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vol. 21, issue 51

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December 16, 2016

Yuriy Kosyuk: Top Bird



OLIGARCH
WATCH

In Europe's breadbasket, few are flying higher in agriculture than chicken billionaire Yuriy Kosyuk. He is Ukraine's 5th richest person and, while one of the least-publicized oligarchs, wields influence to match.

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 Akhmetov: Too Big To Tame
Part 4	Oct. 28	Ihor Kolomoisky: Still Throwing His Weight Around
Part 5	Nov. 11	Vadim Novinsky: Ukraine's 'Russian' Oligarch
Part 6	Dec. 9	Dmytro Firtash: The Oligarch Who Can't Come Home
Part 7	Dec. 16	Yuriy Kosyuk: Top Bird

Yuriy Kosyuk, owner of the country's top poultry producer company MHP, is the fifth richest person in Ukraine. He also wields considerable influence in parliament and with President Petro Poroshenko. (Ukrafoto)



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CURRENCY WATCH

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Засновник ТОВ "Паблік-Медіа"

Головний редактор Брайан Боннер

Відповідальний за випуск

Люк Шеньє

Адреса видавця та засновника

співпадають: Україна, м. Київ, 01004,

вул. Пушкінська, 31А, 6-й поверх.

Реєстраційне свідоцтво

Кв № 15261-3833ПР від 19.06.09.

Передплатний індекс ДП Преса 40528

Надруковано ТОВ «Новий друк»,

02660, Київ, вулиця Магнітогорська, 1,

тел.: 559-9147

Замовлення № 13-8040

З приводу розміщення реклами

звертайтесь: +380 44 591-77-88

Відповідальність за зміст реклами

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Crimea suffering from lack of water from the mainland

BY KYIV POST

PERVOMAISK, CRIMEA -- The Kalinina farm collective near Pervomaisk in northern Crimea is busy with seasonal workers loading sacks of cabbages, or gathering up carrots in the big muddy fields. It looks like a successful harvest, but it's a result of almost three years of hard struggle to adapt to new conditions here, after vital water supplies from Ukraine's mainland stopped in 2014, following Russia's annexation of Crimea.

"Now we have to lay out these maggots," said farmer Vladimir Vasilievich, kicking a huge roll of plastic piping which snakes all over his carrot fields, providing a drip irrigation system which has to be replaced every two seasons.

Pervomaisk Administration Head of Agriculture Vladimir Mironyuk indicated an adjacent field green with a crop of winter grain. Farmers have switched to these less profitable crops, because they can use natural winter moisture. "But if we had Dnipro water," he said resignedly, "the crop yield would be twice as high."

With an average annual rainfall of just 330-350 millimeters, and no surface water sources, Pervomaisk district is entirely dependent on boreholes for drinking water and, until 2014, on irrigation for agriculture with water from the Dnipro River supplied via the Northern Crimean Canal. In spring 2014, 15,000 hectares were ready or planted for cultivation, providing work and income for the vast majority of inhabitants of this flat, inhospitable region.

'A really big shock'

But in late April Ukraine abruptly dammed Dnipro water after Russian annexed the peninsula. "It was a really big shock," said Mironyuk. "There were huge losses."

The Russian government covered some of those losses, he said, so that



Workers harvest carrots at a farm in Pervomaysk district in Russian-occupied Crimea on Nov. 23. (Kyiv Post)

the district's agricultural sector was not completely devastated. But more than two years on there is no sign of a solution to restore or replace the water supply, and it's clear that lack of water is a slow-motion disaster.

Now the only water source for farming is the same limited groundwater which provides the region's entire drinking water supply (and which is actually gastronomically, if not technically undrinkable, because of its saltiness). The amount that can be used for farming is strictly controlled by ecologists from the Crimean Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, who will assess the limits every three years.

"It's all within a rational framework so as not to cause an ecological catastrophe, because what will we drink in Pervomaisk region tomorrow if we use all the groundwater for tomatoes?" said Mironyuk.

No one in Pervomaisk was keen to speculate on the record about the effect agricultural use may have on overall groundwater levels. "If they give us permission to drill boreholes then that means it's alright," said Vladimir Voytyuk, responsible for production and cultivation in Pervomaisk administration. "They're the ones responsible for the ecology of the region."

The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources had not responded to requests for interview by the time of going to press.

Expensive produce

So far nine new boreholes for crop and livestock farming have been drilled in Pervomaisk district. One is at the Kalinina farm. It's an expensive and time-consuming process: the current cost for getting all permissions and hiring a government

firm to drill is around \$15,000, according to Mironyuk – and that doesn't include the further outlay on equipment to transport water to crops, and paying for the water itself. The government offers no subsidies or compensation.

"Now all the costs for water – from drilling and permissions to the electricity needed to bring it to the fields – lies on the shoulders of farmers," said Mironyuk. "Only one in 10 can afford the expense."

The additional cost is reflected in prices for Crimean vegetables, making them less competitive on the Crimean and Russian markets – the only possible outlet since annexation.

"The small farmers have really suffered, and lots have dropped out and left," said Mironyuk. "They've gone to work in Moscow, Saint Petersburg,

more **Crimea** on page 18

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A woman buys bananas at a local market in the village of Alexeyevka in northern Crimea on Nov. 11. The region's agriculture has been hard hit by water shortages since Ukraine cut supplies from the Dnipro River in the wake of Russia's 2014 invasion and annexation of the territory. (Kyiv Post)

Crimea's pump stations stand idle as dispute over water supplies drags on

BY KYIV POST

OLEKSIYIVKA, Crimea – Viktor Kuminov is bored. His son, Aleksei, sitting with his feet up on the desk in the snug control room of Pumping Station number 358, is even more bored.

These two engineers in the Pervomaisk region of northern Crimea are in charge of controlling pumps that are capable of shifting over a million tons of water per day. But the sluices are empty, and the pumps stand idle.

For more than two years, since Ukraine halted the water supply after Russia annexed Crimea in April 2014, father and son have been manning this station with nothing whatsoever to do but wait for the day when Ukraine turns the water back on.

"In principle everything's in working order," Viktor Kuminov said as he conducted an impromptu torchlit tour of the station's many floors and looming silent machinery. "Just give us water, and we'll get going again."

The station is part of a gigantic engineering project which diverts water from the Dnipro river to Crimea's parched steppe regions. One of the "great constructions of communism" ordered by Stalin in the 1950s and built largely by Comsomol (communist youth league) volunteers from all over the Soviet Union, it comprises the 402-kilometer Northern Crimean Canal running from Ukraine's Kherson region to Crimea's easternmost point at Kerch, seven reservoirs, and around 11,000 kilometres of side channels and pipes. Additional channels and pumping stations continued to be completed right into the 1990s; 80 percent of the water was used for agriculture.

Opened in 1984, station 385 is one of four such powerful stations in Crimea. It has its own electricity station, and used to pump water from the canal into the reservoir at Saki, about 50 kilometers away.

The central pump hall is still decorated with bright murals and banners proclaiming "Water to the Earth, Harvest to the People!" and "Labour glorifies Man!" In better times workers brought topsoil and planted trees and lawn grass around the buildings to create a small oasis here in the dry, windswept steppe.



Viktor Kuminov, the hydro engineer who works at Northern Canal Pumping Station No. 358, points to rain water in the canal on Nov. 22. The main source of water for the peninsula, the Northern Crimean Canal has been cut off from water supplies since 2014. (Kyiv Post)

Now, there's no electric light for the lower floors, and no water even for the shower and toilet used by shifts of two or three workers still manning the station without much opportunity for glorifying labor.

"It's not hard to keep it all going," said Viktor's son Aleksei, relaxing at a table in the control room and playing on his phone. "But another issue is that the budget's been reduced."

When Ukraine halted water supply, citing huge arrears from Crimea after Russia's takeover, farmers panicked about fields already sown with water-dependent rice and vegetables. Viktor and Aleksei had another immediate concern: "They cut our wages," said Viktor.

Viktor says he now gets up to 10,000 rubles (\$150) a month, around half his previous salary. With 250 people working for the water system in his district alone, the costs must still be huge. "And they're paying us all a salary for doing precisely what in practice?" he said.

Vladimir Mironyuk, head of the agriculture department of the Pervomaisk administration, confirms that the entire water regulation and distribution system is being preserved.

"The government takes this expense, because everyone understands that this water artery for Crimea is hugely significant," he said. "If it's thrown away today, it'll take decades to replace."

Other options floated by Crimean and Russian authorities, like bringing water from Russia's southern Rostov region, would require building a new distribution system because the water, unlike Dnipro water, would run from east to north. "You'd have to change all the canals and pumping systems to work the other way," said Vladimir Voytyuk, also from the Pervomaisk administration. "It'd be better to rebuilt from scratch, it's all designed to work in one direction."

Originally from the Urals in Russia, Viktor Kuminov has worked as a hydro-engineer in Crimea for 30 years. Water, or the lack of it, provides a living for his whole family: his wife and two sons work as engineers or administrators (his third son did too before being drafted into the Russian army).

He was resigned about his current situation, comparing it positively – as



The empty and overgrown Northern Canal near the village of Oleksiyivka in Crimea, pictured on Nov. 22. The main source of water for the peninsula, the Northern Crimean Canal has had its supply of water from the Dnipro River cut off since 2014. (Courtesy)

do many in Crimea – with the ongoing war in east Ukraine. "I can't say if it's sad or not, because do we have a choice? The main thing is there isn't chaos here, like in Ukraine," he said.

"I have three sons and if we had such destruction in Crimea as there is in Ukraine, who knows what would happen to them?"

Meanwhile, as an agreement with

Ukraine to re-open the canal and allow water again to flow remains a distant wish, there's a nearer date he's waiting for. "It's four months until I can retire," he said. ■

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Editorials

Syria's Ilovaisk

Earlier this week Kremlin-backed Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad effectively won the battle of Aleppo, with rebels fleeing their last major urban stronghold.

Assad and Russia offered a "safe corridor" to militants and civilians leaving Aleppo. The agreement was immediately disrupted by pro-Assad Shia militias who fired on a Red Crescent ambulance, according to pro-rebel media.

In 2014 the Kremlin proposed a similar "safe corridor" to Ukrainian soldiers leaving the city of Ilovaisk in Donetsk Oblast. Later hundreds of those soldiers were massacred by Russian regular troops.

In 2000, Russia offered a "safe corridor" to residents of the village of Katyr Yurt in Chechnya. As a result, 363 people were slaughtered.

The similarities do not end there.

In February, Russia, Assad's regime and anti-Assad rebels reached a cease-fire deal. But the fighting continued, and by December Assad, Iran and Russia's air force had pounded the rebel enclave in eastern Aleppo to rubble, massacring thousands of civilians and bombing hospitals – a war crime.

Just a year before that, Ukraine and Russian-separatist forces also struck a cease-fire deal. The agreement did not prevent Russia from taking over the Ukrainian city of Debaltseve and killing hundreds of soldiers and civilians.

And in 2000, Russia carpet-bombed and captured Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, with the United Nations calling it "the most destroyed city on Earth." Again, thousands of civilians were killed.

The West's failure to stop Russia's war in Chechnya, Ukraine and Syria shows its impotence. Other than spouting meaningless platitudes about "deep concerns," token gestures and mild sanctions, Western countries have done little to stop Russian despot Vladimir Putin.

Western leaders' inaction about the fall of Aleppo, as well as the fall of Ilovaisk and Grozny, will go down in history as shameful deeds on the scale of the bombing of Guernica, the crushing of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and the massacres in Rwanda and Srebrenica.

Ukraine can draw one lesson from this: it has to rely on its own forces to defeat both the domestic hydra of corrupt and lawless politicians, and the foreign hydra of Russian aggression.

Trump tragedy

Ukraine is looking geopolitically more vulnerable at the moment.

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump is surrounding himself with Russian apologists at the same time that the public has no idea what sort of financial ties he has with the Kremlin, Russian business interests or even whether Vladimir Putin has information to blackmail America's 45th commander-in-chief.

The choice of ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson as the next secretary of state is unacceptable. His company has a multibillion-dollar stake in seeing that Western economic sanctions against the Kremlin are lifted. He's made it clear, time and time again, that commercial interests trump American desires for democracy, human rights and rule of law worldwide.

The best that can be hoped for from the Trump administration is that Republican hawks will form an alliance with the Democratic minority to veto any relaxation of sanctions against Russia for its human rights abuses globally, but particularly its war against Ukraine and its illegal annexation of Crimea. Tillerson shows he cares nothing about violations of international law if it interferes with making more money.

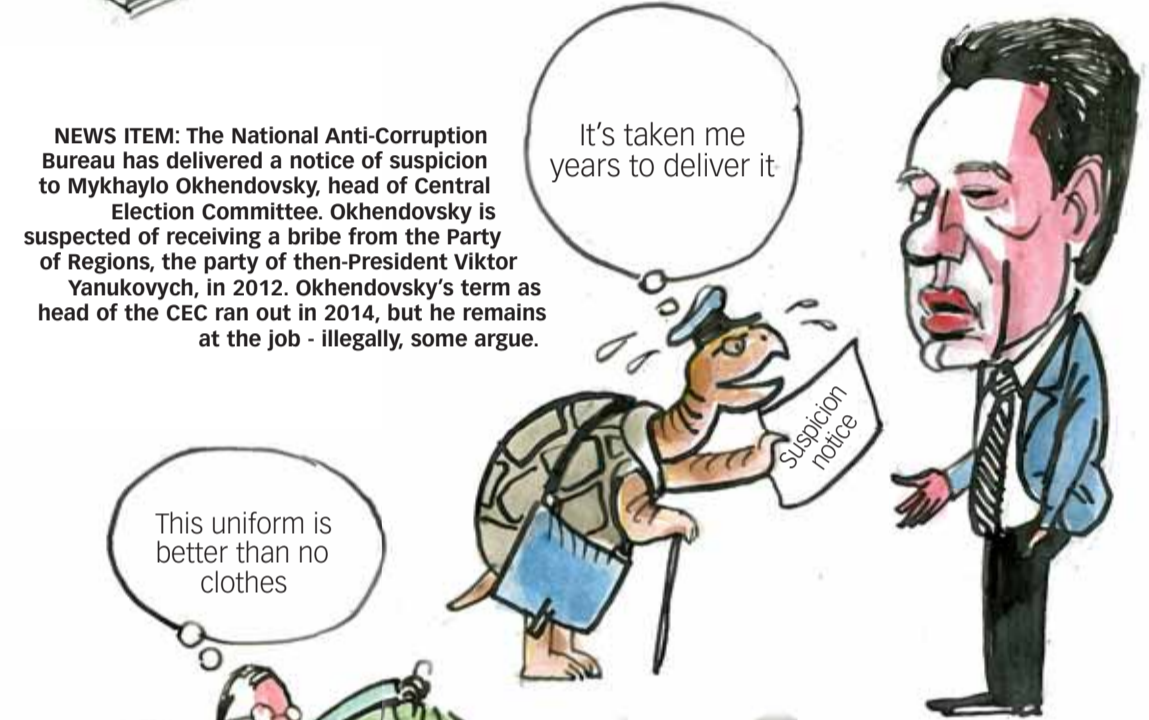
Republican U.S. Sens. John McCain of Arizona and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina have scheduled visits to Ukraine this month. We hope they can sketch out a credible plan for containing Russia.

