonia, has one of the highest penetration rates in the world. Moreover, Estonians make much broader use of it than in other countries – they even use it now to elect their parliament, start companies and pay their taxes.

In fact, the huge amount of electronic services created by the Estonian government to ease its citizens' interaction with the state has turned the country into the world's leading digital society. These electronic solutions save money, time, and make government operations entirely transparent and open to public scrutiny.

The e-services created by the Estonian government under its e-Governance initiative include services such as i-Voting, the e-Tax Board, e-Business, e-Banking, e-Tickets, e-Schools, University via the internet, and the e-Governance Academy – the Estonian organization that aims to educate officials and citizens about the use of the internet in running the country.

Hannes Astok, the director for development and strategy at the e-Governance Academy, says one



A woman in Tallinn, Estonia, casts her vote online in the Baltic country's March 2011 general election. The first internet-integrated vote in the world happened in 2005, when a modest 1.9 percent of Estonia's 1.3 million population cast their votes in municipal elections online. (AFP).

of the country's e-services – digital signatures – alone saves Estonia millions of euros.

"We've calculated that with every

digital signature provided, the country saves at least €1," Astok told the Kyiv Post. "Since Estonians have provided more than 280 million digital

signatures during the last decade, we have saved around €280 million as a nation. No government ever has enough money – there's always a

better use for every penny."

In total, Estonia saves 2 percent of its gross domestic product through the paperless governance every year, according to Taavi Rõivas, the country's prime minister.

Internet Voting

The first internet-integrated vote in the world happened in 2005, when a modest 1.9 percent of Estonia's 1.3 million population went not to polling stations to cast their votes in municipal elections, but online to vote for their preferred candidate.

In subsequent elections that percentage has gradually increased, with the level of online voting growing to 30.1 percent at the last parliamentary elections, in March 2015.

"If the government asked people to send a paper letter, many people wouldn't know anymore how to print it out, where to buy an envelope, how many stamps are needed, and where the nearest mailbox is," Astok said.

Voters identify themselves with either an ID-card – a smart card issued in Estonia by the Ministry of Internal Affairs – or mobile-ID, a service that allows a client to use a mobile phone as a form of secure

more **E-governance** on page 10

HOW DOES I-VOTING WORK IN ESTONIA?

I-Voting is an electronic system that allows voters to cast their votes from any internet-connected computer. Estonia is the first country to implement online voting in general elections.

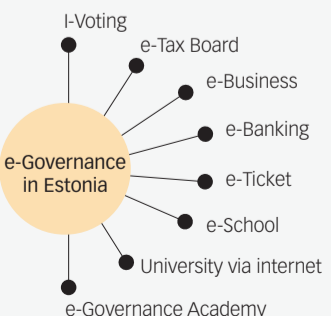
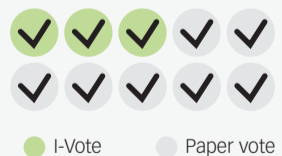


TIME SAVING
It takes **2:36 minutes** to vote via the internet, while voting at a polling station takes on average 30 minutes.



MONEY SAVING
In the case of i-voting, the cumulative time savings in the Estonian parliamentary elections of 2011 were around **504,000 euros** in average wages.

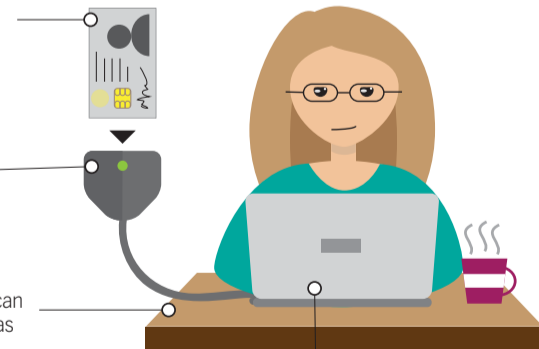
I-VOTING vs. PAPER VOTING
In 2015, during the parliamentary elections in Estonia, **30.5 percent** of the voters used the i-voting system to cast their votes from 116 countries.



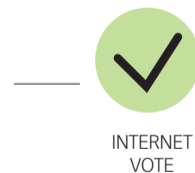
In Estonia, you can vote with either an **ID-card** (a plastic national ID-card with a chip inside) or **Mobile-ID** (voting using a smartphone).

To authorize an ID-card, citizens need to connect it to a computer via a **smart card reader**.

Estonians can vote wherever they can get internet connection. **Estonia** has one of the highest internet penetration rates in the world.



The most popular operating system with i-Voting Estonians is Windows (92.6 percent), the second place is iOS and the third – Linux.



The voter's identity is removed from the ballot before it reaches the National Electoral Committee thereby ensuring anonymity.



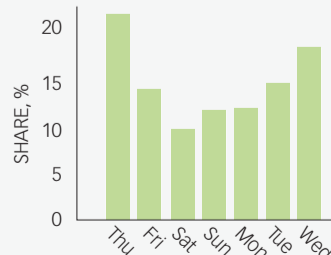
A separate Electronic Voting Committee is responsible for conducting Internet voting. But the National Electoral Committee retains a supervisory role.

History of internet elections in Estonia

- 2005 — Local elections (the first one in the world held at national level)
- 2007 — Parliamentary elections
- 2009 — European Parliament elections & Local elections
- 2011 — Parliamentary elections
- 2013 — Local elections
- 2014 — European Parliament elections
- 2015 — Parliamentary elections



A typical e-voter is a 35-45-year-old person. It takes 2:30 minutes to vote. It takes less time for old people to i-vote than young people and it takes less time for females to vote than it does for males.



Voting via the internet in Estonia starts 10 days before Election Day and continues for one week. Moreover, it's possible **to vote any time at the day**.

Estonia 12th, Ukraine 80th, in Ease of Doing Business

E-governance from page 9

electronic identification.

Since 2013, Estonians have also been able to check if their votes have reached the election committee server and have been counted.

Although the system allows voters to remain anonymous, every time a vote is cast on the internet, the electoral bodies can see a range of other data about voters. This allows them to gather statistical data about voters' sex and age, and time a vote was cast, which are analyzed for scientific purposes, according to Kristi Kirsberg, an advisor at Estonia's National Electoral Committee.

"This provides insight into how voters vote," Kirsberg said.

Despite winning praise from Estonian election officials, computer security experts from outside the country have warned that any voting system that transmits voted ballots electronically cannot be completely secure.

"(However), the system has been used in eight elections – municipal, national and European – without a single serious incident," Kirsberg said.



Kersti Kaljulaid was elected as the fifth President of Estonia on Oct. 10, 2016. (AFP)

"Every aspect of online balloting procedures is fully documented, and the procedures are rigorously audited," she added.

E-Business

The World Bank placed Estonia 12th in the 2017 Ease of Doing Business ranking. Compare that to France at 29th, and Switzerland at 31st – or Ukraine's place at 80th.

Many businesspeople run their companies in Estonia on the web, and 98 percent of all financial transactions in the country are now carried out online. And as many as 95 percent of the country's citizens now file their tax returns online.

The Estonian government now plans to attract even more investors and young entrepreneurs to the country: in December 2014, Estonia became the first country in the world to introduce the concept of electronic residency.

Having obtained an Estonian e-residency, one receives a government-issued smart ID-card that includes a digital identity and authorization code. This allows e-residents to sign important documents digitally and accessing secure services – even if they don't live in Estonia.

For example, having an e-Residency would allow a Ukrainian entrepreneur to establish an Estonian company that he runs from Singapore to serve clients based in Germany. He would also be able to use his digital signature to sign contracts with customers throughout the European Union.

In other words, one could administer a company from anywhere in the world, conducting e-banking, and paying Estonian taxes (at a flat 20 percent rate).

About 13,000 people have already obtained electronic residencies in Estonia, but its government envi-

More than 10 years ago, Estonia's capital Tallinn became the first city to hold elections online. (AFP)



sions 10 million virtual residents by 2025.

"E-Residency is just an extension of our existing digital society," e-Residency managing director Kaspar Korjus told the Kyiv Post, saying that the state accepts almost everyone. "Only 1 percent of people are rejected – if they fail a police background check. The reasons may include previous poor business behavior."

Ukrainian dream

Estonia's example could show the way forward for implementing similar electronic systems in Ukraine, according to Dmytro Dubilet, the IT director at PrivatBank and founder of the Ukrainian government's electronic services portal, iGov.

"But it's important to understand that Estonia was building its basic systems 15 years ago. Many things have changed since then, especially in terms of technology," Dubilet told the Kyiv Post.

And the e-Governance Academy's Astok said it was impossible to entirely copy an e-government solution from one country to another, as legislation, organizational culture

e-government are active management and political leadership, along with supporting legislation and technology. The technology is the easiest part, as almost every country has a lot of talented engineers and tech companies, he said.

"But if the government's willingness to change is missing, it's unlikely anything will happen," Astok said. "Government is one of the key players in e-society development in every country. Only together with the government can all other stakeholders – businesses, citizens and NGOs – create a secure and trusted digital society."

Dubilet agrees, saying that support from the government is very much needed in Ukraine "at least at the organizational level."

"Luckily, we have it. Without this support, we wouldn't have achieved anything."

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and traditions vary.

Nevertheless, work on transferring Estonian e-government know-how to Ukraine started back in 2012, with Estonian advisors helping to set up electronic document management systems, mobile applications, geographical information systems and call centers in Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk oblasts.

