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Rotterdam+

Investigators: Prosecutors sabotage case into coal-pricing scheme that cost Ukrainians \$1.4 billion

Time to look into Medvedchuk's role in EuroMaidan Revolution, Yanukovich's escape



Opinion

Sergii Leshchenko
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On June 7, the final series of the four-part investigation by Bihus.Info on relations between ex-President Petro Poroshenko and pro-Kremlin lawmaker Viktor Medvedchuk aired. Ukraine's prominent investigative journalist Denys Bihus analyzed numerous leaked phone tapes of Medvedchuk, who is currently under house arrest after being charged with high treason.

These tapes, apparently made by the Security Service of Ukraine, better known as the SBU, date back to 2014 and reveal a lot about Medvedchuk and his modus operandi.

Medvedchuk turned out to be much less influential in Russia than he wanted Ukrainians to believe. For instance, to get a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is the godfather of Medvedchuk's daughter, Medvedchuk had to be on a "waiting list" for weeks and even travel to the Russian Far East.

At the same time, Medvedchuk communicated with Putin's closest associates Vladislav Surkov and Dmitry Kozak, as well as Russian-sponsored militants fighting against Ukraine in Donbas, while constantly referring to agreements with Poroshenko.

Medvedchuk's mandate from the previous Ukrainian government turned out to be way broader than previously articulated.

When Poroshenko was president, he said that Medvedchuk was involved in negotiations with Russia because German Chancellor Angela Merkel suggested getting him

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Rotterdam has the largest seaport in Europe. Between 2016 and 2019, Ukraine set energy prices based on the price of coal in the Dutch city plus the cost of its delivery to Ukraine. This "Rotterdam+" formula looked like a scam because no coal was delivered to Ukraine from Rotterdam. The National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine estimated that citizens overpaid \$1.4 billion on their electricity bills. Investigators say subordinates of Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova have sabotaged the criminal probe into oligarch Rinat Akhmetov's DTEK company.



By Igor Kossov and Anna Myroniuk
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President Volodymyr Zelensky promised to go after the oligarchs.

The National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) says that Zelensky's prosecutors don't seem to have got-

ten the memo.

During Zelensky's tenure, prosecutors have refused to go after associates of Rinat Akhmetov, Ukraine's richest man, whose company is accused of cheating the public out of Hr 39 billion (\$1.4 billion) via the so-called Rotterdam+ coal pricing scheme.

On May 20, the Rotterdam+ inves-

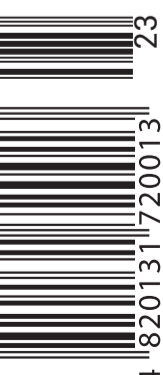
tigation was shut down for the fourth time. And this time, prosecutor Denys Demkiv tried to make it impossible for the NABU detectives to revive it as they had in the past. He refused to give them the document with his decision until their three-day appeal window ran out.

In an interview with the Kyiv Post, NABU detectives Mykhailo

Romaniuk and Oleksandr Rykovchey said the prosecutor intentionally sabotaged the Rotterdam+ case by withholding the document. If prosecutors were willing to take the accusations seriously, the case would be in court by now, the detectives argued.

They accused prosecutors of act-

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DTEK says expensive Rotterdam+ coal-pricing formula was justified

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ing like judges in deciding the fate of the case.

"If the prosecutor doesn't want to prosecute, no matter how you come to him, no matter how you dance in front of him, what arguments or suspects you present, (you get the same answer): 'I don't want to,'" said NABU detective Rykovchev.

The Prosecutor General's Office led by Iryna Venediktova and Special Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO) didn't respond to requests for comment.

The press service of Akhmetov's energy company DTEK, implicated in the scheme, said the company is fully compliant with Ukrainian laws. It said that the Rotterdam+ case was groundless and that NABU overstepped its authority in trying to bring it back multiple times.

"The lack of evidence and far-fetchedness of this case has already been confirmed both by the actions of prosecutors and court decisions," DTEK wrote.