When Ukrainian leaders warned the world that they were defending democracy after Russia's invasion and annexation of Crimea, they were not crying wolf. When they said that Russia will not stop until they are stopped, they weren't kidding.

The West should have heeded these warnings a long time ago. Instead, a lawless Kremlin has interfered in the U.S. presidential election through hacking and sinister propaganda. It is tampering with European democracies in the same way. The West and Ukraine are being tested. We expect a big fight ahead, but also that they will defeat anti-democratic forces that are trying to destroy governments that work in the public interest.



NEWS ITEM: When Oleksandr Onyshchenko, a member of parliament who left Ukraine to escape arrest for embezzlement, started publicly claiming that he helped President Petro Poroshenko bribe other lawmakers, Poroshenko's lawyers sent out letters to several Ukrainian and foreign journalists and news outlets, threatening to sue if they published Onyshchenko's claims.



NEWS ITEM: The National Anti-Corruption Bureau has delivered a notice of suspicion to Mykhaylo Okhendovsky, head of Central Election Committee. Okhendovsky is suspected of receiving a bribe from the Party of Regions, the party of then-President Viktor Yanukovich, in 2012. Okhendovsky's term as head of the CEC ran out in 2014, but he remains at the job - illegally, some argue.



NEWS ITEM: Ukrainian colonel Ivan Bezyazykov, who was seen wearing a Russian military uniform and carrying firearms while in captivity in the Donbas, is on trial in Ukraine for suspected treason. Bezyazykov explained in court that he wore Russian uniform because his own clothes were torn when he was taken captive.



NEWS ITEM: Ukrainian lawmaker Nadiya Savchenko, a former military pilot who spent nearly two years in a Russian prison after being captured in the Donbas in 2014, secretly met in Minsk with the commanders of the Russian-backed separatists that control Ukrainian territories in the Donbas. Her unauthorized meeting was criticized in Ukraine, especially after Savchenko spoke positively about the representatives of the separatists.

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Reformer of the week

Anna Kalynchuk

Anna Kalynchuk, a 23-year-old lawyer at the Justice Ministry's lustration department, wrote on Dec. 14 that the department had submitted to the High Council of Justice a proposal to fire 29 judges who passed unlawful rulings against EuroMaidan protesters in 2013-2014.

The department is in charge of firing, under the 2014 lustration law, top officials and judges who served ex-President Viktor Yanukovich.

Kalynchuk was scheduled to become the acting head of the department after reformist official Tetiana Kozachenko resigned as its head in November. But her appointment was blocked by Deputy Justice Minister Hanna Onyshchenko in what critics believe to be the authorities' reluctance to appoint an independent official.

Meanwhile, the High Council of Justice has been dragging its feet on earlier proposals to fire judges subject to lustration. It is highly likely that it will not be able to do that by the legal deadline set for early 2017, Mykhailo Zhernakov, an expert at the Reanimation Package of Reforms, told the Kyiv Post.

Earlier this year parliament dismissed 19 judges under lustration, while President Petro Poroshenko fired 10 judges.

The lustration of Yanukovich-era top officials, except for judges, is scheduled to be completed this month. Kozachenko said last month that top officials had sabotaged lustration: specifically, Poroshenko had refused to fire Kirovohrad Oblast Governor Serhiy Kuzmenko and also illegally appointed two other Yanukovich-era officials: his deputy chief of staff Oleksiy Dniprov, and Luhansk Oblast Governor Yuriy Harbuz.

— Oleg Sukhov



Anti-reformer of the week

Mykhailo Okhondovsky

The National Anti-Corruption Bureau on Dec. 14 served a notice of suspicion to Mykhailo Okhondovsky, chairman of the Central Election Commission.

Okhondovsky was charged with receiving bribes worth \$100,000 in 2010 and \$61,000 in 2012 from ex-President Viktor Yanukovich's Party of Regions. His name features in the party's off-the-book ledgers submitted to the anti-corruption bureau in May.

Okhondovsky has also been accused of rigging elections. He denies all the accusations.

The authority of Okhondovsky and several other members of the election commission expired in 2014. But President Petro Poroshenko has been reluctant to replace them.

Critics say that Poroshenko has been using Okhondovsky to protect his political interests. For instance, in March he approved the Verkhovna Rada's decision to expel lawmaker Yegor Firsov, a critic of Poroshenko and his allies, from parliament.

In a similar way, Poroshenko and the Verkhovna Rada have refused to replace Yuriy Baulin, chairman of the Constitutional Court, and five other judges of the court being investigated by the Prosecutor General's Office on suspicion of helping Yanukovich usurp power. The judges are also alleged to have obtained \$6 million in payments from Yanukovich's Party of Regions, according to the party's off-the-book ledgers.

— Oleg Sukhov



VOX populi

WITH MARIA ROMANENKO

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insurance worker.

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Sofiia Borodiy,
deputy director of a meat producing company

"I'm only worried about whether the money will stay

on my account. But for one thing, it would be even better for it to be a state bank, because the state needs to protect its people."



Pavlo Vasylenko,
journalist, videographer

"It will not affect people's savings in the bank because there is a guar-

antee for savings under Hr 200,000. And everything that is above that is already business, and is not related to ordinary people."



Irina Privoziuk,
economist in a utility company.

"If everybody starts taking their money out, the bank will have problems. I don't

have any money in PrivatBank, but I do online shopping and many other transactions via it - it's very handy."



Yaroslav Koshtorniy,
student.

"If there is an unstable situation in Ukraine, the bank will shut down, the accounts will be taken to off-

shore companies, and Kolomoisky will leave the country and will be happy. Other people won't be (laughing) though."



Oleg Dukhota,
IT specialist

"No, I'm not worried because I don't have much money in my account. If

there are any losses, I will survive them. To be honest, I mostly use PrivatBank credit lines. It doesn't matter whether I have to return money to PrivatBank or to the state."

Kremlin fighting West, not global terrorism

KSENIYA KIRILLOVA



The unending terrorist acts in France and other countries and the necessity of uniting against the growing threat of international terrorism gives rise to a certain side effect: the Kremlin is again insisting that without Russia, the West is incapable of dealing with such massive global threats. A number of specialists, including government officials, harbor the suspicion that Moscow is involved in global terrorism.

Nevertheless, no one has produced evidence of Russian involvement in European terrorist acts. For now, I shall attempt an accounting of what is known from open sources about Russian connections with Arab extremism without plunging into speculation. Unfortunately, for the time being it is evident that present-day Russia is not a reliable ally for the West in the fight against terrorism.

This is evident from the fact that the attacks are obviously convenient and beneficial for Russia, and the Kremlin uses them to sow discord between the United States and Europe. Russia aims to weaken America's position in the region and undermine the unity of NATO in line with Russia's geopolitical strategy. The conduct of Russian mass media and its political establishment confirms this conclusion.

The primary Russian media periodically spotlights personalities who aver that Europe is falling apart because of the mistakes of the United States in the Near East. They say "it's time to listen to Russia instead of serving the USA."

This reached a high point with the broadcast on TV of An Evening with Vladimir Solovyov, when notorious member of parliament and former deputy chairman of the Russian State Duma Vladimir Zhirinovskiy declared the following: "Europe is being attacked by terrorists, and these attacks will spread across all of Europe. That's convenient for us! Let them all choke and croak!" Indeed, such candor is hard to imagine! Of course, this is no proof that Russia is the direct instigator of terrorist acts. The mere fact that Russia benefits does not automatically place the nation's leaders

The barrel of the weapon of a member of the Syrian pro-government forces is seen against the backdrop of an evacuation operation of rebel fighters and their families from rebel-held neighborhoods in the embattled city of Aleppo on Dec. 15. (AFP)



in the criminal category, but it's not something to be ignored.

Second, from the foregoing it's obvious that Russia is not interested in defeating ISIS, as the actions of the Russian leadership once again so eloquently demonstrate. Russia's entire domestic and foreign policies are directed toward confrontation, if not with the West as a whole, certainly at a minimum with the United States. It is enough to recall the professionally produced video following the first Paris tragedy last autumn calling Russians to war with ISIS, and with America that was named in the video as the creator of the Islamic State and international terrorism. Putin often says the same thing.

Of course, Russian propaganda is directed mostly at the domestic audience, and should not be taken as proof of anything. However, the degree of conflict is no lower in Russia's external rhetoric, and many analyses of Russian activities in Syria conclude that they are in direct conflict with Western interests.

Activities directed at weakening relations between the US and Europe automatically imply the weakening of the West as a whole. In this way, Russia acts as an ally of the terrorists in their war with the West, even if they have no formal agreement to do so. It is evident, as well, that it is the West rather than ISIS that today creates the most problems for Putin. The sanctions in support of Ukraine prevent the Kremlin from achieving its primary aims in the post-Soviet space.

Third, Russia was complicit in the creation of ISIS and has the means to influence this organization, as a minimum in the form of deep intelligence penetration. The president of the Institute of Eastern Partnership (Israel), the rabbi Avraam Shmulevich, avers that the largest collection of Islamic State fighters consists of recruits from Russia and other post-Soviet areas. At the same time in the territory controlled by Assad and ISIS one sees the longest front lines but the least

more Kirillova on page 9

Nasirov, nation's tax chief, answers critics

BY JOSH KOVENSKY
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Is State Fiscal Service chief Roman Nasirov the nation's whipping boy for tax & customs corruption, or a deserving target of all the criticism heaped upon him?

The business community is rife with complaints about his performance. Members of parliament regularly criticize him, while some have managed to persuade prosecutors to open a criminal investigation into him for negligence and inaction. Some critics point-blank say he's the front man for corrupt tax-skimming schemes and tax favors to insiders.

Even Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman criticized Nasirov's work in September, comparing the customs service to a whorehouse.

So why is he still in office?

"Stupid question," according to Nasirov.

The Kyiv Post met with Nasirov at the State Fiscal Service's heavily guarded offices on Lvivska Square on Dec. 2. Nasirov has led the country's fiscal service, which oversees tax and customs collection, since May 2015.

During that time, he has had a well-publicized conflict with former Odesa customs chief Yulia Marushevska's attempt to streamline Odesa customs. Marushevska claims he halted efforts to lustrate corrupt officials while allowing graft to continue en masse. He has also been accused of acting with the political cover of Vidrodzhennya member of parliament Vitaliy Khomutynnik.

And about all of this, Nasirov says he has "no regrets."

Political project

At the start of November, Odesa Governor Mikheil Saakashvili resigned, blaming the Kyiv government for blocking his attempts to rid the southern Black Sea oblast of corruption.

Nasirov took the brunt of Saakashvili's complaints, largely due to the State Fiscal Service chief's conflict with Marushevska.

Marushevska, a Saakashvili appointee who gained fame during the EuroMaidan Revolution for her viral "I am a Ukrainian" video, spent

her time as Odesa customs chief attempting to modernize the local customs service. She tried to accomplish this by raising staff salaries and arranging for all incoming shipments to be processed by one customs official in one place, thereby reducing the opportunity for corruption.

But Marushevska claimed Nasirov blocked her throughout, preventing her from appointing officials to needed positions while ordering the State Fiscal Service to raid Marushevska's offices.

Nasirov called Marushevska's attempt at reform a "political project."

"She did nothing," he said. "There should be something proposed, there was nothing proposed. That's it."

When asked why he did not fire Marushevska, Nasirov replied: "she had political protection."

Controlled from afar?

But many observers, including Marushevska's former boss Saakashvili, have alleged that Nasirov himself benefits from so-called "political protection."

Specifically, Khomutynnik, a business partner of oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky, is alleged to provide cover for Nasirov as part of an elaborate political horse trade.

President Petro Poroshenko has control over the General Prosecutor's Office, while the State Fiscal Service is given to Kolomoisky through Khomutynnik.

"There is no relationship," Nasirov said of Khomutynnik. "I know him as a parliament member. I knew him as a committee member."

Nasirov denies that Khomutynnik provides him political protection.

"What I have is a belief from the prime minister, from the government, from the president, from the coalition, that the things we're doing are the right things."

E-declarations

One thing that Nasirov has been ordered to do is investigate the declarations of public officials for evidence of tax avoidance.

After the International Monetary Fund pressured Ukraine into instituting a public registry of assets and income for public officials, many Ukrainians were disgusted by how



State Fiscal Service Chief Roman Nasirov speaks to the Kyiv Post on Dec. 2. Nasirov has come under fire for allegedly protecting corrupt schemes in the tax and customs sectors. (Volodymyr Petrov)

many civil servants had managed to accumulate fortunes while drawing paltry government pay.

Nasirov said that his taxmen "don't look at them as parliament members or anyone else. We look at them as taxpayers... if, when the analytics are done, someone's income doesn't match their savings or assets, then there is a legal procedure."

From there, the State Fiscal Service will ask for an explanation, "not of where the cash is from, but whether their income reflects the assets that the person has declared."

Nasirov himself keeps more than \$1 million in cash and, according to his declaration, keeps very little money in Ukrainian banks.

"Look at the people who put their money into Bank Mikhailivsky - they don't have any money. I wouldn't want to have the same problem," he said.

Nasirov added that he thinks "there is no public responsibility whatsoever" for a Ukrainian official to keep money in local banks.

Contraband man

Government officials in the Ministry of Finance complain that Nasirov has a tendency to block access to customs data. Under Ukrainian law, customs information is a state secret, meaning that Nasirov's State Fiscal Service must approve every external request to access the data.

Officials attempting to reform the customs service argue that this is a serious barrier to determining what is actually going on in Ukrainian customs.

"Someone told you this from the Ministry of Finance?" Nasirov said. "If they told you, then they lied."

He added: "They don't need permission from us," before immedi-

ately contradicting himself: "There are specific state rules of how to get access to this data that are written in the legislation."

Nasirov addressed the specific issues of lumber and cigarette smuggling - the former is contributing to the destruction of Ukraine's forests, and the latter has made Ukraine one of the main suppliers of illegal cigarettes to Europe.

"We identify in absolutely most cases where they are trying to manipulate the export of lumber," Nasirov said, adding that many businesses will intentionally mislabel the kind of wood they export. "But the problem starts with business trying to smuggle," he said.

When asked if he had an obligation to enforce the law, Nasirov replied: "First of all, it's their obligation to try not to break the law."

Nasirov then went on to blame the customs services of Ukraine's European neighbors for the issue of cigarette smuggling.

"If Ukraine is considered to be a big source, why do they allow the cigarettes to be brought in?" Nasirov asked, apparently rhetorically.

Political favors, cases

Nasirov has also been involved in the ongoing scandal surrounding former Rada Deputy Oleksandr Onyshchenko.

The former People's Will deputy fled the country amid an investigation into corruption at Ukrgazvydobuvannya, in which Onyshchenko is alleged to have siphoned millions out of the state-owned gas extractor.

But months before the scheme was revealed, Nasirov allowed the politician's companies to delay rent payments that amounted to Hr 13

billion (\$49.3 million).

Nasirov called this a "restructuring," and said that it was commonplace.

"We were giving it to literally all oil and gas producers, including Ukrgazvydobuvannya," Nasirov said, while refusing to confirm a Ukrainian media report that the Prosecutor General's Office interrogated him about the matter.