Astok said the key elements in

Estonia at a glance

Total area: 45,228 square kilometers

Population: 1,258,545

Government type: Parliamentary republic

Head of state: Kersti Kaljulaid

Head of government: Taavi Roivas

GDP: \$37.55 billion

GDP per capita: \$28,600

Main economic sectors: Agriculture, manufacturing, textiles, telecommunications, wood production, IT

Ukraine-Estonia relations

Trade: \$90 million (2015)

Exports from Ukraine to Estonia: Agricultural products, machinery, timber

Exports from Estonia to Ukraine: Animal products, chemical products, machinery

Estonian foreign direct investment in Ukraine: \$308 million (2015)

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 • innovation
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18 years in Ukraine

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High-tech Estonia builds on success

BY DENYS KRASNIKOV
KRASNIKOV@KYIVPOST.COM

When it was released in August 2003, videophone app Skype put Estonia on the world's tech map.

Since then, this small Baltic state has been plowing resources into developing its information technology sector – and the results have been impressive.

More than 10 years ago, Estonia's capital Tallinn became the first city to hold elections online, through the same system citizens use to pay their taxes and view the data the government keeps on them. And when the country introduced a system of e-Residency in December 2014, non-residents got the chance to participate in Estonia's e-development.

Now, with its transparent tax system, membership of the European Union trade zone, and easy conditions for doing business, Estonia is capitalizing on its digital orientation to make the little country a big player in the startup world.

Easy going

The World Bank placed Estonia 12th in the 2017 Ease of Doing Business ranking. One of the reasons for this high position may be that getting early stage funding from private and public sector has become a lot easier in Estonia over the last 10 years.

New companies obtain funding every month. According to non-profit Estonia Startup, set up to foster a favorable tech startup eco-

system in the country, over the last decade Estonian tech companies have attracted roughly €320 million (\$349 million), €95 million (\$104 million) of which was invested in TransferWise, a peer-to-peer money transfer service.

During one of its funding rounds, TransferWise received €48 million (\$52.3 million) from the investor triad of Richard Branson, Silicon Valley king-maker and venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz, and Peter Thiel, the co-founder of PayPal.

"Skype's success story meant that everyone in Estonia could actually try and do the same," Marek Unt, head of communications in Europe at TransferWise, told the Kyiv Post.

Founded by Estonians in the United Kingdom 11 years ago, TransferWise now employs more than 600 people globally – 400 of them in the Estonian capital, Tallinn.

"The reason for basing our biggest office in Tallinn has mostly been the abundance of talent," Unt said.

But there are other good reasons to be based in Estonia – ease of doing business being one.

A digitally enabled ID-card, a computer, a credit card and a few minutes time were all Markus Villig needed to set up his Taxify taxi-app startup in Estonia in August 2013. Taxify now boasts over 500,000 users in 15 countries and has raised €1.4 million (\$1.5 million) from U.S. and European investors.



Steve Ballmer (L), the CEO of U.S. Microsoft, shakes hands with Skype CEO Tony Bates during an announcement about buying internet phone service company Skype for \$8.5 billion on May 10, 2011 in San Francisco, California. (AFP)

"Estonia has three main benefits – good technical education, easy access to early-stage financing, and low barriers to doing business," Taxify's expansion director Jevgeni Belousov told the Kyiv Post. "In Estonia, it takes five minutes to set up a company, the tax system is simple and you can easily operate across Europe."

"Estonian people are very proud of their e-country imago, Belousov added. "The business environment is also rather supportive of startups and entrepreneurship in general. All the digital services and e-solutions make business management fast and easy to handle."

Tech-savvy government

Estonia's success derives from not just the business community being tech-savvy, but the government as

well. According to TransferWise's Unt, the government's reputation for being digitally open has helped created a positive backstory that keeps attracting more startups to the country.

The number of startups in this country of 1.3 million people ranges between 500 and 700. Ukraine, with over 40 million people, has 1,127, according to website angel.co.

"As a small country, it's hard for us to compete in government funding with much larger and wealthier countries, but we can do our best to market our success stories well," Unt said.

Under former Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, the government invested effort into promoting brand Estonia globally. "People (from other countries) already presume Estonian companies are strong

in technology, and build great products," Unt told the Kyiv Post.

Going global

In 2015, Ukrainian tech startups had their best ever year, attracting \$132 million through 66 signed agreements with various investors, 48 percent of whom were foreign.

But while Estonia's Skype and TransferWise from the get-go targeted markets worldwide, many of Ukraine's tech companies, such as Ukraine's biggest online retailer Rozetka, have opted to stay within the country, content to work only on the domestic market.

That will have to change, if Ukraine is to emulate Estonia's success in the tech sector. The IT industry accounts for about 6.8 percent of Estonia's gross domestic product, while in Ukraine the figure is only about 3 percent.

"Skype, Transferwise and now Taxify have shown how a simple Estonian idea can grow to a successful worldwide business," Taxify's Belousov said. He added that because the domestic market is so small, most startup have no choice but to work with global partners and look for a stronger team abroad.

But Ukrainian investors are already sending the message that future startups in the country will have to have global ambitions if they want to attract their money.

"We want to invest in something digital that can compete globally," the CEO of investment fund Digital Future, Oleksii Vitchenko, said during the Lviv IT Arena tech conference on Oct. 1.

The Kyiv Post's IT coverage is sponsored by Beetroot, Ciklum and SoftServe. Content is independent of the donors.

Estonia moves to integrate Russian-language minority

BY JOSH KOVENSKY
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Estonia is not a suburb of St. Petersburg, despite what ex-U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich thinks.

The northernmost Baltic state with 1.3 million people has fought a tough internal battle over the past 25 years to cleanse itself of its Soviet past and join the European community. Estonians reached their goals, joining the European Union and NATO.

But Russian propagandists have focused intently on Estonia's Russian-speaking minority, claiming discrimination against them. Estonia's small size could make it even more vulnerable to Russia's hybrid-war tactics than Ukraine, which has been under invasion from the Kremlin since 2014.

The year after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Estonia held three elections in 1992 that signaled political support for integration with the West.

"From very early stages of that government it was taken very firm decision to reunite with Western organi-

zations," said Marko Mihkelson, chair of the Estonian Parliament's defense committee. "There was a strong political consensus behind this integration processes to dismantle everything connected with the Russian or the Soviet empire and to establish, first reforms, democratic reforms, social reforms, and that allowed us to be ready for membership."

Part of the de-Sovietization process includes promoting the Estonian language. The country passed a law in 1992 which mandated that Russians who moved to Estonia after the 1940 Soviet invasion and annexation must pass an Estonian language test in order to gain Estonian citizenship.

Ukraine in background

The country's Russian minority of 320,000 – nearly 25 percent of the population – coalesced into a separate community after independence. But the Russian minority appear to be poorer than Estonians; at least the unemployment rate is higher – 8.0 percent compared to 5.4 percent.

Russia's war against Ukraine convinced many in Estonia to be more

vigilant in integrating its Russian minority. According to Henrik Praks, a research fellow at the International Center for Defense and Security in Tallinn, the Estonian government is actively pursuing this goal, including by creating a Russian-language TV channel.

"We know a lot of Russian speakers in Estonia follow Russian state language media, and we know what kind of a world is presented there," Praks said. "What happened in Ukraine was a catalyst, and a public TV channel in the Russian language - which had not existed before - is broadcasting."

But in spite of "growing propaganda from Russia," Mihkelson argued that "integration in Estonia has been a success story."

Spartak Ivanov, a St. Petersburg native who lives in Tallinn, told the Kyiv Post that he never encountered any trouble, thanks to his command of the English language.

"I don't feel discrimination," Ivanov said. But, all the same, he's not planning to become an Estonian citizen. ■

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Not king of oligarchy, but its crown prince

Whether out of honesty or arrogance, Ihor Kolomoisky has revealed the corrupt ways of Ukraine's oligarchy, in which a tiny elite thrive at the nation's expense. "His entire business...is based on a conflict of interest and a merger of business and government," said lawmaker Mustafa Nayyem.

Story At A Glance

Ihor Kolomoisky, a pudgy jokester, is no laughing matter for Ukrainians. He is accused of corporate raidership – a polite term used in Ukraine to describe theft of other people's businesses by exploiting corrupt courts and deficient legislation – and large-scale tax evasion. He denies all accusations.

He's a perennial oligarch, thriving no matter who is in power, often in a top position behind Rinat Akhmetov in wealth. He clocks in with Forbes recently at No. 2 at \$1.46 billion, slightly ahead of his business partner, Henadiy Boholyubov, and his rival, Victor Pinchuk.

He has dominant or monopolistic positions in many sectors -- including banking, airlines and oil production.

Kolomoisky rallied the nation to the defense of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014 – protecting the motherland and his businesses – by bankrolling volunteer battalions when Ukraine's army was weak. But then he came into conflict with President Petro Poroshenko, who removed him as oblast governor on March 25, 2015.

Kolomoisky delivers personal insults, even to Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom he called "a schizophrenic of small height" who has "completely lost his mind." Putin returned the insults, calling Kolomoisky "a unique con man." In a Dec. 21 interview with Oliver Carroll in Politico, Kolomoisky also took aim at Poroshenko, saying the only difference between him and overthrown President Viktor Yanukovich is "a good education, good English and a lack of a criminal record." Everything else is the same: "It's the same blood, the same flesh reincarnated. If Yanukovich was a lumpen dictator, Poroshenko is the educated usurper, slave his absolute power, craven to absolute power."

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BY OLEG SUKHOV,
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For many years, he was one of Ukraine's most camera-shy oligarchs, rarely appearing in public and giving almost no interviews.

In recent years, however, Ihor Kolomoisky has burst into the spotlight, revealing himself to be one of the country's most colorful, comical – and confrontational billionaires.

For some, his bizarre behavior explains why he is nicknamed Benia, after a kind lion with a fluffy mane from an old Soviet cartoon. Seemingly proud at times of his reputation as a corporate raider, he has joked about being able to control a company after buying just a small stake. "Give me a 1 percent stake and I will take over the entire company," he has been quoted as saying.

Sadly for Ukraine, Kolomoisky's real behind-the-scenes antics are no laughing matter. He is not to be taken lightly by Ukraine or its citizens. Kolomoisky has been accused of bleeding the state dry by not paying his fair share of taxes while profiteering through rent-seeking schemes at state enterprises by exploiting ties to government officials.

The Kyiv Post had conversations with Kolomoisky, but he refused to be interviewed for this story.

'Political corruption'

"His entire business and everything he does is based on a conflict of interest and a merger of business and government," said Mustafa Nayyem, a lawmaker from President Petro Poroshenko's bloc in parliament. "Kolomoisky is one of the biggest factors of business influence on government... His business and the preferences he got would have never existed without the cooperation of state bodies, which is political corruption in the strict sense."

One of the most notorious examples is unpaid dividends and tax evasion at majority state-owned oil production giant Ukrnafta, the management of which Kolomoisky and



Pro-Ukrainian fighters aim an anti-tank gun during their training at the Right Sector base in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast on May 17, 2015. (Volodymyr Petrov)

Ihor Kolomoisky

Date of birth: Feb. 13, 1963.

Place of birth:

Dnipropetrovsk

Wealth: \$1.46 billion, second richest person in Ukraine, according to a 2016 Forbes ranking.

Key Assets: PrivatBank, Ukrnafta, Ukraine International Airlines, 1+1 Media.

Personal: Married to Iryna Kolomoiska; one son and one daughter.

Praised for: Successfully stopping Russian aggression from spreading to Dnipropetrovsk Oblast during his stint as governor in 2014-2015; admitting that oligarchs got rich from assets "stolen from the state."

Criticized for: Profiteering from his links to the government; blocking state oil company Ukrnafta's tax and dividend payments; strong-arm tactics, including raidership.



(UNIAN)

partners controlled for years.

Authorities say it cost the state \$600 million of unpaid taxes.

Just over a year ago, Kolomoisky appeared to be on the defensive, losing the governorship of his native Dnipropetrovsk Oblast and effective control of Ukrnafta.

Poroshenko claimed back then that his crackdown on Kolomoisky was the beginning of a de-oligarchization drive that would, once and for all, break the country free of the grip of oligarchy and pervasive kleptocracy. But the promise by the president, who is himself an oligarch, was not kept.

Failed de-oligarchization

After a hiatus, Kolomoisky again started exploiting leverage for tradeoffs – to preserve and increase his influence, while other oligarchs also remain untouched.

He now holds the balance of power in parliament, with his loyal lawmakers helping to secure key

votes for Poroshenko's wafer-thin ruling majority. Political analysts said Kolomoisky played a major role in the appointment of Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman in April and Prosecutor General Yuriy Lutsenko in May – both presidential loyalists.

'Hello, anybody home?'

The billionaire looks like a comic character – a short, energetic man with a shaggy grey beard and a thick, wavy full head of hair.

Some of his quotes, such as "hello, anybody home?" or "wanna grab a coffee?" have become internet memes shared on social networks.

In contrast with conventional bureaucrats and tycoons, he has an informal, offhand and down-to-earth, sometimes coarse style.

"Kolomoisky wore a grey t-shirt and grey jeans, and didn't resemble a governor in the classical sense," said Borys Braginsky, who was a spokesperson under Kolomoisky.

The tycoon is notorious for impulsive outbursts of anger, which can transform in a flash into dry humor.

In October 2014, Kolomoisky admitted having Israeli and Cypriot citizenship, apart from his Ukrainian one. This is a violation of Ukrainian law, which bans dual citizenship. "The Constitution says that dual citizenship is banned. It doesn't ban triple," Kolomoisky told Serhiy Andrushko, a Radio Liberty journalist.

Threatening manner

On March 19, 2015 Kolomoisky rudely insulted the same journalist during a standoff with Poroshenko over control of oil producer Ukrnafta and oil pipeline operator Ukrtransnafta.

Irritated with Andrushko's previous reporting on him, Kolomoisky swore at the journalist and called him a "prostitute." He also asked him whether he had "stuck" his tongue "up his ass."

"You're spying for me like a chick who's spying on her cheating husband," he yelled at Andrushko, who approached him for a comment.

In 2015 lawmaker Sergii Leshchenko published a recording of an alleged phone conversation between Kolomoisky and Andriy Kobolev, CEO of state oil and gas firm Naftogaz. In the conversation, which allegedly took place in September 2014, a man with a voice resembling Kolomoisky threatened to send loyal soldiers to capture a power plant and the office of the state's gas pipeline operator Ukrtransgaz.

"Don't provoke us to send people from the war zone. Don't fuck with us," said the voice that resembled that of Kolomoisky.

Then in May 2015, Kolomoisky called then-Economy Minister Aivaras Abromavicius a monkey at a meeting of Ukrnafta's board of directors. Despite his explosive persona, Kolomoisky's brain "works like that of an engineer," Braginsky said. "He always calculates, and his brain functions at lightning speed."

Ruthless competitor

Back in 2007, Kolomoisky turned to black humor in order to get rid of annoying neighbors – Russian oil company TNK-BP – which had an office next to him in the Millennium office building in Kyiv. One day in April, office workers were shocked to see an exhibition of expensive



OLIGARCH
WATCH

Kolomoisky unafraid to attack both Putin and Poroshenko

Kolomoisky from page 12

coffins in the Millennium's lobby. Men in black suits were distributing leaflets promoting a funeral company whose abbreviation in Ukrainian was TNK-BP. A few months after that incident, TNK-BP moved to another office.

Although his business grouping has never held power on the national stage and was often sidelined by rivals in prized privatization auctions, Kolomoisky has developed a knack for survival and success no matter who is officially in power.

Known for his aggressive and litigious style, harking back to the "wild '90s" of gangster capitalism, Kolomoisky and partners in his so-called Privat business group control a diversified portfolio of business assets spanning from Ukraine and extending to an ore mining enterprise in Australia, all via a web of offshore companies.

Business and political savviness has helped him outlive all previous political regimes in Ukraine, said Svyatoslav Oliynyk, an ally of Kolomoisky who was a deputy Dnipropetrovsk Oblast governor under him.

To Ukraine's defense

Prior to 2014, he and partners never directly got involved in politics. He broke that rule after the 2013-14 EuroMaidan Revolution that drove President Viktor Yanukovich from power.

When Russia started its war against Ukraine soon after the revolution, he was appointed governor and played a key role in fending off the Kremlin's onslaught.

Kolomoisky burst out of the shadows and switched from being an oligarch who rarely appeared in public



Newly appointed Dnipropetrovsk Oblast governor Ihor Kolomoisky (L) meets Yuriy Bereza, then head of regional pro-Ukrainian self-defence unit in Dnipro (then Dnipropetrovsk) on March 4, 2014. Bereza symbolically granted Kolomoisky the keys to the regional administration. One month later Bereza headed the Kolomoisky-sponsored Dnipro-1 volunteer battalion. (UNIAN)

or gave interviews, to being the most outspoken one.

Oliynyk said Kolomoisky proposed that fellow oligarchs Rinat Akhmetov and Victor Pinchuk become governors of Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts, respectively, but they refused.

Kolomoisky also said that he had advised Kharkiv Mayor Hennady Kernes, a Yanukovich ally, to support the post-revolutionary government instead of siding with pro-Kremlin protesters, and that Kernes had agreed.

In some of his first comments as governor of Dnipropetrovsk, he

dismissed claims by Russia that a coup by Nazi Ukrainian nationalists had seized power in Kyiv, claiming instead that Russia's leadership itself was Nazi and fascist in its views and behavior.

"If Nazis made me a governor, then either they are not Nazis or I'm not a Jew," Kolomoisky said.

Spars with Putin

Kolomoisky has also insulted Russian President Vladimir Putin on occasion, even though angering the Kremlin strongman has led to extremely unpleasant – even fatal –

consequences for his enemies.

At his opening press conference as Dnipropetrovsk Oblast governor on March 3, 2014, Kolomoisky called Putin "a schizophrenic of small height." "He is completely delusional. He lost his mind completely. His mission to recreate the Russian empire within the boundaries of 1913 or the Soviet Union within the boundaries of 1991 may bring the entire world to catastrophe," he said.

Putin returned the favor, calling Kolomoisky a "unique con man," claiming that he had defrauded Russian oligarch Roman

Abramovich. "And now this scoundrel was appointed governor of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast," he said. "... As a result of dishonest privatization, some people got rich, and now they're joining the government."

Kolomoisky kept up the feud in March 2015, telling the Financial Times he understands why Putin seized Crimea. "He was just taking advantage of the situation. He's just as much a raider as we are."

Dnipro's protector

One of his first moves as governor was to prevent the spread of Russian-engineered separatism from the eastern Donetsk Oblast to his neighboring Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. He ordered checkpoints to be set up on the border to defend the region.

As the country's financially starved army proved unable to fight in early days of the crisis, local self-defense units, sponsored by Kolomoisky's entourage, proved crucial in manning checkpoints and fending off Russian and separatist forces.

Located between Kharkiv, where Russian-backed separatists took over the regional administration briefly in April 2014, and Donetsk, which remains a separatist stronghold to this day, Dnipropetrovsk became a bulwark of the pro-Ukrainian movement. A major hospital for wounded soldiers and a center for the release of prisoners of war were established.

'There was no army...'