But he did not appear inclined to give such a break to Ukrnafta, the state-owned oil producer that is currently around Hr 12 billion (\$455 million) in debt to the fiscal service. The company is able to earn enough to prevent the debt from drastically increasing, but lacks funds to turn itself around.

Parliamentarians, including Energy Committee Secretary Viktoriya Voitsitska, have alleged that the larger plan is to bankrupt the company and sell it off on the cheap. The current debacle with the tax authorities will supposedly allow that to occur.

"They've been covering if not all, then absolutely most of their current liabilities," said Nasirov with satisfaction.

The Kyiv Post spoke with Nasirov one day after TV host Savik Shuster announced that he would have to close his television channel due to financial issues. Shuster had been under investigation by the tax police, claiming that it was politically motivated harassment from the government.

Nasirov denied it, throwing the accusation back at Shuster: "I think the whole of Savik Shuster's show is politically motivated."

He added: "We don't do any political cases. We would be very busy nowadays if we did political cases." ■



A border guard inspects an empty truck along the Ukraine-Moldova border in August 2016. (Volodymyr Petrov)

Weekly business update

BY ISOBEL KOSHIW
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Firtash blamed Odesa Portside Plant failed sale

Fugitive Ukrainian oligarch Dmytro Firtash, who is awaiting the U.S. appeal on a failed extradition request in Vienna, has been blamed for yet another failed attempt on Dec. 7 to privatize the Odesa Portside Plant, a large chemical plant.

Ihor Bilous, the head of the State Property Fund, the government agency in charge of the privatization, made a point of naming Firtash as a reason for the lack of bidders in the latest privatization auction. He said that potential investors had been scared off by the plant's disputed debt for gas from Firtash's Ostchem Holding, a gas supply company.

During the first attempt to sell the plant, the bidding started at \$521 million but on Dec. 7, it was cut to \$200 million. The port was originally valued at \$1 billion.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman in turn blamed the State Property Fund, for the failure to sell the plant, calling it the state agency "incapable."

PrivatBank insists it will not be nationalized

The press service of Ukraine's largest private bank PrivatBank has hit back at reports that it will be nationalized. Long discussed rumors about the financial state of PrivatBank reached a peak this week with some reports that the nationalization of the bank would happen over the New Year.

Oleh Gorokhovskiy, first deputy chairman of the bank, said in a press release that the rumors were an "informational attack" intended to hurt its clients and destabilize the economy. Gorokhovskiy said that the bank is stable and is conducting its planned recapitalization.

"If the government wanted to nationalize the bank, it would have acted without much publicity. Here everything is different: using a misunderstanding by citizens essentially nationalization disperse panic," Gorokhovskiy said.

The bank's owner Ukrainian oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky has not personally commented on the rumors about his bank.

Ukraine boosts EU trade

After losing the Russian market because of being embargoed, Ukraine's agricultural companies are



Odesa Portside Plant, a chemical plant near Odesa, as seen on Aug. 31. Ihor Bilous, head of Ukraine's State Property Fund, announced on Dec. 7 that there were not enough bidders for the privatization of the plant to go ahead. This is the second failed privatization of the plant in 2016. (Volodymyr Petrov)

converting their technical processes to meet European Union standards in the hope of winning a share of the free trade zone.

Since Jan. 10, dairy manufacturers have been licensed to supply the European markets. One of them, Milk Alliance, a group of dairy companies, is delivering butter to Bulgaria and The Netherlands. In December, the

company supplied The Netherlands with 140,000 tons of butter and they plan to buy 200,000 more in 2017.

The export of honey, one of the top Ukrainian agricultural products selling abroad, has increased by a third since the start of 2016. As of December, honey manufacturers exported 47,800 tons of their products in 2016, while in 2015,

they exported a total of 36,000 tons. Among the biggest buyers are Germany, who consumed one third of Ukrainian honey, and the United States, which buys around 15 percent of Ukraine's produce.

Japanese open cable plant in western Ukraine

Japanese wiring systems producer Sumitomo Electric Bordnetze has opened a cable factory in western Ukraine. The plant, which produces cables for Germany's Volkswagen, started operating in the city Chortkiv in Ternopil Oblast on Dec. 14. By 2018, the plant plans to increase its production and hire up to 3,000 workers.

The first joint German and Japanese investment project was launched in Ternopil Oblast in 2006 which makes cables for Audi and Volkswagen. Successful cooperation later led to another plant being opened in Chernivtsi city, western Ukraine.

Among other Japan's investments in Ukraine this year, Fujikura opened a car parts factory in Lviv in April. It currently employs 550 people in the city, and plans to expand to 3,000 employees. ■



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Ukrainian apparel appeals to international consumers

BY MARIA ROMANENKO
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Ukrainian fashion designers like Vita Kin and Natasha Zinko have been popular abroad for years, but smaller Ukrainian clothing businesses are now breaking into foreign markets as well.

Ukrainian fur label Blood&Honey was on every fashionista's lips after pop-star Beyonce was spotted with one of the brand's mink fur clutch bags, bearing the slogan "I kiss better than I cook" while on a date with her rapper husband Jay-Z.

The brand, which specializes in fur items, is sold in multi-brand boutiques across the United States, but hasn't yet got its own shop.

Kachorovska, a Ukrainian authentic leather shoes brand, is also seeing some success abroad. The producer has roots going back more than 50 years, but it only started selling to foreign customers recently.

"We've only just moved into the foreign market, so it's too early to compare the statistics, but around 10 percent of our orders are currently sent abroad (as internet purchases)," CEO of Kachorovska Alina Ocheretiana told the Kyiv Post.

Like Blood&Honey, Kachorovska is yet to open a shop outside Ukraine, but its products are selling well internationally via the Internet and distributors in the U.S., the UAE and Japan.

Ukrainian coat brand Mirella Moda is also gaining popularity abroad. The brand, established in 2014, already has three shops outside of Ukraine: in Toronto, Almaty and Moscow.

"We've also had a lot of offers from the EU. We can choose where



A woman tries on a coat in a Mirella Moda shop in Kyiv on Dec. 8. The brand has recently started expanding abroad and already has shops in three cities abroad, including one in Toronto, Canada. (Volodymyr Petrov)

we would like to sell," the co-founder of the brand, Artur Golosnoy, told the Kyiv Post.

Foreign success

Golosnoy says Mirella Moda's international success started when the company presented their new collection at a fashion exhibition in Kyiv in 2014. Foreign clients started calling them up and offering to work together under franchise.

"Within a year, nine shops opened in Ukraine, and a year later there were shops in Toronto, Moscow and Almaty," says Golosnoy, who works

with the brand's wholesale partners.

Blood&Honey now has employees both in Ukraine and the U.S. Its founder and designer, Lidia Pfeifer, says that apart from its outlets in New York, Chicago and Miami, the brand is "actively progressing" in the UAE and Europe.

"When you walk into a shop, you first notice the item, and only afterwards you look to see which country it was produced in," the designer said.

Kachorovska's shoes are sold via foreign websites, social media and at festive markets in the United States,

the UAE and Japan. The brand has also had requests to open shops in Canada, the Netherlands and the UK.

Low prices, high quality

All of the Ukrainian clothing brands say that competitive pricing helps them maintain growth and appeal to foreign customers.

"Basic ballet pumps from Jimmy Choo cost around \$400, whereas we charge 110-150 euros for winter shoes," Ocheretiana said, adding that Kachorovska charges all customers the same in their online store, regardless of their country.

Mirella Moda's Golosnoy agrees that fair prices help their products sell well abroad.

"Our policy is that a good coat should not cost a lot," Golosnoy said. "Our prices are lower (than those of foreign companies) but our quality is not."

However, Mirella Moda's coats sell at considerably higher prices abroad than they do in Ukraine.

In Ukraine, their autumn coats cost Hr 3,500-4,000 (\$140-160), while a

winter coat goes for Hr 5,500-6,500 (\$220-260); whereas in Canada their coat goes for \$350-500.

Its use of real fur makes Blood&Honey high-end, but this hasn't stopped the brand from selling well. Prices for their goods in the U.S. are 30 percent higher than in Ukraine.

"A Rex Rabbit fur clutch bag costs \$650 in Ukraine, and Beyonce's pick, a mink fur clutch bag, retails in the U.S. for \$1,950," Pfeifer said.

High quality also helps promote the brands, maintaining their success and keeping up demand.

"A satisfied client always brings in a couple of new ones," Ocheretiana said.

Ocheretiana says that a big part of the brand's success abroad is also due to producing shoes for the collections of the famous Ukrainian designers like Elena Reva, Svitlana Bevza and Andre Tan.

"Their shoes, which are (actually) made by us, are sold on the websites that are popular worldwide, and in European shops," Ocheretiana said.

The future

Emmanuel Lowe, managing partner and co-founder of Elese International LLP, a company that focuses on helping Ukrainian brands expand abroad, played a big role in helping Kachorovska export its products.

Lowe says that a range of factors have come together to produce the success of Ukrainian clothing brands abroad over the last three years.

"(These were) the closing off of the Russian market, the huge amount of help coming from partners worldwide, and the work done by public bodies like the Export Promotion Office from the Ministry of Economy and Trade," Lowe said.

He thinks that Ukraine's proximity to the huge EU market, and the fact that the country can make good products at good prices, will boost sales further, and that there is still a lot of potential for growth.

"This is (just) the beginning, and if (Ukrainian clothing brands) adapt and understand the requirements for running an export business, the prospects are excellent," he said. "Patience and effort are needed." ■

World in Ukraine: Kazakhstan

Coming in the December 23 edition of the Kyiv Post

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Alina Ocheretiana, the CEO of shoe brand Kachorovska, shows off some of her company's products on Nov. 4, 2013. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)

Kirillova: Kremlin has suspicious ties to ISIS

Kirillova from page 5

fighting. Many of Saddam Hussein's former generals fill the ranks of the Islamic State, and they all were trained in Russia or the USSR.

"Russian Intelligence possesses detailed dossiers on many ISIS commanders, and it would be good to know what use is made of them. In a word, it's suspicious, and Russia is not sharing its information. At least, we can truthfully confirm that Russia had a hand in the creation of ISIS," says Shmulevich.

Russian opposition political analyst Stanislav Belkovskiy also revealed to the press that Putin knew about the Paris terrorist acts beforehand because he has a widespread agent network within DAESH. According to Belkovskiy, ex-Russian Prime Minister Yevgeniy Primakov originally ran this network. This is at least partially substantiated by another opposition politician, the leader of the Democratic Choice political party, Vladimir Milov, who at one time worked in the Russian Federation government.

"Russia's inexplicable and thoughtless anti-Americanism in large measure resulted from Primakov's stubborn and consequential efforts. When he was Foreign Minister Russia began a friendship with Milosevich, with Saddam, and promoted the Bushehr nuclear project in Iran. It was then that Foreign Ministry documents with an anti-American tone began to circulate for the first time since 1991. With Primakov as Foreign Minister, the idea of "concern about the spread of NATO to the East" was raised. Note that there was no concern about the Iranian friends of the new Minister or about the fact that we were not yet members of NATO, but just that NATO was expanding to the East," said Milov in his interview given just after Primakov's death at the end of June last year.

As yet there is no answer to the question of how Moscow uses its

capabilities. At least we know of no instance where Russia warned her potential allies about planned terrorist activities, excluding Facebook posts or the alleged arrest in Brussels of three Belarussians for terrorism. As it turns out, one of them was at home in Gomel (Belarus) at the time of the bombing of which they were accused.

Fourth, Russian and old Soviet weapons somehow turn up in ISIS hands. It's interesting that Russian propaganda heatedly charges Ukraine with supplying such weapons (one of these fakes was taken apart piece by piece by Sergey Ilchenko, a correspondent for the Ukrainian website "New Region." Experts from the Ukrainian Center for the Army, Conversion, and Disarmament (TslAKR) confirm that many of the weapons in ISIS hands was "re-exported" from Donbas territory and the Crimea occupied by pro-Russian militias. In the opinion of the experts, the puppet leadership of the (separatists) would hardly have permitted themselves such a thing absent the blessing of their Moscow bosses.

"There is irrefutable evidence that MANPADS were especially popular with ISIS, and were "re-exported" from occupied Donbas territory and the annexed Crimea by pro-Russian militias. True, this concerns primarily weapons systems of Soviet manufacture. It was important to Moscow to nurture the implacable enemies of those who stand in her way," notes the TslAKR Director, Valentin Badrak.

And the final argument concerns, as strange as it may seem, the growing wave of repression in Russia. It's well known that open persecution of dissidents inevitably incites more denunciations. As a result, Russian special services that should be combatting terrorism waste their resources battling single mothers and postings on social networks. A single example of such actions against "enemies of the people" will suffice to

illustrate how Russian secret services are wasting their time.

The largest portal in the Urals-Uralu - devoted an entire article to how a single mother from Ekaterinburg, Ekaterina Vologzheninova, was convicted because of anti-war postings in Vkontakte. A few months earlier she had posted a message in support of Nadezhda Savchenko.

"On 5 March, Ekaterina posted a photo of Nadezhda Savchenko on her page, including messages from other Ukrainian pilots: "I won't break, I won't give up," which Ekaterina used as the cover photo on her page. Below the post we see four comments, likes and non-likes, 55 people marked this post and four shared it," reports the authors of the article.

It would seem that people who spend their time counting "likes and non-likes" and re-posts on the page of a common housewife are not fighting real terrorists. Let us recall how a woman carrying the decapitated head of a child was able to walk the streets of Moscow for nearly an hour before anyone thought to detain her. This is all one needs to know about the Russian potential for fighting terrorism.

It is obvious that, regardless of the role Russia plays in terrorism, the nation's leaders play into the hands of the terrorists and work against the interests of the West. It would be useful if journalists and the public could determine the degree to which Russia influences ISIS, how the Kremlin uses its agent network and whether it reaches beyond merely following the organization's activities to actual participation.

Kseniya Kirillova is a Russian journalist who focuses on analyzing Russian society, political processes in modern Russia and the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. She writes for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and other outlets and is an expert of the Center for Army, Conversion and Disarmament studies and the Free Russia Foundation. ■



Rally against Russia's actions in Syria

A woman attaches pictures to a fence as she attends a rally in front of the Russian embassy in Kyiv on Dec. 15 against the Syrian- and Russian-led military operation in Aleppo, Syria. Nearly 30 people gathered in front of the embassy to demand that the fighting end in the Syrian city. They brought flowers, toys and photos taken in besieged eastern Aleppo, which they attached to the fence in front of the embassy. (Volodymyr Petrov)

BUSINESS ADVISER

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Håvard Elvbakken
CEO Ares Arms

The key to change: Becoming comfortable with discomfort

"Change can be an uncomfortable process and even hurt, and some people might even end up giving up. It is only when you see the higher purpose you get comfortable with discomfort, and lay the foundation for change."

What do you consider to be the greatest challenges for Ukraine?

The conflict between the separatists and the armed forces extend to political and administrative issues, splitting the government into two parts. The anti-western vs. the anti-Russians in office and in government, making it a conflict of interests and resulting in making bureaucracy difficult, slowing down important decisions and making the government malfunction. The Minsk agreement is also putting the sitting government in a difficult position. Granting the occupied Donbas areas a special status will have great influence on the political situation. It will make the current "horse trading" politics impossible, and will force politicians to pull their heads up out of the sand, accept some home truths, and take some really difficult decisions.

The conflict in the east also increases the flow of illegal weapons, resulting in a significant increase in weapon- and financially-related crimes in Ukraine. These crimes are no longer limited to large criminal organizations, but now also extend to low-life criminals on the street, exposing even more people to weapons-related crimes. Recent events also show that people in official positions, together with the police, are also part of this spiral.

What is it important for Ukraine to focus on?

The most important focus point for Ukraine at this moment is to restore trust in the government. To have a well-functioning democracy that can provide the trust and services the people need, you also need circulation of money. If people don't trust the political system, they will avoid paying taxes and other revenue taxes that Ukraine needs in order to run necessary governmental services. This means that the negative spiral of holding back on paying taxes prevents the system from working, making it even harder to regain the peoples trust.

What are your main focus areas in Ukraine?

Our work is primarily security management. Based on our clients' situations, we provide competent and efficient solutions making it easier for our clients to operate under sometimes difficult conditions.

Our services range from management and strategic services, to direct physical security, training and equipment. Maintaining our customers' reputation is our top priority. We only work with experienced and qualified personnel, and we are proud of the results we and our partners have achieved in the past.

There are many areas of focus in Ukraine. As we covered earlier, both the conflict and the financial situation makes Ukraine in need of services on many levels. The personal interests some have in maintaining the current system, is the biggest «threat» and security issue to date. The solution is simply diplomacy and education, but given the current situation, we believe that a firm hand is also needed.

In contrast to Obama's policies, Trump will keep a firm hand on policies towards Ukraine. Less tolerance for bullshit, corruption and the continuing "poking of the bear." The time of "personal piggybanks," ignorance and satisfaction of primal and selfish need to repent for old Soviet ways is over. Ukrainian people are more than ever aware of their country's financial situation. The fall of local currencies can be felt every day, raising prices for services as a last resort to cover the failures of their government. At the moment, they are in a vacuum, realizing that the transition towards the West isn't as swift and easy as they were promised. The result is apathy among the people, making them feel as though their hopes are broken, waiting for the next big change of course for Ukraine.

To be able to make change, it is important to make people at all levels of society feel safe. It is a process that requires careful and slow change. We can provide services at all levels, but considering the financial challenges most people are experiencing, it also requires a level of conciseness from the government to help give these services to the people.

How are you partnering up with local businesses?

We pride ourselves in offering our customers a wide range of services, but we also realize that in a country like Ukraine, partnering up with local businesses and entrepreneurs will increase our knowledge and ability to cover all needs. Sharing experiences and knowledge will increase the quality of the services provided, also enhancing and ensuring our clients privacy and security.

Information security is a growing issue all over the world. In this area we have a lot to offer, and taking the overall situation in Ukraine, this is probably one of the areas we can contribute in a very good way. In an area that's controlled by big economic interests, securing information is crucial for healthy growth and a balanced financial environment.

Why is the market in Ukraine interesting?

There are definitely positive signs that Ukraine is heading the right way. People at all levels are now starting to see the benefits and the need for change. Lately, people have been starting to look more to the West for "inspiration." This has planted the seed of realization that is needed for change. We think that this is one of the more important things that foreigners bring as they look more and more to Ukraine. Ukraine is facing big choices these days - choices that could produce many different outcomes. Most likely things will also take a big drop before positive change again can take place. Ukraine is now making a new start, no matter which way they choose to take. If the change represents security for foreign investors and companies, Ukraine might get the financial push that it desperately needs. It's interesting to be part of that change, and hopefully we can do our part to help it move in the right direction.



**OUR PASSION
YOUR SAFETY**

Savchenko leaves party, but not politics or Rada

BY VERONIKA MELKOZEROVA
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A day after news broke of Nadiya Savchenko's secret meeting with the leaders of Russian-backed armed groups in the Donbas, the Batkivshchyna Party announced the lawmaker had left their ranks.

It was no coincidence: Savchenko had offered her resignation to the Batkivshchyna Party several weeks ago, but the party only announced it Dec. 12, when Savchenko was facing public criticism for meeting with the leaders of the Donbas armed groups – people the Ukrainian government, and Savchenko's own party, brand "terrorists."

Tatyana Protorchenko, Savchenko's spokesperson confirmed to the Kyiv Post that the lawmaker had actually left the party several weeks ago, at the end of October.

"Nadiya still remains in the faction. Soon she will start her career as an independent lawmaker," said Protorchenko.

After the reports of Savchenko's secret meeting with separatists' leaders from Donetsk and Luhansk appeared in the media late on

Dec. 11, the Batkivshchyna Party said in a statement that the lawmaker was no longer coordinating her actions with the party.

"The Batkivshchyna Party and faction condemn Russian aggression and criticize any negotiations with terrorists," read the statement, which was published on Batkivshchyna's website on Dec. 12.

Protorchenko told the Kyiv Post that Savchenko would now be concentrating her political activity on her own "civil platform," but revealed no more details.

On the news that Savchenko was leaving the Batkivshchyna Party, speculation arose over her future in parliament – both in the National Security and Defense committee in which she works, and the faction to which she belongs.

Batkivshchyna Party leader Yulia Tymoshenko told Ukraine's 112 television channel on Dec. 12 that Savchenko could be expelled from the Batkivshchyna faction as well.

"Savchenko can plan her life and political activity however she likes. She has nothing in common with the Batkivshchyna Party," Tymoshenko said.



Nadiya Savchenko, a Batkivshchyna Party faction lawmaker, walks inside Russia's Supreme Court building in Moscow on Oct. 26 after attending an appeal against Moscow's sentencing of Ukrainians Stanislav Klykh and Mykola Karpyuk, who were sentenced to up to 22 years in prison for fighting in the 1990s Chechnya war. (AFP)

"Moreover, we decided to initiate a faction meeting on the very first day of the next parliament week (Dec. 20). We decided to call Savchenko to that meeting to talk, and to take a decision," Tymoshenko added.

Savchenko was elected to parliament in absentia – she was number one on the Batkivshchyna Party election list – while she was illegally imprisoned in Russia in 2014. She was also made a member of the Ukrainian delegation to the

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – a status that granted her immunity from prosecution, and effectively rendered her prosecution by the Russian courts illegitimate.

Political analyst Taras Berezovets told the Kyiv Post that Batkivshchyna had decided to reveal the fact that Savchenko had left the party after her meeting with the leaders of the Russian-backed armed groups in the Donbas in order to limit damage to the party's reputation.

The expert also said Tymoshenko would go all out to expel Savchenko from the faction as well, as she (Tymoshenko) has a "unique political intuition" and understands that Savchenko could be damaging to her own rating.

"Even if Savchenko is expelled from faction she won't lose her lawmaker's status. She will continue to work in the Rada as an independent lawmaker, unless she chooses to quit voluntarily, according to the law," said Berezovets. ■

American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine

2016



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Crimean Tatars find new home in Lviv Oblast

Abderrakhman and Dilyara Dzepparov have lunch with their kids in their house in Borynia, a city in Lviv Oblast. The Dzepparovs left Crimea in April 2014 after the Russian military invasion and annexation. The family bought a house in Borynia with the help of local nongovernmental organization and opened a small business in producing cheese. Now they call their son Abdalmuin, who was born in Borynia in 2016, a "Carpathian Tatar." Read the full story and see the pictures on kyivpost.com. The story is produced with the support of the Magnum Foundation as part of the project called "What Works." (Anastasia Vlasova)



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RESTAURANTS

1900 Coffee (112-A Saksahanskoho St.)
 Al Faro (49-A Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Antwerpen (38-A Pushkinska St.)
 Aroma Espresso Bar (5 Dmytrova St.)
 Aroma Espresso Bar (75 Zhylivska St.)
 BAO (14/1 Mechnykova St.)
 Babene (18/7 Zadniprovskoho St.)
 Baraban (4-A Prorizna St.)
 BEEF, meat & wine (11 Shota Rustaveli St.)
 Belle-Vue (7 Saksahanskoho St.)
 Bigoli (7-A Klovsky Descent)
 Carpaccio Bar (12 Sofiivska St.)
 Chachapuri (36-A Tarasa Shevchenka Blvd.)
 Chashka Espresso Bar (1-3/2 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Citronelle (23 Bohdana Khmelnytskoho St.)
 Coffee Tram (14 Tarasa Shevchenka Blvd.)
 Come and Stay (23-B Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Cosmopolite Hotel (6 Hetmana St.)
 Cup & Cake (27 Khreshchatyk St.)
 Cup & Cake (57/3 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Dom Bergonie (17 Pushkinska St.)
 Druzi Cafe (5 Prorizna St.)
 Fair Finch (45-49 Vozdvyzhenska St.)
 Family House (25-A Dehtiarivska St.)
 F-cafe «MAROKANA» (24 Lesi Ukrainky Blvd.)
 Felinni (5 Horodetskoho St.)
 First Point (14/20 Yaroslavska St.)
 GastroRock (10-B Vozdvyzhenska St.)
 Georgian House (36 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Golden Gate Pub (15 Zolotovorotska St.)
 Goodman (75 Zhylivska St.)
 Gorchitsa (6 Pylypa Orlyka St.)
 Himalaya (80 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Kanapa (19 Andriivskiy Descent)
 Kava Like (30-A Honchara St.)
 Korchma Taras Bulba (2-4/7 Pushkinska St.)
 L'Kafa (116 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 La Casa del Habano (13 Klovsky Descent)
 La Vaca Tapas (6 Petlury St.)
 Le Cosmopolite (47 Volodymyrska St.)
 Litpub Krapka Koma (14 Antonovycha St.)
 Liubimy Diadia (20 Pankivska St.)
 Liudi Casual Food (5 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Lviv Handmade Chocolate (2-B Andriivskiy Descent)
 Lviv Handmade Chocolate (TSUM, 6th floor)
 Lypsky (15 Lypska St.)
 Mama Manana (44 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Mangal (33-35 Saksahanskoho St.)
 Matisse + City Hotel (56-A Bohdana Khmelnytskoho St.)
 Mimino (10-A Spasska St.)
 Mindal Coffee Room (1-3 Hoholivska St.)
 Mon Cher (11 Yaroslaviv Val St.)
 Mon Cher (124 Zhylivska St.)
 Montecchi Capuleti (36-B Shchorsa St.)
 Moya Kryzhkova Polytisia (7 Pushkinska St.)
 Musafir (57-A Saksahanskoho St.)
 Etazh (ex Music Bar) (16-A Shota Rustaveli St.)
 Napule Pizza (9 Mechnykova St.)
 Naturlich (3 Bohdana Khmelnytskoho St.)
 Nelson & Friends (4 Pugachova St.)
 Tike (31-A Sahaidachnoho St.)
 O'Brien's (17-A Mykhailivska St.)
 O'Connors (15/8 Khoryva St.)
 Oliiva (34 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 One Love Espresso Bar (100 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Viva Oliiva (16 Pushkinska St.)
 Oliiva (25 Druzhby Narodiv Blvd.)
 Opanas (10 Tereshchenkivska St.)
 Oxota Na Ovets (10-A Vozdvyzhenska St.)
 Pache (3 Kostelna St.)
 Pantagruel (1 Lysenka St.)
 Pervak (15/2 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Podshofe (45/2 Pushkinska St.)
 Praga (1 Hlushkova Ave.)
 Pynna №1 (15 Baseina St.)

Reprisa (40/25 Bohdana Khmelnytskoho St.)
 Reprisa (26 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Salateira (37 Sahaidachnoho St.)
 Salateira (72 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Salateira (56-A Yaroslavka St.)
 Sam's Steak House (37 Zhylivska St.)
 Shevchenko Hall (13/5 Ihorivska St.)
 Shooters (22 Moskovska St.)
 Shoti (9 Mechnykova St.)
 Simple (102 Saksahanskoho St.)
 Small Talk & Coffee (19-A Dmytrivska St.)
 Slivki Obshchestva (47 Zvirynetska St.)
 Soiree (11 Artema St.)
 The Kitchen (68 Saksahanskoho St.)
 Très Branché (4 Lysenka St.)
 Tres Francais (3 Kostelna St.)
 True Burger Bar (42 Bohdana Khmelnytskoho St.)
 Tsarske Selo (42 Mazepy St.)
 Under Wonder (21 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Vero Vero (82 Artema St.)
 Verona Pizza (71-E Kostiantynivska St.)
 Videnski Bulochky (1-3/5 Pushkinska St.)
 Videnski Bulochky (14-A Instyutska St.)
 Vopros Bar (19 Shota Rustaveli St.)
 Whitebeard Blackbird (40 Vozdvyzhenska St.)
 Wolkonsky Patisserie (5-7/29 Tarasa Shevchenka Blvd.)
 Wolkonsky Patisserie (15 Khreshchatyk St.)
 Yolk (11/16 Lva Tolstoho St.)
 Yolk (37/1 Yaroslaviv Val St.)
 Yolk (1/2 Spaska St.)
 Yolk (8/2 Rusanivska Quay)

HUBS

America House Creative Space (6 Pymonenka St.)
 Chasopys (3 Lva Tolstoho St.)
 Fedoriv Hub (5 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)

THEATERS

Operetta Theatre (53/3 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Theatre "Chornyi Kvadrat" (5-B Artema St.)
 Theatre on Podil (20-B Andriivskiy Descent)

HOTELS

11 Mirrors (34-A Bohdana Khmelnytskoho St.)
 Attache Premier Hotel (26 Zhylivska St.)
 Dream House Hostel (2 Andriivsky Descent)
 Express (38/40 Tarasa Shevchenka Blvd.)
 Fairmont Hotel (1 Naberezhno-Khreshchatytska St.)
 Gonchar Hotel (17-A Honchara St.)
 Greguar Hotel (67-7 Velyka Vasylkivska St.)
 Hilton (28-30 Tarasa Shevchenka Blvd.)
 Holiday Inn (79 Horkoho St.)
 Hotel Bontiak (5/24-B Irynska St.)
 Hotel Rus (4 Hospitalna St.)
 Hyatt (5-A Tarasovo St.)
 Imprensa (21 Sahaidachnoho St.)
 Intercontinental (2-A Velyka Zhytomyska St.)
 Khreshchatyk (14 Khreshchatyk St.)
 Kozatsky Stan (18 km Boryspilske Highway)
 Opera (23 Bohdana Khmelnytskoho St.)
 Park-Hotel KIDEV (5 Boryspilska St.)
 Premier Palace (5-7-29 Tarasa Shevchenka Blvd.)
 President Hotel (12 Hospitalna St.)
 Radisson Blue (22 Yaroslaviv Val St.)
 Ramada (103 Stolychne Highway)
 Ukraine (4 Instyutska St.)

BUSINESS CENTERS

Cubic Center (1 entrance) (3 Sholudenko St.)
 Cubic Center (2 entrance) (3 Sholudenko St.)
 Europa Plus (120 Saksahanskoho St.)
 Europa Plus (33 Tarasa Shevchenka Blvd.)
 Gooioord (11 Mykhailivska St.)
 Gooioord (34/33 Ivana Franka St.)
 Gooioord (36 Ivana Franka St.)
 Gooioord (52 Bohdana Khmelnytskoho St.)