"Effectively there was no army and no police," Kolomoisky's ex-spokesman Braginsky said. Starting from late March, Kolomoisky's team started creating the volunteer Dnipro-1 Battalion to help the weak and poorly equipped Ukrainian army to fight

more Kolomoisky on page 16

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Seen as patriotic at start of war, Kolomoisky soon showed business is No. 1

Kolomoisky from page 15

separatists.

Oliynyk, who was Kolomoisky's deputy during his governorship, said the oligarch was funding the equipment, lodgings, food and logistics of the unit, but all the weapons and wages were provided by the government.

Dnipropetrovsk activist and blogger Vyacheslav Poyezdnik told the Kyiv Post that Kolomoisky was paying some Hr 5,000 to Hr 7,000 per month to Dnipro-1 fighters.

Oliynyk also said that Kolomoisky's team had helped the Right Sector paramilitary group, which was comprised mostly of EuroMaidan Revolution activists, basing them at a former summer camp and supplying them with food.

Among other battalions supported by Kolomoisky were also Dnipro 2, Azov, Shakhtarsk, Poltava, Sicheslav, and several regular army battalions.

At the end of April 2014, Kolomoisky's deputy Borys Filatov offered to pay \$10,000 to anyone who captured a Russian mercenary fighting in eastern Ukraine.

'Protecting business'

Poyezdnik said that, although Kolomoisky had not been seen often in Dnipropetrovsk, his team had been trying hard to get positive publicity by showing grenade launchers allegedly taken from enemy saboteurs and separatists supposedly captured on the war front.

"Their defense of Dnipropetrovsk was largely a publicity stunt," Poyezdnik said. "Why did they start defending Dnipropetrovsk? They were protecting their business."

Kolomoisky controls Ukraine's

largest commercial bank, Privatbank and, in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, the local soccer team Dnipro, ore mines and many other businesses.

Kolomoisky also spread his influence to Odesa Oblast when his ally Ihor Palytsya served as governor of the region from May 6, 2014 into half of 2015.

In the course of the war, Kolomoisky and his allies gained more influence in southeastern regions and elsewhere in Ukraine and – critics say – started widely using it to advance their businesses.

Poroshenko conflict

As Kolomoisky's clout grew nationwide, some observers say that he aspired to the role of Ukraine's oligarch No. 1, similarly to Akhmetov, Ukraine's richest man, under disgraced former President Viktor Yanukovich. But these ambitions appeared to set him on a collision course with Poroshenko in March 2015.

At that time, the Verkhovna Rada passed a bill curtailing Kolomoisky's de facto management control of majority-state-owned oil and gas producer Ukrnafta, while a Kolomoisky protégé was fired from the CEO position at state oil transportation monopoly Ukrtransnafta. Kolomoisky responded by sending armed men to blockade both companies.

Kolomoisky accused Poroshenko's business partner and "grey cardinal" Ihor Kononenko of being behind the takeover of Ukrnafta and Ukrtransnafta.

Eventually Kolomoisky was dismissed as governor of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.

Political consultant Taras Berezovets said Kolomoisky had

become too powerful and had started to irritate many with his rudeness to journalists and others. As a result, nobody supported him at a critical moment.

In an interview published Dec. 21 in Politico, Kolomoisky remained angry with Poroshenko, saying the only difference between him and overthrown President Viktor Yanukovich is "a good education, good English and a lack of a criminal record."

Everything else is the same: "It's the same blood, the same flesh reincarnated. If Yanukovich was a lumpen dictator, Poroshenko is the educated usurper, slave to his absolute power, craven to absolute power."

'Needed to be reined in'

"He completely lost it. He stopped taking into account that he is just one of Ukraine's 27 governors and can't be equal to the president," Berezovets said.

Nayyem, the lawmaker from the Poroshenko Bloc, said that the oligarch probably had patriotic motives at the beginning of his governorship, but later his business interests prevailed. "Eventually his government post became an appendix to his business," he said.

Oliynyk, a deputy governor under Kolomoisky and now a member of the Oblast's legislature from the Vidrodzhennya Party, played down the conflict between the oligarch and Poroshenko saying Kolomoisky had not planned to stay in office for long. "We were planning to serve for six months at most. But then the battle of Ilovaisk started. We couldn't leave," he said. "When the situation stabilized, Kolomoisky left. It just happened six months later than we initially planned."



Ihor Kolomoisky and PrivatBank chairman Oleksandr Dubilet at a press conference in Kyiv on April 2, 2003. (UNIAN)

Political analyst Volodymyr Fesenko said that in 2014 to early 2015 Kolomoisky aspired to be "one of the key figures in the government." "But after the conflict with Poroshenko he decided to return to the his previous traditional tactics, when he reached agreements with (ex-President Leonid) Kuchma, (ex-President Viktor) Yushchenko, (ex-Prime Minister Yulia) Tymoshenko and (ex-President Viktor) Yanukovich," he added.

Deal with Poroshenko?

Kolomoisky told online newspaper lb.ua in late 2015 that he had reached an agreement with Poroshenko in March on settling their dispute. The deal covered economic, political and media aspects. It also envisaged no

legal troubles for his allies, he added.

One of them, ex-Ukrtransnafta CEO Oleksandr Lazorko, is wanted in Ukraine on embezzlement charges and has applied for political asylum in the United Kingdom.

But the conflict between the tycoon and the president flared up again after another Kolomoisky ally, Gennady Korban, set up Ukrop, an opposition party with staunch anti-Poroshenko rhetoric, in June 2015. Korban clashed with pro-presidential candidates in the Chernihiv parliamentary by-election in July 2015 and the Kyiv mayoral election in September 2015 and lost.

In October 2015 Korban was arrested on embezzlement, organized crime, kidnapping and hijacking charges in a case that he called a vendetta by Poroshenko for his political activities.

Both Korban's defense and other lawyers say there were numerous procedural violations during his arrest.

Korban said that Pavlo Demchyna, a top state security official and a protege of Kononenko, was behind the operation.

A coup attempt?

Borys Lozhkin, Poroshenko's former chief of staff, wrote in a book he published in early 2016 that there had been rumors that Kolomoisky was planning a coup against the government using the Ukrop party.

"Kolomoisky allegedly made a deal with 'junior' factions of the government coalition, Rinat Akhmetov and someone in the cabinet, and was aiming to replace the government," Lozhkin wrote.

Oliynyk argued, however, that Korban's political project was independent from Kolomoisky and that his arrest stemmed from his own personal conflict with the president, rather than from the Kolomoisky-Poroshenko dispute.

New deal

Analysts speculate that Kolomoisky's team and Poroshenko reached

Ihor Kolomoisky argues with security at the entrance to the Kyiv office of state-owned energy giant Naftogaz on May 29, 2015. Kolomoisky came for a meeting of the supervisory board of subsidiary oil producer Ukrnafta, where he has a minority share. (Ukrinform)



Kolomoisky seen as in charge of 23-member Vidrozhennya bloc

another deal after Korban's arrest.

Braginsky argued that Korban's release from a detention center in March was part of the deal. Korban was put under house arrest and received a suspended sentence in the kidnapping case in April. Ukrainska Pravda reported on June 14 that he had fled to Israel.

Another part of the agreement is likely that Kolomoisky, his allies and lawyers should keep silent about Poroshenko's policies, Braginsky said.

"Non-compliance with this deal could entail big problems," he said. "That's why this topic is just being bypassed."

Korban's press office told the Kyiv Post that he was not giving any comments for the time being, while a spokeswoman for Filatov, mayor of Dnipro and ex-deputy governor of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast under Kolomoisky, said he could only comment on municipal issues, not on political ones.

Supporting Poroshenko

Another aspect of the alleged deal with Kolomoisky concerns the support of his allies in parliament for Poroshenko's agenda.

The governing coalition, which has a wafer-thin majority, desperately needs additional votes to pass laws and appoint officials. It makes it dependent on situational alliances and trade-offs with lawmakers and parties outside the ruling coalition.

The 23-member Vidrozhennya group, which pundits have linked to Kolomoisky, voted for the appointment of Poroshenko loyalist Volodymyr Groysman as prime minister on April 14 and the selection of Yuriy Lutsenko as prosecutor general on May 12.

Both Fesenko and Braginsky said that Kolomoisky had played a major role in both appointments. "This wouldn't have been done without Kolomoisky," Fesenko said.

Despite the agreements, Braginsky compared the Kolomoisky-Poroshenko conflict with the Minsk ceasefire with Russia.

"This conflict is smoldering like a cigarette," he said. "At any moment it can be re-ignited."

Wild 1990s

Kolomoisky's rebellious and conflict-prone spirit harks back to his youth.

He was born in 1963 to a Jewish family of engineers in Dnipropetrovsk, which is now known as Dnipro. In 1985 he received a degree in metallurgical engineering and started working at a state design bureau.

But he didn't follow his parents' career. Together with his friends, Kolomoisky started travelling by train to Moscow to purchase computers and other office equipment to re-sell them in Dnipropetrovsk, according to Forbes.

In the late 1980s, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev started promoting small business initiatives known as co-operatives. Kolomoisky benefited from this, initially working at the

Fianite co-operative together with Gennadiy Bogolyubov. In 1991, they co-founded Sentosa Ltd., naming it after an island resort in Singapore where they once spent a vacation, according to Forbes.

In the following years, Kolomoisky and Bogolyubov switched their attention to metal trading, and in 1992 they launched Privatbank, today Ukraine's largest commercial bank with over 20 percent of the nation's banking assets alone.

Supports Jewish causes

Calm, non-emotional and camera shy Bogolyubov, the complete opposite of the flamboyant Kolomoisky, is still a 50 percent partner with him in many businesses.

In 1995 Bogolyubov started actively practicing Judaism and now he is one of the main financiers of the influential global Chabad Jewish religious group.