Illinsky (8 Illinska St.)
 Regus (4 Hrinchenka St.)
 Regus Podil (25-B Sahaidachnoho St.)
 Silver Breeze (1-V Pavla Tychny Ave.)
 Ukrainian Crisis Media Center (4 Instyutska St.)

BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

American Chamber of Commerce (12 Amosova St.)
 European Business Association (1 Andriivskiy Descent)
 EBRD (16 Nemyrovycha-Danchenka St.)

EMBASSIES

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (7 Kontraktova Sq.)
 Consulate of the Republic of Austria (33 Ivana Franka St.)
 Embassy of the Republic of India (20-B Berlinskoho St.)
 Embassy of the United States of America (4 Sikorskoho St.)

AIRPORTS & TICKETS OFFICES

Kiy Avia (4-B Horodetskoho St.)
 VIP Hall Boryspil Airport (Airport Boryspil, Terminal D)
 Business Terminal, Kyiv International Airport
 Terminal A Lounge, Kyiv International Airport

SPORT CLUBS

5th Element (29 Elektrykiv St.)
 Fitness Planet (10 Kropyvnytskoho St.)
 Kiev Sport Club (5 Druzhby Narodiv Blvd.)
 Sofiivsky Fitness Center (5 Rylskiy Lane)

CLINICS

Americal Medical Center (1 Berdychivska St.)
 Porcelain (26-5 Otto Shmidta St.)
 Porcelain (29 Vozdvyzhenska St.)
 Cell Therapy Institute (3 Kosmonavta Komarova Ave.)

LIBRARIES AND SCHOOLS

American Councils for International Education (20 Esplanadna St.)
 Kyiv School of Economics (92-94 Dmytrivska St.)
 National Parliamentary Library of Ukraine (1 Hrushevskoho St.)
 National Academy for Public Administration under the President of Ukraine (12/2 Puhachova St., 20 Ezhena Potie St.)
 Pechersk School International (7A Zablyi St.)
 Kyiv International School (3-A Sviatoshynsky Lane)

GAS STATIONS

Shell Gas Station (31/1 Stolychne Highway)

REGIONS OF UKRAINE

Kharkiv

Paris restaurant (30/32 Yaroslava Mudroho St.)
 Chekhov restaurant (84/2 Sumska St.)
 Chichikov Hotel (6/8 Hoholia St.)
 Iris Art Hotel (6-A Sviatoduhivska St.)
 Kharkiv Palace Hotel (2 Pravdy Ave.)

Kirovohrad

Reikartz Kirovohrad (Hotel) (1-D Chornovola St.)

Lviv

RESTAURANTS

Amadeus (7 Katedralna St.)
 Atlas Deluxe (27 Tarasa Shevchenka Ave.)
 Baczewski Restauracja (8 Shevska St.)

Centaur (34 Rynok Sq.)
 Chorny Kit (4 Heroyiv Maidanu St.)
 Harmata (11 Hrabovskoho St.)
 Hrushevsky cinema jazz (28 Tarasa Shevchenka Ave.)
 iFest network (15-A Lemkivska St.)
 Kumpel Gastropub (6 Vynnychenka St.)
 Kumpel Gastropub (2-B Chornovola Ave.)
 Stary Royal (3 Stavropigiyiska St.)
 Strudel House (6 Shevska St.)
 Tex-Mex BBQ (7 Johara Dudaieva St.)
 Veronika (21 Tarasa Shevchenko Ave.)
 Zukernia (3 Staroyevreyska St.)

HOTELS

Astoria (15 Horodetska St.)
 Chopin (7 Malaniuka Sq.)
 Citadel Inn (11 Hrabovskoho St.)
 George (1 Mitskevycha St.)
 Leopold (16 Teatralna St.)
 Lion's Castle (7 Hlinky St.)
 Nobilis Hotel (5 Fredra St.)
 Reikartz Dworzec Lviv (107 Horodetska St.)
 Swiss Hotel (20 Kniazia Romana St.)

BUSINESS CENTERS

Emerald (3 Petrushevycha Sq.)
 InterCity (67 Chornovola Ave.)

SCHOOLS & OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Lviv Business School (35-A Hutorivka St.)
 Bank Lviv (1 Serbska St.)

Mukacheve

Star (Hotel) (10 Myru Sq.)

Mykolaiv

Reikartz River Mykolaiv (Hotel) (9 Sportyyna St.)

Odesa

RESTAURANTS

Traveller's coffee (14 Derybasivska St.)
 Terrace Sea View (1-5 Lanzheron Beach)
 The Roastery by Odesa (1 Arkadia Alley)
 Bratia Grill Restaurant (17 Derybasivska St.)
 Benedikt (19 Sadova St.)
 Fratelli (17 Hretska St.)
 Ministerium (12, Hoholia St.)

HOTELS

Otrada (11 Zatyshna St.)
 Palace Del Mar (1 Khrustalny Lane)
 Stella Residence (3 Vanny Lane)
 Frapolli (13 Derybasivska St.)
 London (95 Uspenska St.)
 Bristol (15 Pushkinska St.)
 Alexandrovskiy (12 Alexandrovsky Ave.)
 Villa le Premier (3-A Vannyi Lane)

Zakarpatska Oblast

Reikartz Karpaty (257 Tarasa Shevchenka St., s. Zhdeniyevy)
 Reikartz Polyana (25 Zhovtneva St., s. Poliana)

Zaporizhia

Khortitsa Palace Hotel (71-A Tarasa Shevchenka Blvd.)

Dnipropetrovsk

Reikartz Dnipropetrovsk (12 Chervona St.)

Yuriy Kosyuk and rise of agricultural tycoons

From his poultry-raising business, Yuriy Kosyuk has made the leap to billionaire, presidential adviser and informal head of an increasingly powerful agribusiness lobby in Ukraine.

Story At A Glance

Yuriy Kosyuk is Ukraine's fifth richest man.

His MHP is the nation's top poultry producer.

He was entrusted by President Petro Poroshenko to oversee the army during the peak of fighting in 2014, and remains a presidential adviser.

Insiders say he has the largest wings in a high-flying agriculture lobby.

Editor's Note: The following article is part of the Ukraine Oligarch Watch series of reports supported by Objective Investigative Reporting Program, a MYMEDIA project funded by the Danish government. All articles in this series can be republished freely with credit to their source. Content is independent of the donor.

BY ALYONA ZHUK
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As three years of Russia's war against the industrial eastern region chisels away at the financial muscle of Ukraine's steel barons, a new breed of tycoons is sprouting up to claim a share in the country's echelons of oligarchy and political power.

Yuriy Kosyuk hovers high atop Ukraine's increasingly powerful agriculture lobby.

His London-listed MHP is one of the largest poultry producers in Europe. It's also a top player on the mushrooming domestic grain and livestock feed businesses. Ukrainian Focus magazine has estimated Kosyuk's fortune at \$769 million, above the current worth of exiled oligarch Dmytro Firtash, the former partner of Russia's Gazprom in the multibillion-dollar business of supplying Ukraine and Russia with natural gas.

Like many oligarchs that have amassed vast wealth since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the

48-year-old Kosyuk accumulated his share of toys to flaunt his status. He has a luxurious yacht, some say a fleet of two yachts, valued at well more than \$100 million.

It's no surprise, therefore, to have seen him with a strong tan – perhaps from Mediterranean sunshine – while visiting the Presidential Administration months after stepping down from a top position in government.

Yuriy Melnyk, a former Ukrainian agriculture minister, has served for years as a top executive in Kosyuk's MHP poultry company. But when duty called in July 2014 as Russia unleashed a separatist proxy war in the eastern Donbas region after having occupied the Crimean peninsula, Kosyuk made his own leap to the highest levels of government.

As fellow oligarchs Serhiy Taruta and Igor Kolomoisky took over as governors of Donetsk and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts, respectively, Kosyuk became part of an emergency initiative to get billionaires with a stake in the country to unite against



(UNIAN)

Yuriy Kosyuk

Date of birth: May 27, 1968

Place of birth: Katerynopil, Cherkasy Oblast

Wealth: \$769 million, 5th richest person in Ukraine, according to a 2016 estimate by Focus magazine. His net worth was estimated at \$750 million in 2014, and \$1.2 billion in 2013.

Key Assets: Myronivsky Hliboproduct, or simply MHP, is one of the Ukraine's biggest agroholdings. It covers 55 percent of the Ukrainian poultry market and exports chicken meat to 67 countries, including 17 states in the European Union.

Family: Married to Olena Kosyuk. Has one son, Ivan.

Praised for: Building a socially responsible business, investing in the local infrastructure in the regions where his capacities are located, promoting Ukraine internationally.

Criticized for: Using his political connections to lobby for his business interests.

the aggression and save the nation from being ripped apart.

He was on July 2, 2014, appointed by a newly elected oligarch president to serve as first deputy head of the presidential administration in charge of coordinating the critical army and security forces. It's a position Kosyuk, who served in the military two decades ago, held until December of that year, after which he took on an advisory role to Petro Poroshenko.

Political insiders and agriculture experts claim Kosyuk retains strong influence over executive and legislative government, foremost as an informal leader of the increasingly influential agriculture lobby. It's a claim the Kyiv Post was not able to directly confirm or deny with Kosyuk, as he did not respond to requests for an interview.

Farmer #1

As Ukrainian media routinely label Poroshenko as Ukraine's "chocolate



Then-President Viktor Yushchenko awards Yuriy Kosyuk with the "Hero of Ukraine" award to mark his outstanding achievements in agriculture on Aug. 23, 2008. (PHL)

king," some are carrying on the metaphor to describe Kosyuk as "Ukraine's chicken king," "chicken billionaire" or even "farmer number one."

MHP, a now common brand, is an acronym for a bread and feed business called Myronivsky Khlibproduct that formed the launching pad for his poultry empire which is today the largest poultry meats producer in Ukraine, and one of the largest in Europe.

According to the company's website, MHP covers 55 percent of an entire 40 million plus Ukrainian consumer market that is increasingly eating more chicken, and fewer Soviet-style sausages. In 2015, it produced 566,600 tons of meat, while all Ukrainian farmers together produced 907,000 tons of meat.

The European Union produces 11.3 million tons of meat a year.

MHP unites about 20 brands. It also cultivates grain, farming about 370,000 hectares of land, producing feed as well as meat products.

Kosyuk's company earned \$1.1 billion in 2015, a 14 percent decrease on the previous year, in part due to currency devaluation. But exports to hard-currency-paying European Union markets have been steadily rising, from 16,536 tons in 2014 year, to 27,285 tons in 2015 year.

To bypass EU quotas for duty-free imports set in Ukraine's free trade agreement with Brussels that Kosyuk has himself criticized in past years as paltry, his MHP last May launched a poultry processing plant in the Netherlands. In total, MHP supplies chicken meat to 67 countries.



Mariann Fischer Boel, then the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, meets Yuriy Kosyuk in Kyiv on June 16, 2009. (PHL)

President Petro Poroshenko (C) with Borys Lozhkin, the president's former chief of staff, and Yuriy Kosyuk (R) stand during the Ukrainian anthem at a meeting with members of Nova Kraina (New Country), a civil society group, on July 9, 2014. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)



War takes Kosyuk from agriculture to manager of the country's military

Natalia Pogozeva, a former presidium member of the Ukrainian Agrarian Confederation, and chair of the executive council at the non-government organization ProInvest, said Kosyuk is the only person in Ukraine who has built an agribusiness empire that functions and competes like top global competitors.

"There is no other company of such status in Ukraine ... In terms of jobs, attitude, technology. Innovations and technologies are top-notch," she said.

While serving as president, Viktor Yushchenko in 2008 awarded Kosyuk – whose MHP was one of the first sizable companies to list abroad – with "Hero of Ukraine" honors to mark his outstanding achievements. Ihor Tarasyuk, a former business partner of Kosyuk, at that time headed Yushchenko's department of presidential affairs. Yulia Tymoshenko, who then was Ukraine's prime minister, told reporters Tarasyuk owned an interest in the MHP business, a statement that Kosyuk denied.

Oleksandr Bakumenko, a Ukrainian lawmaker with Petro Poroshenko's faction who heads

parliament's agriculture committee, claims to have known Kosyuk for about 20 years. A former head of the Union of Poultry Breeders of Ukraine which MHP is a member of, he said: "Kosyuk is my close friend, and I am proud to be his friend. He is a perfectionist. He is very pedantic and very smart."

"For him, the period of time between the idea and its realization is the shortest. While others are hesitating, he is already doing. He loves (business) and he knows how to do it. He can run fast and he makes everyone in his team run as fast as he does," Bakumenko added.

President's lieutenant

It was perhaps organizational and managerial qualities that convinced Poroshenko, as Ukraine's newly elected commander-in-chief, to appoint Kosyuk as his deputy in charge of managing security services and the military during the peak of war in 2014.

Kosyuk, who graduated the National University of Food



An employee of the poultry plant in Kaniv, a city in Cherkasy Oblast 140 kilometers southeast of Kyiv, inspects freshly slaughtered chickens on June 16, 2009. (PHL)



**OLIGARCH
WATCH**

Kosyuk keeps hands clean during short stint as official

Kosyuk from page 13

Technologies in Kyiv, seems to have little experience in military affairs, which comes down to his compulsory service in Ukrainian army in early 1990s.

"I consider him the best manager, who has quite tough management style," Poroshenko said on July 3, 2014, when he introduced Kosyuk to the heads of the law enforcement and defense agencies. "He has to improve the situation with bringing order to the support area, to the logistics system, tender procedures."

That last word refers to state purchases for the military, long a suspected source of murky, non-transparent dealings. Yet it's noteworthy that Kosyuk has not figured in any major corruption scandals while serving in the Presidential Administration, nor afterwards.

Borys Lozhkin, who at that time was Poroshenko's chief of staff, said in an interview with the Ukrainska Pravda website that along with logistics, Kosyuk helped "with coordinating the actions of the law enforcement bodies." Kosyuk's team,

Lozhkin added, also helped to design legislation that led to formation of the new Anti-Corruption Bureau.

Dmytro Shymkiv, deputy head of the Presidential Administration since 2014, said Kosyuk's responsibilities were "everything that has to do with security, defense, and anti-corruption."

Political analyst Ruslan Bortnik said "he was appointed as a person, who could support financial changes in the army and law enforcement."

Arsen Avakov, Ukraine's interior minister since early 2014, described Kosyuk as an enthusiastic official while recalling their joint trip to a newly liberated Sloviansk in the summer of 2014.

"He was there with us for the first time ... He took on his job with passion," Avakov said.

Though Kosyuk's stint in direct public service lasted less than half a year, Poroshenko immediately in December 2014 took him on as a freelance advisor.

Shymkiv, a former regional executive for Microsoft, said that Kosyuk had his own point of view about how fast reforms should be moving,



From left, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, then-Deputy Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine Mykhailo Koval, then-First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration Yuriy Kosyuk and then-Defense Minister Valeriy Heletey walk along a corridor of a government building in Kyiv on July 3, 2014. (UNIAN)



Yuriy Kosyuk and Ukrainian Interior Minister Arsen Avakov talk to residents of Sloviansk on July 6, 2014, soon after the Ukrainian army returned the city in Donetsk Oblast to government-control. (Ukrafoto)

adding: "this is an Achilles heel of all the people who come (here) from business, including myself."

"In business, when you have an idea, you don't have to be persuading every person in your company to follow it. In politics, you have to persuade a lot of people, taking into account many interests," Shymkiv added.

Kosyuk, in an interview with the online program "Without Fences" that was published on YouTube on Dec. 23, 2014, said he was an entrepreneur in his heart.

"I'm definitely not an official. You have more freedom in business," he said.

According to Lozhkin, the main reason of Kosyuk's resignation was his schedule.

"Yura was used to a bit easier schedule than the one we have,"

Lozhkin told new website Ukrainska Pravda. "He admitted it honestly two months after he was appointed, but he kept working for a long time after that."

According to political analyst Volodymyr Fesenko, it was a matter of time, as business management significantly differs from government management.

"Plus, different sources say he did not manage to adjust his lifestyle to the job in public service. He did not want to give up many of his habits," Fesenko told the Kyiv Post.

Oligarch lifestyle

According to a publication by Sergii Leshchenko, a former investigative journalist now serving as a pres-

idential critic within Poroshenko's own party, Kosyuk owns two yachts: the 87-meters Ace equipped with a sauna, cinema and gym on board; and a support vessel called Garçon that transports jet skis and a helicopter. Ace was estimated by Leshchenko to cost \$150-\$180 million; Garçon up to \$30 million.

However, according to Super Yacht Fan, an online register of yacht owners based on user-generated content, Kosyuk does not own Ace and Garçon. Instead, he owns the 85-meter Valerie, which is valued at some \$120 million.

Leshchenko told the Kyiv Post that when his article was published in December 2015 complete with photographs, Kosyuk definitely owned Ace and Garçon, according to his sources among Ukraine's oligarchic elite.

Bakumenko said people speculate about Kosyuk's possessions "to even out those who earned money honestly and those who earned it through graft, and to show that both are bad, because they are rich."

"They are writing about yachts. So? What if a person earned that?" Bakumenko asked the Kyiv Post. "In the U.S., a person would say: 'Look, son, this is John. He has been studying hard, worked hard, launched production, created jobs, pays taxes. Learn from him.' What would our people say? Ivan, do you see how he lives? What a bastard, we need to poke his eye out."

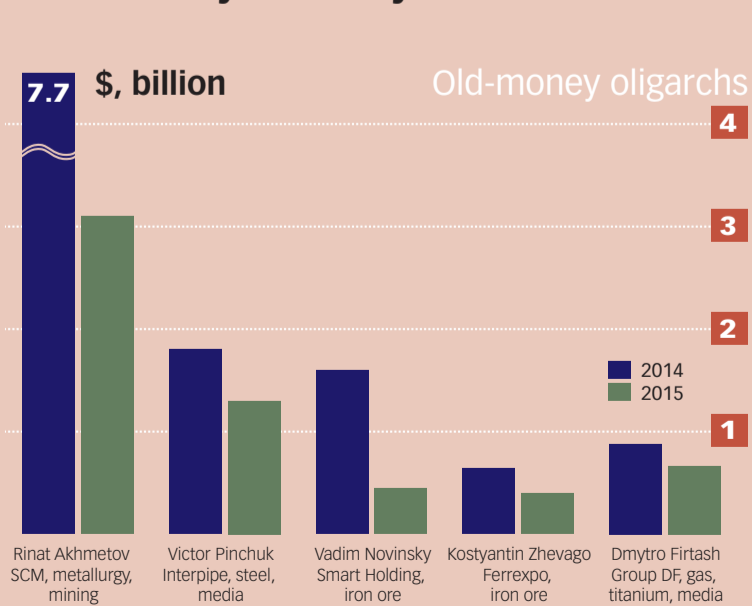
In his asset declaration for 2013 which was published by Ukrainska Pravda, Kosyuk did not list any yachts.

Other luxurious property alleged-



OLIGARCH WATCH

Ukraine's tycoons by source of wealth



As the agricultural sector and food industry evolve in Ukraine, owners of these businesses have strengthened their positions among Ukraine's richest people. Steel, chemicals and metallurgy - the traditional sources of oligarch wealth - are in decline. (Source: Focus Magazine)

Oligarch loses his battle to keep special tax breaks, but retains influence

ly owned by Kosyuk has made headlines.

According to the Ukraine's state register of the real estate, Kosyuk, in addition to claiming four apartments in Kyiv, owns a 1,070-square-meters house in Khotiv, a village 27 kilometers southwest of Kyiv. He also has four land plots there – almost eight hectares in total.

Investigative journalists from Hromadske TV and ZIK reported that Kosyuk's mansion there was built on territory that historically has been a part of cultural property: the so-called Khotivske Horodyshche (Khotiv Settlement).

Hlib Ivakin, deputy head of the Institute of Archaeology of Ukraine's National Academy of Science, told reporters that excavations on that territory revealed a lot of valuable finds related to the ancient Scythian inhabitants of the area. He said that if the land plot had been sold to Kosyuk, it had probably been done through a series of backroom deals and "some illegal transaction," as the land had to be first deprived of its protected status.

Kosyuk told reporters he bought the land legally and it is not a part of an archaeological site.

Self-made man?

Kosyuk's supporters say he built up what is today a model, Western-styled agribusiness corporation through hard work and merit, not political connections or nepotism. Ukrainian Forbes magazine quoted him as saying that he didn't like working with friends and relatives, though his wife holds a senior position in his business overseeing quality control and food safety.

"Those who stayed work at the most difficult jobs. They have to be either an example to others, or leave," he said in 2013.

His teenager son Ivan Kosyuk studies at Deerfield Academy, a prestigious boarding school in Massachusetts. It counts king Abdullah of Jordan among its alumni.

According to Latifundist, a Ukrainian internet site which focuses on agribusiness, Kosyuk had earlier promised that he would sell his business and give away all the money to the charity if his son refuses to take over the running of MHP.

Strings in government

Though he no longer holds a formal position in government, Ruslan Bortnik, director of the Ukrainian Institute for Policy Analysis and Management, described Kosyuk as a "person from the financial and administrative circle of president's close associates who can influence the governmental appointments."

"This concerns first of all the issue of import and export in the agricultural sector," Bortnik said.

"He is an important person, but we should not overestimate his influence. This influence is limited within the economic matters and lobbying of his interests. There is also a political influence, but he is not the strongest player here," Bortnik added.

Playing chicken

Yuriy Solovey, a lawmaker within Petro Poroshenko faction who serves as deputy head of the parliament's economic policy committee, said Kosyuk weighs influence through a grouping of legislators, including in the agricultural committee.



Yuriy Kosyuk talks to reporters during a press conference on June 12, 2013. (Ukrafoto)



Yuriy Kosyuk talks to Nataliya Mykolska, a deputy minister at Ukraine's Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, at the Kyiv Post Capturing New Markets conference on March 29. (Pavlo Podufalov)

In his words, agribusiness holdings in Ukraine, for example, are lobbying their interests often by disguising themselves as looking out for the good of small farmers. A case in point, he said, was a push in past

years to preserve a special taxation regime opposed by the International Monetary Fund that allowed farmers to retain accumulated value added tax – spending it on goods and services that are related to their production – as opposed to paying it to the national budget.

Confrontation over the matter got stinky at one point, as protesters brought cow heads on sticks and a carcass of a dead pig in a coffin to parliament in December 2015. The stunt was to illustrate the fate of agribusiness if the special tax regime was cancelled, as it was late last year as part of a budget vote.

According to Solovey, this was one of the biggest political battles lost by "the big latifundistas," including Kosyuk.

"Companies that have been farming over 100,000 hectares of land were interested in keeping the spe-

cial regime in being free from taxes. So they fought," Solovey said.

Several independent sources told the Kyiv Post off the record that Bakumenko was one of the lawmakers who were representing Kosyuk's interests in this budget and tax battle.

Bakumenko denied the allegations, saying he always advocates the interests of responsible, transparent, law-abiding, effective and stable businesses, no matter whether they are small or big.

He admitted that he was one of those who fought for preserving the special tax regime for agricultural companies. However, he said it was profitable for all kinds of companies, including small, medium and big ones.

"Politicians play on the statements that can't be proven. They say it was more beneficial for the big holdings because they get more (of the accumulated value added tax to retain.) But they produce more! Please, do more, develop, and you will also get more. These are all fairy tales," he said.

Kyiv Post editor Olga Rudenko contributed reporting to the story. She can be reached at rudenko@kyivpost.com ■

Future installments will be published in the Kyiv Post until Dec. 22 and available freely for republication in English, Ukrainian or Russian languages.

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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



Nov. 11 – Oligarch Watch, Part 5

Vadim Novinsky: Ukraine's 'Russian' Oligarch



Dec. 9 – Oligarch Watch, Part 6

Dmytro Firtash: The Oligarch Who Can't Come Home



Dec. 16 – Oligarch Watch, Part 7

Yuriy Kosyuk: Top Bird



Kamaliya sings to help children



Singer-actress Kamaliya, the wife of Kyiv Post publisher Mohammad Zahoor, performed her 3rd annual St. Nicholas Charity Night on Dec. 12. The event at Nivki Concert Hall raised more than \$18,000 to benefit charities supported by the Kyiv Lions Club volunteer service organization. (1) Karolina Wirowska and Marek Gajowy enjoy the show. (2) Emcees Pavlo Shylko accepts a gift of \$10,000 from Karolina Wirowska, PR director for Bartek children's shoe manufacturer. (3) One of the night's winners. (4) Kamaliya performs. (5) Mohammad Zahoor and twin daughters Mirabella and Arabella. (6) A painting is auctioned off. (7) Guests toast to a great evening. (8) Francis Goya performs with Kamaliya. (9) The party atmosphere of Nivki Concert Hall on 84 Prospect Peremohy. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)



An excellent night for music and needy children in Ukraine



(1) Dario Sala, Paolo Pontiggia and Renata Gajowy (back center) enjoy the show. (2) From left, Dario Sala, Leonid Naidiuk, Tatiana Hovarna and Ignace Meuwissen. (3) A fan. (4) After the show, the Kamaliya Foundation awards the Hr 490,000 in proceeds to representatives of the Kyiv Lions Club. From left, Andrius Nemickas (partly obscured), Marjon Cals, Kyiv Post chief editor (and Lions Club member) Brian Bonner, Kamaliya, Kyiv Publisher Mohammad Zahoor, Kyiv Post Lions Club president Karen-Marie Kragelund, Inna Shmarenkova (mother of Kamaliya), Pieter Hagendoorn and Tatiana Bentsianova. (5) Emcee Pavlo Shylko auctions off more prizes. (6) Terry Pritchard of Channel Equity Finance is one of the night's raffle winners.(Kostyantyn Chernichkin, Tasia Dolgoplova)

Crimean farmers struggling to adapt to life under occupation

Crimea from page 2

Tyumen, Archangelsk – anywhere but here.”

More sellers than buyers

On a bitterly cold November day, there were more sellers than buyers at the small local market in nearby Alexeyevka. Three traders there said they had made their living from farming before 2014. Now they were selling Turkish and Polish clothing brought from Russia, and potatoes from Belarus for 20 rubles a kilogram – more than twice the price in neighboring Kherson Oblast in Ukraine.

“It’s impossible to grow anything. Lots of friends have moved to Kherson because it’s not possible to work here,” said Lenur Ismailov, who used to grow potatoes to sell through the winter on 15 rented hectares. “And the prices of vegetables – we might as well be watering them with mineral water.”

Now he and his wife sell clothes to make a living; at first they brought them from Odesa but since Ukraine imposed a trade blockade they bring them from Russia in tiresome and costly journeys over the Kerch straits. In what was clearly the last straw, Ismailov’s son was called up to the Russian army in November. “There’s nothing good here now. It’s really hard – write that down: really hard,” he said. “I’ve just had enough.”

Two men selling Belarusian potatoes declined to give their surnames or name the agribusiness where they used to work, which imported European seed and technology and sold frozen fruit and vegetables to Kyiv. “It was Ukrainian so I won’t name it,” said Rustem. Now the company has re-registered under Russia, switched to less labor- and water-in-



Farm workers sort through newly harvested cabbages at a farm in northern Crimea on Nov. 11. (Kyiv Post)

tensive crops, and laid off most of its workers. “That’s how they exist now – they don’t like it, but of course they don’t say so,” said Rustem, who also used to grow potatoes on his own seven hectares to sell. “And we’re like wolves, scavenging for work.”

Ruins of collective farm buildings lie everywhere in this region’s flat landscape, reminders of a previous farming disaster. The huge lorries Vladimir Mironyuk remembers from his childhood, lining up to take tons of apples from local orchards to Belarus, are long gone.

Under Mikhail Gorbachev’s 1980s anti-alcohol campaign vineyards and orchards were ploughed up as wine and cider plants closed, or else were abandoned in the dreadful years of the 1990s when collective farm workers were paid in grain and vegetables and stealing a cow or pig was often the only way to survive.

Life gradually improved after the collective farms were broken up and workers received land plots which they could rent out for farming to enterprises like the Kalinina farming collective, established in 2000. The

orchards never came back, but rice and vegetable fields took their place. Post-Soviet farmers in Crimea had no need to economise on water; Dnipro water was unlimited in practice, and cheap for both big farms and individuals cultivating a few hectares.

Abandoning farming

Now rice farming has been abandoned and vegetable crops much reduced. One trickle-down from today’s water shortages is that some landplot owners are no longer being paid by lease-holders unable to farm the land, or are being paid in the winter grain crops farmers are now planting because they are not water-intensive. Another is that land rental agreements, usually of 10 years duration, must be re-registered under Russian law when they run out – an additional headache for farmers, who also need to get new documents for land use which were not required under Ukraine.

Only after all these papers are ready can farmers get any government subsidies. The Kalinina farm managed in 2014 to scrape funds together (with no operational banks after annexation, it was impossible to get a loan) to drill a borehole before all the extensive documentation was required and costs were lower. But because of limits on groundwater use, even the new borehole does not supply enough water. The collective is still trying to get documents together so it can apply for a subsidy for the drip irrigation system it has laid, a more economical system providing water directly to roots of crops, but which has to be replaced after one or two growing seasons, at yet more expense in both time and money.

The collective is still earning out the outlay on the borehole, and is not cultivating as much land, or employing as many workers, as formerly. This year the 450-hectare farm is growing 180 hectares of grain and animal feed, and 100 hectares of vegetables.

‘Can you help us?’

“We’d be happy to take more water and cultivate a bigger area, but there are limits and you can’t do anything about that,” said farmer Vladimir Vasilievich. The vegetables will be frozen and sent to Russia. Before 2014, the produce was sold to Ukraine.

“It was hard to get into the Russian market,” Vladimir admitted. But watching his harvest of carrots and cabbages being brought in, he remained cautiously upbeat. “If it had been little by little, this becoming part of a new state... It is a bit hard. But it’s already easier now than the first year, we’ve adapted.”

Behind any optimism in Pervomaik, and fear of saying the wrong thing, is a thinly cloaked desperation.

“Can you help us?” asked Mironyuk’s deputy Antonina Oltyanova, after nevertheless insisting that there is no crisis and farmers have been able to adapt successfully to new conditions. Crimean media have stopped covering their troubles, she said, since after two years the situation had not changed. “Can you influence this issue of water? If it worked out that your information was published and people read it and helped, we’d be really grateful.”