Speaking in November 2010 in Brooklyn, New York, at a Chabad conference, Bogolyubov said his charity donations had grown in tandem with the growth of his business. While in 1995 he donated \$10,000, in 2007 his donations had risen to \$10 million. "Business was above the roof, it was a golden rain," he said speaking in English about that period.

The Menorah Center, the world's largest Jewish community center, a seven-story complex of some 50,000 square meters, opened in Dnipro in October 2012. Bogolyubov and Kolomoisky were the main sponsors of the project.

Corporate raiding

Sidelined from many lucrative privatization dealings, Kolomoisky's Privat group allegedly built much of its wealth by acquiring companies through litigation and corporate raids. In Ukraine, a country with weak law enforcement and judicial systems, where underpaid and corrupt judges often issue rulings to the highest bidder, court rulings have readily been used to seize company shares and assets.

Korban, a business partner of Kolomoisky, is widely considered the group's main specialist in corporate raiding. He argues, however, that there is nothing wrong with this.

"I didn't offend a single honest or poor person," Korban told the Kyiv Post last November. "These activities are called 'mergers and acquisitions' worldwide. There is no Criminal Code article for what I was doing, because many people do this around the world, for example George Soros."

Korban is also known for his ruthless approach to business dealings and politics. In April he pleaded guilty to kidnapping Serhiy Rudyk, head of Ukraine's land management agency, in 2014.

Privatization wars

In the early 2000s, Kolomoisky and Gennadiy Bogolyubov appeared to have cooperated with Victor Pinchuk, another native



People sit at Kyiv Boryspil airport on May 30, 2013 with a view of an airplane operated by Ihor Kolomoisky's Ukrainian International Airlines. (UNIAN)

of Dnipro and son-in-law of then President Leonid Kuchma. Kolomoisky claims he and Bogolyubov were making deals with Pinchuk, who was using his government connections to acquire the most lucrative pieces of Ukraine's industry.

The details of the murky privatizations of the early 2000s would have probably stayed secret if not for bitter arguments between participants years later, which led to several lawsuits being filed at the High Court of Justice in London.

In testimony given in September 2013, Kolomoisky claimed the Privat group had cooperated with Pinchuk in the privatization of several big plants.

According to Kolomoisky, Pinchuk was using his influence as the president's son-in-law to buy assets at a lower price, while Kolomoisky with Bogolyubov had to pay bribes to Kuchma.

Kolomoisky mentioned a written agreement reached in January 2003 regarding the management of Ukrnafta. Kolomoisky claimed that he and Bogolyubov were obliged to make payments "of no less than \$5 million per month until November 2004" into a fund intended to be used for Kuchma's next presidential campaign.

The Constitutional Court allowed Kuchma to run for the presidency in the autumn of 2004 – a right that he didn't use in the end. Kolomoisky said at the court that some \$100 million accumulated in the fund had been used for Pinchuk's personal needs

In its campaign, the Ukrop political party calls to "get rid of an oligarch president" and "return money to Ukraine from the offshores." Ironically, the party is financed by oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky, who reportedly uses offshore jurisdictions in his business.

instead.

'Stolen from state'

Kolomoisky claimed to have been extorted by Pinchuk and Kuchma again when speaking at a parliament committee in March 2015. He called the privatization of iron ore producer Ukrudprom, the Nikopol Ferroalloy Plant and steel producer Kryvorizhstal as "the most outrageous" cases of privatization, when some chosen oligarchs were able to buy the strategic businesses for next to nothing.

"Everybody plays soccer here but only Germany wins. Everybody takes part in privatization but only Akhmetov purchases," Kolomoisky joked at the committee, referring to Ukraine's richest oligarch.

In June 2005, the government cancelled the privatization of Kryvorizhstal, which had been sold in 2004 to Pinchuk and Akhmetov for \$800 million. In October 2005 the Indian-owned Mittal Steel bought the steel mill in a repeat privatization for a record price of \$4.81 billion.

Kolomoisky argued that other state companies bought by the oligarchs at lower prices should also be re-sold "through nationalization and expropriation."

Ukrnafta

One of Kolomoisky's key assets, a 40-plus percent stake in Ukrnafta, is currently at the center of a large-scale corporate conflict.

Viktoria Voytsitska, a lawmaker from the Samopomich Party, wrote in a Nov. 23, 2015 letter to the State Fiscal Service that Ukrnafta had received revenues worth Hr 20 billion from September 2014 through October 2015 and had enough cash to pay taxes. But Ukrnafta "deliberately" failed to pay taxes by hiding its cash and not showing it on its bank accounts, she added.

Last December the State Fiscal Service opened a tax evasion case against Ukrnafta. Ukrnafta's tax debt amounted to Hr 12.2 billion (or \$478 million) as of Sept. 30, according to investment bank Concorde Capital.

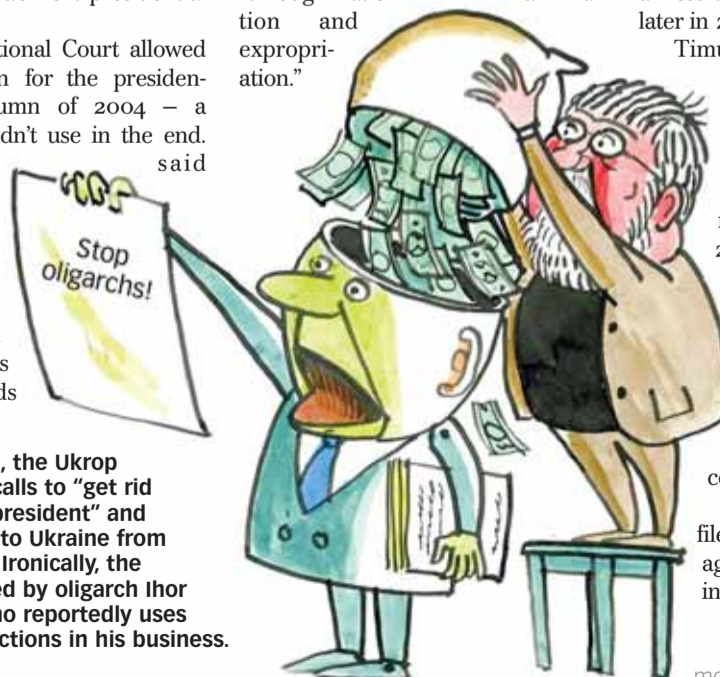
Kolomoisky has denied the accusations, blaming instead government officials for extorting his and other businesses in the country.

Moreover, Kolomoisky had blocked the payments of Ukrnafta's dividends worth Hr 2.4 billion for 2011-2014 to state-owned Naftogaz, which holds 50 percent in Ukrnafta, before the government passed a law in March 2015 to prevent him from obstructing shareholder meetings. As a result, the dividends were paid later in 2015.

Timur Khromayev, head of the National Securities Commission, said in January that Ukrnafta's management had also repeatedly failed to pay dividends to non-Privat minority shareholders since 2006.

But Kolomoisky argues that Ukrnafta can't pay the tax debt and the dividends because it was crippled by Naftogaz, which he says illegally seized a big amount of gas from the company.

In early June, Kolomoisky filed a \$4.67 billion lawsuit against the government, seeking compensation for the gas



Kolomoisky spills dirty secrets of oligarchy in Pinchuk dispute

Kolomoisky from page 17

that was seized.

This amount exceeds Ukraine's budget spending on security and defense in 2016, the third year of war in the country. Kolomoisky's opponents say this is at odds with the tycoon's claims to be a patriot.

Oleksiy Shalaisy, head of Nashi Groshi anti-corruption watchdog, said Kolomoisky was profiting for years thanks to his control over the majority state-owned Ukrnafta.

"For years it was the only company which could make all the purchases without tenders as they had a special law for that," Shalaisy said. "As a partly state company it was also obliged to sell [hydrocarbons] at state-regulated prices but in fact they were selling it the way they wanted."

PrivatBank dilemma

Kolomoisky also owns the country's largest bank, a media empire and Ukraine's near-monopoly passenger airliner. This leverage is enough to at least trigger a panic or even bring about the collapse of entire industries.

In June 2014, the National Bank of Ukraine started cleansing country's banking system of insolvent banks, many of which were oligarchs' "pocket banks," used to plunder depositors, central bank refinancing and launder illicit proceeds.

Banks whose shareholders could not boost capital were shut down. But the biggest challenge to banking reform is PrivatBank, which needs to increase its capital by millions of dollars.

The situation at PrivatBank has led to months of arguments between its main shareholder Kolomoisky and Valeria Gontareva, the National Bank of Ukraine governor.

They couldn't agree on how much the oligarch should invest in his bank to keep it afloat.

"The problem is that one day she (Gontareva) talks about 128 billion hryvnias (\$5.7 billion) and then the next day she says it's 15 billion (\$678 million). And today she has her tongue stuck up her arse because she doesn't know what to say next," Kolomoisky said in an interview with Politico in December 2015.

Critics say Kolomoisky has used PrivatBank as leverage as part of a broader attempt to protect his business interests.



Ihor Kolomoisky (R) participates in the opening ceremony of Menorah, the world's largest Jewish community center in Dnipro (then Dnipropetrovsk) on Oct. 16, 2012. (UNIAN)

As of beginning of 2016, Privatbank accounted for 21 percent of the entire country's banking system and 35 percent of Ukraine's personal deposits, said Oleksandr Zhohud, an analyst at the Center for Economic Strategy.

Oleksandr Savchenko, president of the International Institute of Business, said the entire banking system would collapse if Privatbank were shut down.

"The payments that had not come from PrivatBank would go to other banks, a series of bankruptcies would begin, and there would be panic," he said. "Re-launching the system would take around one or two months; the loss to GDP would be around 2 to 3 percent."

In early June, Gontareva said in an interview with Ukrainska Pravda that she had reached a deal with Kolomoisky on PrivatBank. "He has given personal guarantees on almost all of our refinancing," she said. The restructuring plan requires the Privatbank to reduce a massive

amount of related party loans and pledge assets belonging to Kolomoisky's business group as collateral.



OLIGARCH WATCH

Media empire

Kolomoisky also owns one of the largest media groups in the country – 1+1 Media, whose main asset is the popular TV channel 1+1. Critics said the oligarch often uses his channel to defend

his interests and provide positive coverage of political leaders in return for trade-offs or to attack his enemies.

An audio recording posted on a YouTube video in early July 2014 features a man with a voice resembling that of Kolomoisky allegedly giving instructions to Oleksandr Tkachenko, head of 1+1 media, to start a campaign against Radical Party leader Oleg Lyashko. In an interview with Novoye Vremya, Tkachenko claimed that Kolomoisky regularly meets the channel's staff, but doesn't directly influence the coverage.

Kolomoisky in his interview with lb.ua, gave a qualified denial to pres-

suring the channel. "In a primitive, vulgar sense, I definitely don't," he said.

Aviation monopoly

Another key asset is Kolomoisky's control of the skies. Ukraine's airline industry experienced a shock in 2013, when one of Ukraine's two largest airlines, Aerosvit, went bankrupt. Aerosvit was co-owned by Kolomoisky.

Subsequently the market was monopolized by Aerosvit's main competitor, Ukraine International Airlines, a company that Kolomoisky at the time took over.

Andriy Guck, an aviation specialist and lawyer, said Kolomoisky's aviation empire is believed to also include Dniproavia, Dnipro Airport and cargo handling services.

Kolomoisky's proteges have also run Kyiv's Boryspil Airport, giving rise to accusations of sweetheart deals for Ukraine International Airlines. "The industry is in one person's hands now," Guck said.

Big appetite

Even after acquiring large chunks of Ukraine's economy, Kolomoisky

still has an appetite for yet more acquisitions.

Parliament has approved a plan to privatize 450 state companies in 2016. Despite a failed auction in July at which no bids were submitted, the State Property Fund still hopes this year to auction off Odesa Portside Plant, the largest fertilizer manufacturer in Ukraine.

This is one of most lucrative subjects of privatization, and it may well be of interest to Kolomoisky, experts say. In 2009 he along with business associates won a privatization tender, offering \$625 million for the plant, but the auction was cancelled by government officials, who sought a higher price.

Braginsky said the fairness of the Odesa Portside Plant's future privatization would depend on whether the plant was sold to firms linked to Poroshenko's ally Kononenko.

"(Kolomoisky) will not deny himself the pleasure of earning a few billions," political analyst Viktor Nebozhenko said.

The next wave

Political analyst Vitaly Bala believes that Kolomoisky and Poroshenko would rather find peaceful and mutually beneficial co-existence. Evidence of an accord would include a situation where Kolomoisky keeps control of Ukrnafta, ownership of PrivatBank and secures an interest in Odesa Portside Plant.

Kolomoisky and Poroshenko "are survivors from the 1990s, where those who couldn't come to an agreement did not stay in business. Those who found an agreement, stayed afloat," Bala said. "Our so-called oligarchs kind of have some wars, but they don't lead to any casualties."

In 2016, Kolomoisky managed to secure his business interests and regain power using his political leverage. Unlike in 2014, however, the oligarch is now trying to keep a lower profile.

But being adventurous, he may soon get bored with staying in the shadows and try to openly challenge Poroshenko and his allies, Berezovets said.

"Kolomoisky catches the wave, he always uses opportunities – when his opponents allow it," Berezovets said.

While Kolomoisky's power peaked in 2014, "it doesn't mean he won't have new peaks in the future," Berezovets added. ■



Oct. 7 – Oligarch Watch, Part 1

Petro Poroshenko:
All In The Family – Again



Oct. 14 – Oligarch Watch, Part 2

Victor Pinchuk:
Ukraine's Friend Or Foe?



Oct. 21 – Oligarch Watch, Part 3

Rinat Akhmetov:
Too Big To Tame



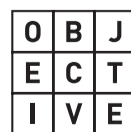
Oct. 28 – Oligarch Watch, Part 4

Ihor Kolomoisky:
Still Throwing His Weight Around

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Dnipro left without flights to Turkey

BY BERMET TALANT
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Turkey last week took retaliatory measures against Ukrainian airline Dniproavia after Turkish Airlines' flights to Dnipro and Ivano-Frankivsk airports in Ukraine were suspended, the Ukrainian airline has announced.

Dniproavia said its flights from Dnipro to Istanbul would be canceled from Oct. 30 until March 25 as the Turkish authorities had not provided landing permits.

That leaves Dnipro, Ukraine's fourth largest city located 391 kilometers southeast of Kyiv, without any direct air connection to Turkey for the next five months. The nearest available flights to Turkey take off from the airport in Zaporizhzhya.

The decision against Dniproavia was taken at a meeting in Ankara on Oct. 12-13, during which an agreement was signed to increase the number of flights to Istanbul from Lviv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Vinnitsya, and Kharkiv. A new direct flight between Ankara and Kyiv was also announced.

Technical reasons

In March, Turkish Airlines announced a new route between Ivano-Frankivsk and Istanbul and an increase in the number of its flights to Dnipro, where the carrier had been flying for 10 years. But the management of Dnipro's airport then abruptly changed the Turkish Airlines' schedule, and shortly after, both Dnipro and Ivano-Frankivsk airports refused to service the Turkish airline. Initially, the airports said the suspension would be imposed until

Oct. 30, due to the poor condition of the airports' runway surfaces, which the airports said prevents heavy aircraft from landing. But recently the ban was extended for the winter period, until the end of March.

"Servicing heavy aircraft such as those used by Turkish Airlines requires the repair of the runway surface," Marina Viktorova, the commercial director of Dnipropetrovsk International Airport, told the Kyiv Post. She said that since the beginning of Russia's war against Ukraine, "our airport has also handled military aircraft, that's why at the moment we can't close the runway for repairs," she said.

Initially, Turkish Airlines operated its flights to Dnipro's airport using Airbus-319s, with seating capacity for 132 passengers, and Airbus-320s, with seating capacity for 150-159 passengers. After receiving notice from Ivano-Frankivsk airport about cracks on the runway surface, the company decided to switch to using a smaller aircraft (an Embraer-190, seating 98 passengers), but it was still refused landing permission.

Yet despite the claims of runway problems, the two airports still accept large aircraft operated by domestic carriers - Boeing-737s with seating for 162-184 passengers, and Airbus-320s with seats for 150-159 passengers.

Viktorova said that Ukrainian airlines use Dnipro's airport as a base for maintenance purposes.

"In order to fly (from Dnipro) they have to adjust their take-off weight and decrease the number of flights. They are unable to relocate to another Ukrainian airport, whereas Turkish Airlines can fly to any other

One of Dniproavia's Embraer-145 passenger jets. The airline's flights to Turkey have been suspended after Dnipro airport banned Turkish Airlines flights from landing. (Oleg V. Belyakov)



airport, especially now there are additional flights," Viktorova said.

Ivano-Frankivsk airport officials did not respond to requests for comment.

Fear of competition?

An inquiry conducted by the State Aviation Administration of Ukraine this summer found there were no technical reasons for the suspension of the Turkish Airlines flights. Unethical business practices might be the real reason behind the confrontation, although neither Ukrainian officials nor the Turkish side want to name names.

"I think there was a misreading, a bad business judgment on the part of some in Ukraine who might have looked at Turkish Airlines as a threat to their business," said Yönet Can Tezel, Turkey's ambassador to

Ukraine.

Dnipro's airport is controlled by Dniproavia, a subsidiary company of Galtera Ltd., while Ivano-Frankivsk airport is operated by Skorzonera LLC. All three companies belong to billionaire oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky.

At the moment, the only foreign carriers allowed to fly to the two airports controlled by Kolomoisky-owned companies are Russia's UT Air and Austrian Airlines. The three Ukrainian airlines that fly from the airports are all affiliated with Kolomoisky - Ukraine International Airlines, Dniproavia, and Wind Rose Airlines.

Turkey's response

In response to the alleged unfair practices against its national carrier, Turkey's Civil Aviation General Directorate withdrew permission

from Dniproavia to land in Istanbul. Previously, Dniproavia operated one flight on the Dnipro-Istanbul route per day using a 50-seat Embraer-145.

Turkey's Civil Aviation General Directorate didn't respond to the Kyiv Post's request for comment. But Dincer Sayici, Turkish Airlines' general manager in Ukraine, confirmed the ban had been imposed, although he said he was optimistic the problem can be resolved.

So is the Turkish ambassador.

"Given the realities of oligarchic structures in Ukraine, the resolution of this issue might be an example of how different interests can be reconciled in a legitimate way, in a win-win scenario," Ambassador Tezel said.

"I hope Ukrainian companies will see Turkish Airlines as a partner, not a competitor." ■

Shuster: Poroshenko 'is not' a modern leader

Shuster from page 2

thought of leaving Ukraine last summer after authorities called him in for questioning.

"I spent not a very good summer and I really wanted to abandon Ukraine, especially after the killing of Pavel Sheremet," Shuster said, referring to the car bombing on July 20 that killed the Belarusian-born journalist for Ukrainska Pravda.

He said he never pays guests - and defies anyone to go public with such an accusation.

As far as his viewership goes, he said that he is still more popular than political talk shows on the main commercial channels.

The greatest strength of his format, Shuster said, is the real-time polling of a representative sample

of 100 Ukrainians in the studio audience.