In fact the only positive influence has been unusually high rainfall which saved Pervomaik’s harvests in 2015 and 2016. Crimean authorities have suggested the higher rainfall is an environmental result of the North Crimean Canal’s closure. But neither climate miracles nor boreholes are likely to save this region. Infrastructural problems have compounded water shortages – livestock farming for example has suffered because hay and silage can no longer be grown locally and the expense of bringing it from Russia is prohibitive. Last year an outbreak of swine flu devastated the industry even further.

Mironyuk and Oltyanova long for a renewed agreement with Ukraine to restore water. But it is out of the hands of local people, most of whom have lived and worked on the land here for decades.

“What can we say, from here down below? It’s for the government to decide,” said Mironyuk. “I’m even afraid to say something. Of course we really want it, believe me. To get the canal network going and grow even those vegetable we grew before – if they gave us water, I’ve worked it out, it’d be possible to take all our produce to the Russian mainland and the whole amount would be gobbled up entirely – except maybe Krasnodar region wouldn’t allow it,” he added worriedly, “they’re also serious agricultural producers...” ■

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Saint Mykolay making a comeback at Christmas

Music Critic

WITH NATALIYA TRACH
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Rising singing star Khrystyna Soloviy revives folk melodies

Ukrainian singer Khrystyna Soloviy doesn't play to the rules of the pop music business. She refuses to appear half-naked in music videos, and doesn't sing what she calls "commercial" songs – simple and catchy tunes.

She prefers to show off her talent via traditional Ukrainian folk songs, and her musical strategy is working: the songs of this 23-year-old star are popular on Ukrainian radio stations, and her videos have been going viral online.

The secret to Soloviy's success may lie in her emotional performance and a strong voice, which captures listeners from the very first bar of music.

"My audience is very diverse, and I'm especially happy to see lots of young people among my fans," Soloviy says as she sips tea during an interview with the Kyiv Post on Dec. 5 in a Kyiv café.

Soloviy, a tiny young woman with dark brown hair, looks more like a teenager than a pop diva. She is now making her first steps in Ukrainian show business. Her music videos "Trymay" ("Hold Me") and "Pod Oblachkom" ("Under a Cloud") together got more than 8 million views on YouTube.

Her debut album "Zhyva Voda" ("Live Water"), which came out in 2015 includes only two of her own songs – the rest are folk songs of the Lemkos, a small ethnic sub-group inhabiting the Carpathian Mountains.

Soloviy says her songs are popular with the foreign audience, too.

"I receive lots of compliments from abroad. Foreigners ask me for a translation (of the songs) and say these songs are something incredible," Soloviy says.

Besides her talent, Soloviy owes her success to her producer – Svyatoslav Vakarchuk, a lead vocalist and founder of Ukraine's popular band Okean Elzy.

"He feels what the audience wants very well. That's why he is a number one musician in Ukraine," Soloviy says.

Three years ago Soloviy didn't even dream of becoming a pop singer. She was born in Drohobych, a town in Lviv Oblast into a family of choral conductors, graduated from Ivan



Saint Nicholas, or Svyaty Mykolay, gives presents to children at his official residence in Kyiv's St. Sofia National and Cultural Reserve on Saint Nicholas Day on Dec. 19, 2014. (Ukrafoto)

BY NATALIYA TRACH
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Saint Nicholas (Svyaty Mykolay in Ukrainian) is making a comeback.

During most of the Soviet period, and for many of the Christmases since Ukraine gained independence, the festive season was dominated by the Soviet-era character Father Frost (Did Moroz), who gave out presents to children at New Year's, in the same way Santa Claus does in the English-speaking West on Christmas Day.

But Did Moroz (and Santa) can both trace their origins back to the original (and some Ukrainians maintain the best) Christmas gift giver – Saint Nicholas, a Christian saint venerated for his generous spirit, who is still the favored "Santa" figure in most of Europe.

And now Svyaty Mykolay is regaining popularity in Ukraine – especially in recent years, while the Soviet-era Did Moroz is losing ground.

It's not clear whether Svyaty Mykolay's resurgence is due to a growing rejection of the country's


Soviet legacy, or a renaissance of national traditions, or both, but the Ukrainian Santa Claus is getting a lot of attention in society and in official institutions these days.

For instance, from Dec. 12 the National Bank of Ukraine introduced into circulation a Hr 5 coin with a Svyaty Mykolay motif, while some non-profit organizations, cafés and restaurants are organizing charity events to mark Svyaty Mykolay's Day throughout the country. The saint's post office, where one can mail him a letter, will be open from Dec. 15

to Jan. 7 in the building of Ukraine's main Post Office on Khreshchatyk Street in Kyiv's downtown, where children will be able to take pictures with the saint next to a Christmas tree. And this year, for the fourth year in a row, Svyaty Mykolay will on Dec. 19 light the Christmas tree on Sofiyivska Square, marking the start of the New Year and Christmas holidays.

Svyaty Mykolay's Day is celebrated in Ukraine on Dec. 19, as most

more Mykolay on page 21



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more Soloviy on page 20



Ukrainian singer and songwriter Khrystyna Soloviy performs songs from her debut album "Zhyva Voda" at the Atlas Weekend music festival in Kyiv on July 10. (Andriy Maksymov)

Singer breathes new life into tradition folk songs of Carpathia's Lemkos

Soloviy from page 19

Franko Lviv University, and was set to become a Ukrainian philologist.

But her passion for music and for Lemko folk songs in particular led her to participate in the Ukrainian version of the show "The Voice" in 2013, where she was noticed by Vakarchuk, one of the four judges.

Soloviy, who comes from a Lemko family, has listened to the Lemko folk songs all her life. Now she says it is her goal to make these songs popular in Ukraine and abroad.

When she performed a Lemko song at "The Voice," it made Vakarchuk cry. After the show, he came up to her and offered to help her record an album of Lemko songs. Soloviy was over the moon.

"It was one of the happiest moments of my life," she says.

But that wasn't all. Vakarchuk convinced Soloviy that she should write songs herself, as well as perform the folk songs.

"Before that I had written only one song, 'Trymay,'" she says. "Now I have more than 20 of my own songs waiting to be recorded."

In the autumn of 2015 she moved to Kyiv from Lviv. She does not like to talk about her personal life, but says she still doesn't have a lot of friends in town and feels homesick for Lviv. "When I have a spare minute, I go to Lviv," she adds.

However, Soloviy's schedule is now very busy, and leaves her little time to be down. She is preparing for her first concert tour of five Ukrainian cities – Odesa, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Lviv and Kyiv – which starts in February.

Soloviy is also working on her second album, which will include mostly her own songs and two Lemko folk songs.

"I dream that one day I will play a concert with a symphony orchestra. I would like to travel more, ideally giving concerts," she says. ■

Five Ukrainian-made gadgets that will make perfect Christmas gifts

BY DENYS KRASNIKOV
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Christmas is coming, and many are already mulling what to buy for whom – a set of difficult choices at the best of times.

Fortunately, Ukraine's abundance of high-tech startups is making the choice easier year by year. Here's a list of made-in-Ukraine gadgets that will make perfect stocking fillers, and can be bought online in time for Christmas.



Petcube Camera

Petcube Camera allows pet owners to monitor and even play with their furry companions remotely, sending live 1080p video feed from one's home to one's smartphone.

The device connects to the Internet via Wi-Fi, and allows owners to play with their pets remotely with a built-in, app-controlled laser. A wide-angle camera on the device transmits high-definition real-time video to the user's smartphone.

Moreover, the device's built-in microphone and speaker allows owners to speak soothing words to their pets from afar, and hear their meows and woofs in reply.

Besides the camera, Petcube has already announced their newest device called Petcube Bites, which, apart from a camera, also includes

a treat dispenser so that a pet owner can remotely reward good behavior. Petcube: \$149 at petcube.com



Ajax Systems sensors

But gadgets made in Ukraine can be more than just entertaining – a company called Ajax Systems produces a wireless security system for residential and business premises that includes sensors to detect intruders, fire, and flooding.

If triggered, the system sends a notification to the owner's smartphone, and to the security agency or firefighters the building is contracted with. When armed, it reacts to human movement, but ignores that caused by animals or draughts.

Installation requires only some wall space for sensors, and the system's central hub collects the info from the devices via Ajax's own radio technology called Jeweler (868.0-868.6 MHz). The hub connects to the network via both Ethernet and GSM (GPRS) as a backup channel to exchange data with the Ajax Cloud.

Ajax Systems: \$30-56 at ajax.systems

entrances, offices, and various types of lockers. Hideez: \$49 at hideez.com



Ecoisme energy monitoring device

Ukrainian startup Ecoisme has developed household sensors that look like wireless internet routers.

But these are certainly not just routers – these devices track energy usage by appliances, such as refrigerators, or by lights in the house. The data are sent to users' smartphones along with energy-saving tips.

The young company has won prestigious international awards, raised funding on the global crowdfunding platform Indiegogo, and won a place in a UK-based tech-acceleration program run by Richard Branson's Virgin Media and U.S. Techstars. Ecoisme CEO and co-founder Ivan Pasichnyk was included on the list of 30 of the most successful people in Europe under 30 years old in the industry sector compiled by U.S. magazine Forbes, and made to the Kyiv Post's Top 30 Under 30 list in 2016.

Ecoisme: preorder at ecoisme.com



Universal Key Hideez

Startup Hideez has developed a device that can remember up to 1,000 super-secure digital passwords, making sure only the Hideez device owner can access all of their gadgets and online accounts.

The password manager device, called the Hideez Key, consists of a key fob and a mobile app, which pair via Bluetooth 4.0 or higher. The device stores passwords for websites and apps visited from a paired device, and at the next visit it enters the relevant password for the user at a click of the fob's button.

Apart from storing passwords, the fob locks devices' screens if it moves a certain distance away from them, and unlocks them when it comes back in range. It works with desktop computers, tablet computers, smartphones – any device that can use Bluetooth. It also can open doors closed with RFID readers – the kind usually installed in garages, building

iBlazr flash for smartphones

Capturing important moments with smartphone cameras can be frustrating – especially in poor light.

To aid smartphone photographers, a couple of Ukrainians have started producing a portable camera flash under the brand iBlazr. By literally shedding light on the shooting of pictures with iPhones, iPads or other devices, they have come up with a solution for those worried about the quality of their Instagram or Facebook images.

And its not just Ukrainians who like the idea – Apple has placed iBlazr flashes in its branded shops all around the globe.

iBlazr sells portable camera flashes for iOS, Android devices and Windows phones. It is the first fully synchronized camera flash for smartphones, and makes sure that no shot is wasted, regardless of poor lighting. IBLAZR: \$30-45 at conceptr.co. ■



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Traditional Ukrainian Santa vies with Soviet Did Moroz

Mykolay from page 19

Ukrainians celebrate religious holidays according to the old Julian calendar, which is 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar. In Western Europe the saint's feast day is marked on Dec. 5 or 6.

Back to roots

Kostyantyn Oliynyk, the director of Kyiv's Mamayeva Sloboda open-air ethnographic museum, welcomes the trend of Svyaty Mykolay replacing Did Moroz, and calls it "a return to our roots."

"Ukrainians have for centuries honored Svyaty Mykolay," he says. "The first written records of Ukrainians celebrating Svyaty Mykolay's Day by giving presents to children and to the poor date back to the 15th century. It's good that we're returning to our roots, that we remember Svyaty Mykolay and his good deeds."

Svyaty Mykolay, or Saint Nicholas, is an actual historical figure who lived in the fourth century in Myra, Asia Minor, which is now the city of Demre in Turkey, where he served as a Greek Christian bishop in a local church. During his life, Saint Nicholas is said to have helped the poor, once even paying the dowries of three daughters of a poor Christian, saving the girls from having to become prostitutes.

Unlike Saint Nicholas, Did Moroz is an artificial creation from Soviet times, and has nothing to do with Ukrainian traditions, Oliynyk says. The character is not related to Christmas and was derived from a mixture of pre-Christian beliefs and Soviet myths, he says.

"Did Moroz was an evil spirit who froze everybody – people, birds and animals," Oliynyk says. "He is the embodiment of the harsh environment of the people who lived to the north of Chernihiv Oblast



Did Moroz sits in a sleigh pulled by reindeer on Troyitska Square in Kyiv on Dec. 31, 2014. Did Moroz, or Father Frost, is a Soviet symbol of the New Year. In Ukraine, he has been competing for the people's affections with St. Nicholas. (Volodymyr Petrov)

and all the way up to the Arctic Circle. Nowadays we call these people Russians."

Did Moroz may also have partly evolved from a character in a fairy tale written in the 19th century by Russian writer Vladimir Odoyevsky - that character, named Moroz Ivanovich, had a kind rather than bad temper.

In the late 1930s the atheist Soviet authorities revived the Did Moroz character, presenting him as an old man with a long red or blue coat who gives gifts to kids, while stripping

him of any religious associations.

But today Did Moroz's Soviet background counts against him with many Ukrainians. Kyivan Nataliya Parkulab believes that Ukrainians should abandon Did Moroz because "it was created by Soviet propaganda to eclipse Svyaty Mykolay."

Her two kids – an 8-year-old son and a 6-year-old daughter, know that Did Moroz is a fictional character, she says. "My kids write letters to and ask for gifts only from Svyaty Mykolay, and never from Did Moroz," she says.

Mykolay vs. Moroz

All the same, many Ukrainians still want Did Moroz to be in charge of handing out gifts to children during the winter holidays.

"I will tell my child about Svyaty Mykolay and about Did Moroz," Facebook user Sveta Semenyaka wrote in a discussion about the winter holidays on Dec. 6.

"The winter holidays are for kids. Why should I take sick fanatics into account, and deprive my kid of the New Year spirit? Did Moroz has been, and will be in many Ukrainian families."

Another Did Moroz supporter, Alenka Bortnychuk, wrote on Facebook on Dec. 5 that "every nation has its Did Moroz/Santa. Stop inventing idiocy! Don't spoil the holidays and the festive mood!"

The people who portray Did Moroz every year also have a lot to lose from the character's decline: Valeriy Potyomkin who describes himself Ukraine's leading Did Moroz, is not happy at being overshadowed by Svyaty Mykolay. For a decade-and-a-half, Potyomkin has been performing the role of Did Moroz in kindergartens and even in top Ukrainian officials' residences.

Potyomkin believes that Ukrainians should retain the Did Moroz character for the winter holidays.

"Did Moroz is our Ukrainian fairy character. He should remain, because he is very kind and very beautiful," he says.

But ethnographer Oliynyk puts Did Moroz's support in society down to the country's Soviet legacy.

"It's a struggle between Soviet ideology and Ukrainian beliefs. We

have to cherish our own ancient traditions," he says.

Kids' holiday

According to those traditions, Svyaty Mykolay usually comes to Ukrainian children at night on Dec. 19 and leaves his presents under their pillows. He brings gifts only to obedient children, while badly behaved kids might get only a twig from a tree.

Did Moroz, in contrast, hands out the goodies at New Year. His popularity is also bolstered by Ukraine's still largely unreformed Soviet-era education system: He is still regularly invited to kindergartens and primary schools, where he congratulates children on the upcoming New Year holidays.