What really bothers Poroshenko and other politicians, Shuster believes, is their rising unpopularity. He thinks that's the real reason they avoid his show.

"I just feel it with our audience," Shuster said of Poroshenko. "They have stopped believing in him." Consequently, Shuster said that the Poroshenko administration is "blocking people from coming to the show."

Ilovaik turning point

Shuster attributes the unpopularity of Poroshenko to many factors.

Only two months after taking office, Poroshenko came under criticism in August 2014, when Russian soldiers massacred hundreds of retreating Ukrainian soldiers in a devastating

loss in the Donetsk Oblast city of Ilovaik. This setback led to the first Minsk peace agreement, replaced by a second one on February 2015 after more battlefield defeats. Russia has not lived up to either peace deal in a war that has killed 10,000 people.

Shuster also said that Tymoshenko's frequent appearances, including two shows in which she sharply criticized the government's increase in utility costs to households, deepened the Poroshenko administration's hostility.

"She was very critical to say the least," he said. "They don't have a person who is capable to oppose her - at least to formulate some credible arguments. They decided to ignore."

Slim re-election chances

Shuster thinks Poroshenko, with approval ratings in the single digits, stands little chance of re-election in 2019 "in an honest scenario." But he is worried about a repeat of the Russian 1996 presidential campaign, when the oligarchs and the media united behind a faltering Boris Yeltsin to defeat Communist Party candidate Gennady Zyuganov.

"That was the beginning of the end of Russian democracy. The media were all told what to do," Shuster said. "We can have a situation like that" when Poroshenko and the rest of the oligarchs unite "to keep their property and their power."

"People have realized that basically he came to power and he is actually defending his own interests," he said. "He's not leading the people. They wanted a leader who would stop the war as he promised and the person who would start correcting the economy."

"There was a hope we are electing a statesman who is going to put behind his own personal interests and lead the country and that didn't happen," Shuster said. "All the property he hasn't sold...a factory in Russia in conditions of war. Nobody understands it really. He's paying taxes in the budget of the aggressor...His enterprises are winning tenders in the defense sector or somewhere else. He doesn't have any trust among society, among the masses."

Poroshenko is so weak that Shuster thinks that Tymoshenko would "certainly" defeat him - and even former Defense Minister Anatoliy Hryshenko, who got 5 percent of the vote in the 2014 election, could do so.

The president's undoing is similar to that of ex-President Viktor Yushchenko, who went downhill after the public saw him as defending his private energy interests with billionaire oligarch Dmytro Firtash.

Not modern leader

Like Yushchenko, Poroshenko "is try-

ing to project himself as a modern, European kind of a leader. He is not."

Instead, Poroshenko has "learned from Yanukovich's mistakes. You cannot be the only oligarch in the county, you have to share. That's what he's doing. He's redividing the country. They are splitting things and he's becoming the big player."

Shuster said he does not have high hopes in the "Euro-optimists" in parliament such as Sergii Leshchenko, Mustafa Nayyem and Svitlana Zhalishchuk. "They're not ready," Shuster said. "They cannot get together on one issue. They don't give a vision of what this country should be."

He's watching with interest "the volunteer battalions who fought the war and basically saved Ukraine," Shuster said. "These guys are not going to play around...These people now are providing hope. They have 90 percent support. Even people from the older generation support them. I don't know if they have a political future now, but they're the people who I'm watching."

But for now, finding money to keep his program going is his top concern. He hopes to find someone like American billionaire Michael Bloomberg to back him. If he fails, Ukraine could be seeing and hearing a lot less from Shuster soon. ■

About Savik Shuster

- Lithuanian-born Savik Shuster, 63, is a journalist and a host of Ukrainian TV shows.
- Shuster was a war correspondent in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Israel.
- He knows several languages, including Lithuanian, Russian, Italian, English, German and French. He also understands Ukrainian.
- Shuster has been working in Ukraine since 2005, after the Orange Revolution that brought pro-Western Viktor Yushchenko to the presidency.
- Since December, he has produced political talk shows on his independent 3S.tv after he was ousted from several tycoon-owned TV stations.
- Shuster has a son and a daughter.



How celebrities will spend Halloween



WITH MARIA ROMANENKO
MRO@UKR.NET

Sexuality of women feature in daring works of designer Ivan Frolov

Scantly clad women hang from the ceiling in Kyiv's Salut Hotel, as people make their way to their seats, the scene accentuated by dim lighting and tantalizing music.

No, it's not the start of an erotic performance, but a spring-summer fashion show by Ivan Frolov, part of Ukrainian Fashion Week.

Frolov is a Ukrainian designer who by the age of 23 has put together an impressive portfolio: He is a five-time participant of Ukrainian Fashion Week and a holder of the 2014 Best Fashion Award for the "Breakthrough of the Year."

Frolov designed the dress Ukrainian singer Jamala was wearing when she won the 2016 Eurovision song contest, and has been noticed by a lot of the Ukrainian and foreign media.

His design philosophy is "intelligent provocation," which implies overt but tasteful sexuality.

"When you create sexual clothes, the main task is not to cross the line, to stay within the edges of beauty instead of going into vulgarity," Frolov said in an interview with the Kyiv Post a few days after his Oct. 13 show.

He speaks slowly and carefully, thinking through every word. Despite working long hours and spending three consecutive nights leading up to the show with no sleep, he hasn't got time to rest as he is already preparing his fall-winter 2017-2018 collection.

Clothes with a heart

Frolov was born and grew up in Kyiv. Ever since he was a child, he knew he'd become a designer. He graduated from Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design in 2013 with a degree in construction engineering and debuted at the Ukrainian Fashion Week at the age of 20.

Frolov says that it's important for him for his designs to be more than just pretty objects, but have a purpose and philosophy. His clothes even have a heart, a literal one: Every piece of clothing has a silver heart on its label, echoing the brand's heart logo.

"It may sound weird but it actually works. I get people mes-



Popular Ukrainian singer Max Barskih often wears evil spirits' costumes for Halloween. This year Barskih plans to organize a grand fancy Halloween dress party with a laser show and a smoke machine for his friends. (Courtesy)

BY NATALIYA TRACH
TRACH@KYIVPOST.COM

Halloween on Oct. 31 is fast becoming one of the most popular holidays of the year in Ukraine, appealing to lovers of the macabre and partygoers alike. It is also popular with Ukrainian celebrities.

The Kyiv Post interviewed Ukrainian stars to find out how they celebrate Halloween, and what spooky experiences they have had.

Dreams of star athlete

Hanna Rizatdinova, a star Ukrainian gymnast and an Olympic Games

medalist, likes Halloween and regrets she has no time to celebrate it – fall is a very tough time for Rizatdinova, who travels to various international competitions and training bases to stay in good shape.

"I've always wanted to put on scary makeup and celebrate the holiday," she says.

Rizatdinova says she dreams of going to a Halloween party dressed as Emily Rose, from her favorite horror movie "The Exorcism of Emily Rose," but she says she would never wear a costume of devil or any evil spirits.

"I believe that there is good and

evil, black and white, good and bad. Even in sports you often meet negative energy," Rizatdinova said. "I believe in angels, and I know they have helped me on my path in sports."

Drag queen with new outfit

Monroe, Kyiv's most popular drag queen, of course likes parties and dressing up very much, all year round. She treats Halloween primarily as an excuse to have fun.

"For me it's just one more day to invent a creative look. I like all sorts of fancy dress parties," she says.

Monroe says she likes witches' costumes.

"Purely visually, the looks of witches suit me quite well – low-necked, long dress with cobwebs, gothic make-up and a deathly pallor," she says.

Monroe has not yet decided which costume she will pick for Halloween this year. She says it will most likely be a comic book heroine. She says she may dress as Catwoman or April O'Neil, the sidekick of the Ninja Turtles, for this Halloween.

more Halloween on page 21

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more Designer on page 21



A model proudly parades Ivan Frolov's design during a fashion show on Oct. 13. (Volodymyr Petrov)

Frolov: Designers must 'go beyond commercial,' take up social themes

Designer from page 20

saging me things like 'I wore your bra today and I had a good date,'" the designer says.

Collection theme

Each of Frolov's collections examine female sexuality from a different angle. School and first love were the basis of his F/W 16-17 collection.

Frolov's earlier collections explored the themes of BDSM, death, striptease and smoking. His last capsule collection was dedicated to transgender and transsexual people.

"It is the social responsibility of every artist to go beyond the commercial side and take up important themes," he says.

His inspiration for the latest collection was the Far East. The collection includes lingerie, bras, and lace dresses, which the designer says is "a part of his brand's DNA," with the addition of a new element – corsets.

"People come to our brand to find something sexy," Frolov says. "Every fitting is a step for them in a new

direction, as they rid themselves of stereotypes and complexes."

Recognition

Frolov has worked with many Ukrainian celebrities, his most notable collaboration being that with Jamala. Making the dress she wore for the Eurovision song contest in Sweden in May was a "task of national importance," the designer says. The dress is still in Stockholm, at the ABBA museum where it was taken after the show.

"It's very flattering, but Jamala is such a great, talented and professional singer that I think she would have won even if she'd worn jeans and a plain t-shirt," says Frolov.

The dress he made for Jamala was a sophisticated multilayered gown that combined a dress and pants. More than 25 meters of wool and silk went into the dress, deliberately making it heavy.

"It just wouldn't have looked natural if she'd worn a light chiffon dress for such a deep song," Frolov says. Jamala's winning song "1944" was about the deportation of the



Ukrainian designer Ivan Frolov at the rehearsal of his S/S 17 fashion show on Oct. 13.. (Volodymyr Petrov)

Crimean Tatars in 1944.

Frolov already sells in four major Ukrainian cities: Odesa, Kyiv, Kharkiv and Dnipro, and is thinking of expanding abroad. But he remains humble - blushing and laughing when asked about his success.

"Every time you talk about my popularity it feels like you're making fun of me," he says. ■

Ivan Frolov's showroom is at 34 Gogolivska St., office 13. Tel. 044-486-2148.

Prices range from Hr 1,350 to Hr 23,900 for a dress.

It seems that all like good fright on scary Halloween evening

Halloween from page 20

Singer will party hard

Popular Ukrainian singer Max Barskih says he is constantly having spooky experiences. One of the scariest things that happened to him had to do with a ghost that he says lived in the first apartment he ever rented.

The singer said doors in the apartment were constantly opening by themselves, stuff fell from the shelves, and strange noises were heard at nights.

"Later we found out that an old man had died in the apartment before we moved in," Barskih says.

However, Barskih is not afraid to don an evil spirit's costume for Halloween. In previous years he has dressed up in the costumes of vampires, cadavers and zombies.

"Remembering all my previous Halloweens, I now understand that all my costumes put me on the evil side," Barskih says.

In contrast, this year he will probably dress as U.S. rapper Eminem, he says.

Barskih plans to party hard during this year's Halloween. He will organize a grand fancy-dress party with a laser show and a smoke machine.

"I want to organize a real mas-

querade for my friends," Barskih says.

Relieves stress

Renowned Kyiv restaurateur Mykola Tyshchenko amazes his friends every year with creative and original Halloween outfits. He is fond of the holiday, and never misses a Halloween party.

"Halloween is a cure-all, it's a remedy for spiritual diseases and for stress first of all," he says. "I think that it's necessary to celebrate Halloween, because it helps to relieve stress and acts as a self-cure."

Monster aversion

But Andre Tan, one of Ukraine's most famous fashion designers, isn't so keen on Halloween.

"Why invent horror when there is a lot of real horror on our planet?" he says, shrugging.

He doesn't like scary, realistic evil spirit Halloween costumes, and believes that those who choose to dress up as a Halloween monster should pick a nice and kind one.

If he were to celebrate Halloween, he would dress as a French designer Yves Saint Laurent, wearing his iconic glasses, black trousers and a turtleneck, he says. ■

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Oct. 28



(kmbtheatre.kiev.ua)

Dance theater performance

Young choreographers, who are also dancers, of the prominent Kyiv Modern Ballet led by Radu Poklitaru, will present new routines during a dance theater performance entitled "Con tutti i strumenti."

Con tutti i strumenti (dance theater). Oct. 28. 7 p.m. Musical Theater (2 Mezhyhirska St.). Hr 40 - 300

Oct. 29-30



(pixabay.com)

Bar festival

At Barometer, a festival of bar culture, visitors can try exclusive cocktails made by Kyiv's top bartenders and enjoy luxury alcohol options from Ukrainian brands. Apart from drinks, the festival will offer meals from Kyiv restaurants.

Barometer Bar Show. Oct. 29-30. 12 p.m. - 9 p.m. Parkovy Conference and Exhibition Center (16A Parkova Road). Hr 300-800

Brunettes Shoot Blondes (indie-rock)



(Brunettes Shoot Blondes/facebook)

Nov. 5

Ukrainian indie-rock band Brunettes Shoot Blondes are coming to Kyiv to perform acoustic versions of their songs, along with covers of popular hits. The band

became famous after their music video for the song "Knock Knock" reached almost million view on YouTube.

Brunettes Shoot Blondes. Nov. 5. 10 p.m. Apelsin Magic Café (19 Velyka Vasylkivska St.) Hr 200

Nov. 4



(Freedom Ballet/facebook)

Freedom Ballet

The Kyiv-based Freedom Ballet company, lead by Ukrainian choreographer Olena Kolyadenko, will present new routines in the Caribbean Club on Nov. 4.

Freedom Ballet (dance show). Nov. 4. 8 p.m. Caribbean Club (4 Symona Petlyurya St.) Hr 250 - 1,300

Nov. 5



(abstract.desktopnexus.com)

Classical music by candlelight

The Kyiv Virtuozы orchestra will perform classical works by world famous composers, including Beethoven, Schubert, Bach, Mozart, Vivaldi, and Tchaikovsky, in a romantic, candle-lit concert.

Classic music by candlelight. Nov. 5. 8 p.m. Budynok Kino (6 Saksahanskogo St.) Hr 150 - 350

Oct. 29



(budivelnik.ua)

Budivelnyk – Dnipro (basketball match)

Kyiv-based basketball club Budivelnyk will compete with the team from Dnipro city in the Ukrainian Basketball SuperLeague 2016/17 competition.

Budivelnyk – Dnipro (basketball). Oct. 29. 2 p.m. Palace of Sport (1 Sportyvna Square). Hr 30-100



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POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Chemonics International Inc., an international development consulting firm, seeks a Ukrainian professional for the following position on the USAID Nove Pravosuddyya Justice Sector Reform Program in Ukraine:

Communications Assistant

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Assist in designing, maintaining and updating the program's website and social media account(s) on a regular basis;
- Collect and prepare information for the program's newsletter and other outreach materials, and maintain distribution lists;
- Participate in organizing media and public outreach events and maintain a media database;
- Collect and archive press-clippings and maintain program's photo and video archive;
- Perform other tasks consistent with qualifications and program's requirements.

Job Qualifications:

- Degree in public relations, journalism or other relevant discipline from a Ukrainian university.
- Three years of experience in public relations or communications, including maintaining websites and social media accounts, media relations, preparation of public outreach materials.
- Excellent writing and speaking skills in English and Ukrainian.
- Previous USAID or other international donor experience preferred.
- Knowledge of the Ukrainian legal and judicial system preferred.

Application Instructions: Please send a CV and a brief cover letter in English in the email body to office@fair.org.ua. Please include the name of the position in the subject line. Candidates will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled. No telephone inquiries, please. Short-listed candidates will be contacted.

Application Deadline: November 11, 2016 at 6 P.M. Kyiv Time



The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a non-profit organization working to strengthen democracy worldwide.

NDI-Ukraine is currently seeking
a Program Manager for Women's
Political Participation Program. The
position will be based in Kyiv and
require some local travel.

Interested applicants should submit
CVs and motivation letters in English
by email to the following email ad-
dress: ukraine@ndi.org.

Deadline:

The deadline of application
submission has been extended to
November 20, 2016 (by COB). Only
selected candidates will be invited
for a **written test and an interview**.

**Full text of the advertisement can
be viewed here:**
<https://www.kyivpost.com/classifieds/jobs/program-manager>



ICPS seeks qualified candidates to fill following positions:

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name in the subject to
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Web-site www.icps.com.ua



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The Municipal Energy Reform in Ukraine Project (MERP), with 10 months remaining, at the main office in Kyiv is seeking a qualified and experienced local expert to conduct Gender Assessment.

For more information on this vacancy, please visit:
www.merp.org.ua (announcements).

Please send application and CV stating desired position in the subject line, to HR@merp.org.ua through November 11, 2016. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. No telephone inquiries please.



Professionals for Reform Support Mechanism (PRSM) provides human resource support – from managers to technical experts – to critical reform initiatives undertaken by national governmental agencies. Current opportunities include:

- **Government of Ukraine Digital support Team Lead and technical experts (2 positions)** who will implement the System of Electronic Document Exchange (SED) at the governmental institutions;
- **State Fiscal Service reform senior experts (5 positions)** – responsible for optimization of the organizational structure and core business processes of the SFS.

For more detailed information about preferred qualifications and skills, indicative duties and responsibilities, as well as applying procedure, please visit web-site: <http://edge.in.ua/vacancies.html>



Opportunity to Join our Team

Deloitte is seeking resumes for the position below to work with HIV Reform in Action, a USAID project.

- Administrative Assistant

For qualifications and job descriptions refer to:

www.kyivpost.com/classifieds/jobs/administrative-assistant



Pact Inc. seeks a Knowledge Management (KM) Officer for the USAID-funded RESPOND project aimed at improving HIV/AIDS services among key populations in Ukraine.

The KM Officer will work in close coordination with the project QI team and Regional Implementation Groups to capture and document the implementation of QI activities in 8 regions. This position will promote learning and exchange through regular learning events internally and externally and facilitate the development and dissemination of knowledge products.

Education:

Advanced university degree in a development-related discipline

Experience:

At least five years of relevant work experience;

Development of reports and publications

Knowledge Management experience will be an advantage;

Language Requirements:

Fluency in oral and written English and Ukrainian is required

For more information on the RESPOND project, please visit www.respond.org.ua

To apply please send cover letter and CV to jobs_respond@pact.org.ua no later than November 15, 2016. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.



Pact Inc. seeks a Temporary (1 month with the possibility of extension) Procurement Assistant for the USAID RESPOND project aimed at improving HIV/AIDS services among key populations in Ukraine.

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

- Prepare RFQ, Proposals under program staff request
- Conduct comparative analysis of all bids received in response to each RFQ
- Prepare selection memo based on analysis of the bids after selection process.
- Prepare contract with vendor and maintain contract after award
- Assist with event preparation
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Education and Experience Requirements:

- University diploma. A minimum of one year of clerical or administrative experience.
- Excellent written and spoken English and Ukrainian, proficiency in Russian.
- Ability to be flexible, resourceful and service-oriented in dealing with people.
- Advanced level keyboard skills and computer literacy on a variety of software applications (MS Word, Excel, Access, etc.).

For more information on the RESPOND project, please visit www.respond.org.ua

To apply please send cover letter and CV to jobs_respond@pact.org.ua no later than November 3, 2016. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

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