So far Ukrainian kids seem to be main beneficiaries of the uncertainty over who should be in charge of the winter holidays in the country – Svyaty Mykolay or Did Moroz.

"Before New Year's Eve I buy sweets for my kids on Did Moroz's behalf, although I don't like this character," Parkulab says, adding that her children receive their main gifts on Svyaty Mykolay's Day.

"I don't want to traumatize my daughter and son – they were told in kindergarten that Did Moroz brings presents."

Economist Olga Marikutsa also buys gifts for her 12-year son and 10-year old daughter both on Svyaty Mykolay's Day and at New Year.

"They refuse to believe that Did Moroz does not exist," she says.

"Anyway, you can never have too many gifts." ■

Svyaty Mykolay vs. Did Moroz

Was a real person, a christian Saint	1	Fictional character
Arrives on Dec. 19	2	Arrives on Jan. 1
Dressed in religious costume	3	Dressed in blue or red coat
Leaves presents under the pillow	4	Leaves presents under the Christmas tree
Brings presents to polite children. Naughty kids get twigs	5	Brings presents to all children
Accompanied by an angel	6	Accompanied by granddaughter Snihurka
Has been bringing presents to Ukrainian children since 15th century	7	Was popular during Soviet times

The graphic shows the difference between St. Mykolay (St. Nicholas) and Did Moroz (Father Frost), Ukraine's two main symbols of the Christmas season. (Stella Shabliovska)

Dutch court says Scythian gold should be returned to Ukraine

BY VERONIKA MELKOZEROVA
MELKOZEROVA@KYIVPOST.COM

Ukraine has won a court case in the Netherlands over a collection of more than 500 items of ancient Scythian gold, kept in the Netherlands since 2014, which were lent to the country by museums in the Russian-occupied Ukrainian territory of Crimea.

The gold should be returned to Kyiv, according to a posting on the District Court of Amsterdam's website published on Dec.14.

Ukraine will have to pay 111,000 euros in compensation to Amsterdam's Allard Pierson Museum for keeping the collection for more than two years, the court also ruled.

The Crimean museums have three months to file an appeal. Should the appeal fail, Ukraine plans to return the collection to the Museum of National History of Ukraine in Kyiv.

Yevhen Nishchuk, Ukraine's Culture Minister, praised the Dutch court's decision in a posting on Facebook on Dec.14.

"There is justice in the world," Nishchuk wrote.



Items from the Crimean exhibition that were on display at the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam and that will be returned to Ukraine, from left: A golden Scythian necklace, a statue of a sea monster with two tails (1st or 2nd century A.D.), a golden earring with glass inlay (2nd century A.D.), a golden pendant in the shape of a deer (1st century AD). (Courtesy)

Nishchuk's first deputy, Svitlana Fomenko, said in a press release that the court had based its decision on the international UNESCO convention of 1970. According to it, Ukraine is responsible for the transportation of its own cultural heritage.

The fourth-century Scythian gold collection, which has a total value of 1.5 million euros, was sent out of Ukraine by four Crimean Museums in early February 2014, almost a month before Russian forces invaded

the peninsula. The exhibition, entitled "Crimea, the Golden Island in the Black Sea" was to tour Germany and the Netherlands.

But by the time the exhibition tour had ended, the peninsula had already been occupied. Ukraine started fighting with Russia for ownership of the gold in the Dutch courts.

Ukraine claimed the collection should be returned to Kyiv because it is a national treasure. But the Dutch side refused to fulfill the

Ukrainian demands, as the Crimean museums had filed a counter-claim.

Since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the Russian authorities have removed a range of precious items from various museums in Crimea. In July 2016, a collection of 38 paintings by Russian artist Ivan Aivasovsky were taken from Crimea's Feodosia Gallery to Moscow, where the Russian authorities said they would be kept until the 200th anniversary of the artist's birth – July 17, 2017. After

that, the paintings are supposed to be returned to Crimea, Russian Ria Novosti reported in July.

In December 2016 Vladyslav Pioro, the head of the Ukrainian Museums Development Center, told news website LB.UA that due to Russia's invasion and occupation of Crimea and the war in the Donbas, Ukraine has lost control over more than a million museum pieces. ■

Employment

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SENIOR ENERGY ECONOMIST

International Resources Group (IRG), an Engility company, is currently seeking a Senior Energy Economist for an anticipated USAID-funded Competitive Energy Market Program in Ukraine. The primary purpose of the project is to enhance Ukraine's energy security by improving the energy legal and regulatory environment and increasing resilience of Ukraine's energy supply.

MINIMUM TANGIBLE QUALIFICATIONS

- a Master's degree in business, economics, finance, energy, or a related field;
- at least 15 years of experience with energy sector economic analyses (preferably with at least 5 years focused on climate change and emission reduction issues);
- familiarity with energy planning models for conducting least-cost analyses;
- at least 5 years of experience in the Eastern Europe region.

This is a contingent position based on funding from the customer.

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ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Ukraine
Announcement # 14

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Administrative Assistant for the Office of Democracy and Governance (ODG) provides administrative support to the Office Director and the ODG team, including: timekeeping; correspondence in English and Ukrainian; scheduling; arranging meetings; visitor access; local, regional and international travel arrangements; translation; office procurements and work orders; VAT reimbursement processing; mail handling; creating and managing ODG administrative records (leave, travel, contact databases, event calendars, etc.); voucher preparation; and other administrative tasks as assigned. The Administrative Assistant will also backstop the ODG Program Management Assistant by providing limited programmatic support to the office, including preparing documents for award requisitions or modifications; program procurement tracking; program reports; and program budgeting. The Office Director or his/her designee will supervise the Administrative Assistant.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

A. **Education:** A University Degree or host country equivalent is required. An advanced degree or technical study in project management and administrative disciplines is highly desired.

B. **Prior Work Experience:** At least three years of progressively responsible administrative experience related to development issues and projects in Ukraine is required. At least one year of relevant project management assistance experience is strongly desired.

C. **Language Proficiency:** Level IV (fluent) in English, Ukrainian and Russian is required. In addition, the incumbent must be fluent with the technical terminology used by ODG.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: December 21, 2016 at 6:00 PM Kyiv time, by e-mail attachment only to Human Resources Office at KyivHR@state.gov; Include vacancy number and position title in the subject line of your email. The full package includes: CV, cover letter and DS-174

(see the full version of this Announcement at <https://www.usaid.gov/ukraine/work-with-us/careers/documents/1863/usaidukraine-job-opportunity-administrative-assistant>)

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The Municipal Energy Reform in Ukraine Project (MERP), with 10 months remaining, at the main office in Kyiv, is seeking qualified and experienced local expert for the following position:

Senior Finance and Procurement Manager: Full-time

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 December 23, 2016. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. No telephone inquiries please.



CMS Reich-Rohrwig Hainz Kyiv, a law firm with 10-years' experience in Ukraine calls for candidates with strong organizational and language talents to fill positions of

- **Legal translator (English and German)**
- **Office manager (English and German)**

Full job descriptions are available at <https://cms.law/en/UKR/CMS-Job-Opportunities>
Please send your applications to career-kyiv@cms-rrh.com

Kyiv branch of a German company is looking for a **Sales Assistant** with the knowledge of German and English.

Please send you CV's to: khudiyash@ohlert.kiev.ua

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

- **For the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine namely Penitentiary System Reform Project Office in the following key components - Probation , Public-private Partnership (PPP), State owned enterprises (SOE)- multiple positions**
- **For the Project Office for Sectoral Decentralization (POSD): Sector Lead (4 positions) – responsible for defining the scope of sectoral (4 sectors) reform.**

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>

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Chemonics International Inc., an international development consulting firm, is seeking key personnel for USAID's Ukraine Competitive Energy Markets (U-CEM) project. The purpose of this project is to enhance Ukraine's energy security. The five-year, \$85-90 million program aims to increase energy efficiency and diversify Ukraine's energy mix through improved energy policy and regulation, and by increasing resilience of energy supply.

Chemonics seeks the following:

DEPUTY CHIEF OF PARTY

The Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) will serve the entire length of the contract, as the backup to the Chief of Party. The DCOP must have proven strategic planning, analytical, business reporting, and financial analysis skills.

- Master's degree in business administration, law, engineering, economics, finance policy, or a related subject area required; advanced degree preferred
- At least twenty (20) years of experience on policy and investment issues related to energy
- At least ten (10) years of experience working on large energy projects
- Coordination of complex projects in cooperation with GOU, international donors, IFIs, and local organizations, and established high-level contacts with such stakeholders
- Experience in development of new financial and investment mechanisms
- Fluency in Ukrainian and/or Russian required; fluency in English required

ENERGY MARKET AND INSTITUTIONAL/REGULATORY ADVISOR

The Energy Market and Institutional/Regulatory Advisor will focus on evaluating the effectiveness of existing energy laws and market structures in meeting national/regional goals, developing options for improving the monitoring and enforcement of energy policies, examining the impacts of energy market changes on different stakeholders, and developing workable plans to reform energy markets and assisting institutions in the implementation of these reforms.

- Master's degree in energy/environmental policy, engineering, economics, or a related subject area required
- At least fifteen (15) years of work experience in transition countries on energy sector reform, restructuring, privatization, and market development issues, with at least five (5) years in Eastern Europe
- At least five (5) years of experience working on donor-funded projects; experience with USAID preferred
- Experience developing workable plans to reform energy markets through changes in institutions, laws, regulations, rules, and public involvement
- Fluency in Ukrainian and/or Russian required; fluency in English required

SENIOR ENERGY ECONOMIST

The Senior Energy Economist will serve as the team's expert in the economics of competitive gas and electricity markets, revenue requirement of regulated market participants, renewable energy, and least cost emission reduction strategies.

- Master's degree in business, economics, finance, energy, or a related subject area required
- At least fifteen (15) years of work experience with energy sector economic analyses, with at least five (5) years focused on climate change and emission reduction issues
- Experience with formulation of national plans, energy planning models for conducting least-cost analyses, and financial schemes for energy projects
- Minimum five (5) years of experience in Eastern Europe
- Fluency in Ukrainian and/or Russian required; fluency in English required

Application Instructions: Please send a CV and a brief cover letter in English in the email body to ukraineCEMrecruit@chemonics.com. Please submit one application per candidate, and 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. Finalists will be contacted.

Application Deadline: January 6, 2017 at 6 P.M. Kyiv Time

Chemonics is an equal opportunity/Affirmative Action employer and does not discriminate in its selection and employment practices. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, disability, or protected veteran status, genetic information, age, membership in an employee organization, or other non-merit factors.



Chemonics International Inc., an international development consulting firm, is seeking senior experts in energy policy and regulation, energy markets, and energy efficiency and diversification for USAID's Ukraine Competitive Energy Markets (U-CEM) project. The purpose of this project is to enhance Ukraine's energy security. The five-year, \$85-90 million program aims to increase energy efficiency and diversify Ukraine's energy mix through improved energy policy and regulation, and by increasing resilience of energy supply.

Chemonics is seeking the following senior expert positions:

- **SENIOR ENERGY MODELING SPECIALIST** with knowledge of economic analysis and optimization
- **SENIOR GAS INDUSTRY SPECIALIST** with knowledge of the international gas market and technologies (European and Middle East preferred)
- **ENERGY TARIFF SPECIALIST** with experience in international electricity tariff methodology development and calculation
- **ELECTRICITY MARKET DESIGN SPECIALIST** with knowledge of competitive electricity markets including power exchanges, balancing and spot markets, ancillary services markets
- **RENEWABLE FINANCING SPECIALIST** with experience in energy investments, including renewable energy
- **SENIOR ENERGY ATTORNEY** with experience in international and EU energy legal and regulatory experience
- **RENEWABLE ENERGY ENGINEER** with experience in technical analysis and design of renewable projects
- **ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALIST** with experience in one or more of the following: Environmental and Social Impact Assessments, Low Emission Development Strategies (LEDS); and renewable energy development

Candidate Requirements:

- Master's degree in energy, engineering, public policy, law, business, finance, economics, or a related subject area required; advanced degree preferred
- At least ten (10) years of work experience in the energy sector (public and/or private sector)
- At least five (5) years of experience working on donor-funded projects; experience with USAID preferred
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Fluency in Ukrainian and/or Russian required; fluency in English required

Application Instructions: Please send a CV and a brief cover letter in English in the email body to ukraineCEMrecruit@chemonics.com. Please submit one application per candidate, and 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. Finalists will be contacted.

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(Urban Gypsy/facebook)

Dec. 21

Jazz show

Jazz lovers can enjoy a program of festive covers of famous hits such as "Let it Snow," "This Christmas" and "Jingle Bells" by Kyiv-based band Urban Gypsy at its "Christmas on Street Jazz" show.
"Christmas on Street Jazz" Show. Dec. 21. 8 p.m. Bel Etage (16A Shota Rustaveli St.). Hr 150-450



Dec. 16 – 18

(Courtesy)

Christmas Arsenal Fair

A Christmas market in one of the Kyiv's main art galleries, Mystetsky Arsenal, is a great place to shop for holiday gifts, toys, Christmas tree decorations, and home décor items. Apart from buying gifts, the market visitors can participate in various quizzes and master classes, and enjoy snacks.
Christmas Arsenal Fair. Dec. 14 – 18. 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. Mystetsky Arsenal (12 Lavrska St.). Hr 60 entry fee



(Courtesy)

Dec. 17

Pantomime performance

The Decru pantomime quartet will present their play "Light Souls" at the SBU House of Arts on Dec. 17-18. The pantomime actor company was founded in 2010, and since then has staged more than 30 performances in Ukraine and abroad.
"Light Souls" (pantomime performance). Dec. 17, 18. SBU House of Arts (6 Irinska St.). Hr 100-450

'One More Time With Feeling' (movie)

Kyiv Cinema is putting on an additional screening of the documentary film "One More Time With Feeling" about Australian musician Nicholas Edward, better known by his stage name Nick Cave. The film depicts the life of the singer and his band Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds following the death of his 15-year-old son. The film will be screened with English subtitles.
"One More Time With Feeling" (English subtitles). Dec. 23. 9 p.m. Kyiv Cinema (19 Velyka Vasylkivska St.) Hr 80-90



(Courtesy)

Dec. 23



Dec. 27

(Olena Fedorchenko)

Pur:Pur

Ukrainian pop band Pur:Pur will perform their hits in the Bel Etage concert hall on Dec. 27. The band became famous after they made it to the finale of the national selection competition for the 2016 Eurovision Song Contest.
Pur:Pur (pop). Dec. 27. 8 p.m. Bel Etage (16A Shota Rustaveli St.). Hr 180 – 500

(kozadereza.ua)



Christmas folk art market

The Ivan Honchar Museum hosts a Christmas folk art market over the weekend of Dec. 17-18. The market attracts craftspeople from all corners of Ukraine, who will sell ceramic dishes, traditional Ukrainian toys and outfits, home decorations, and food. Visitors are invited to sing the traditional Ukrainian Christmas carols, called shchedrivky, or cook up some traditional Christmas porridge, kutya.

Christmas folk art market. Dec. 17-18. 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. Ivan Honchar Museum (19 Lavrska St.) Free

Dec. 17-18