The formula

Rotterdam+ was introduced in 2016-2019 when DTEK faced the prospect of losing its coal mines in the Donbas. The formula also fulfilled Ukraine's EU obligation to create transparent energy prices.

Ukraine's coal prices were pegged to the index price of coal in the European coal hub of Rotterdam, the second largest city in the Netherlands. The "plus" refers to the added cost of shipping coal from Rotterdam to Ukraine.

Except no coal was shipped from Rotterdam. NABU alleges that this scheme was cooked up by DTEK, which got almost all of its coal from Ukraine and pocketed the transportation money.

DTEK controls 70% of coal power generation in the country.

NABU has evidence of DTEK employees and energy officials working together to enact the scheme. Expert testimony found that paying international shipping expenses for domestic coal cost Ukrainians between Hr 19 billion (\$700 million) and Hr 39 billion (\$1.4 billion).

NABU says this is enough to take DTEK and the officials to court.

"Rotterdam+ assaulted everybody. It got into everyone's pocket — whoever went out and bought even a Snickers bar during this period was paying extra for the nonexistent delivery of coal to produce electricity," Rykovchev said.

DTEK's lawyers disagree. They say that "were Ukrainians forced to pay for nothing?" is the wrong question. The right question, they argue, is whether the formula was economically justified.

NABU responded that the formula was not economically justified, since forcing people to pay for fictitious delivery broke the law on state-regulated pricing.

Going to court

Whether the case went to court depended on which head prosecutor was assigned to it.

Venediktova, the prosecutor general and Zelensky appointee, kept assigning people that were reluctant to prosecute, like prosecutor Vitaliy



Mykhailo Romaniuk, a detective with the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, examines materials of the so-called Rotterdam+ case in the NABU headquarters in Kyiv on June 9, 2021. The Rotterdam+ energy pricing scheme allegedly enriched Rinat Akhmetov's company DTEK by Hr 39 billion (\$1.4 billion) at the cost of Ukraine's electricity consumers.

Ponomarenko, who closed the case three times. Venediktova ignored prosecutors who wanted the case, like Vadym Sydorenko.

Sydorenko was among the prosecutors overseeing the case from the very beginning. In January, he officially asked to be appointed as a chief prosecutor in the case, arguing he saw enough evidence to go to court. But he was rejected. Sydorenko declined to discuss the matter as he is not authorized to speak to the press about the case.

After Demkiv took over in May, shut the case down and made NABU miss its appeal window, it's unclear whether the investigation will see the light of day again.

"We were messaging him: 'Denys, OK, fine, give us the resolution, you know well that we will not be able to appeal (without it), do not deprive us of our right, do not take away this chance,'" said Rykovchev, showing the Kyiv Post his texts to Demkiv.

The prosecutor refused. When the detectives came to see him in person, he had them booted out of the building. "He called security... and we left," said NABU detective Romaniuk.

The shutdown of the case means that notices of suspicion to six people, including four DTEK employees and two energy officials, will be automatically withdrawn.

No guts?

From the beginning, Demkiv made it clear that he was rushing to close the case, the NABU detectives said.

The four-year investigation contained 20,000 pages of material and 158 hours of video testimony. Demkiv, who had never seen the case files before, said he'd get through them in two weeks, even though he was on vacation during a part of that time.

"He could have studied the case for half a year to understand it," said NABU detective Mykola Samoylenko.

Rykovchev added: "He told me he would make the decision. I wrote to him: why are you in such a rush?"

Figure it out, you're being so hasty. 'No, this is what I decided.' He simply ignored me."

According to NABU, the prosecutor said he was trying to get it done before his interview for a promotion as the head of a department at SAPO. Yet in the end, Demkiv did not get the job. Whether his interview and his actions on Rotterdam+ are connected is unknown.

Demkiv did not respond to the Kyiv Post's requests for comment. In an interview with publication *Sensor.Net*, he said that detectives and experts failed to establish that the formula was illegitimate, caused public losses, and had clear victims.

He also said that the investigation deadline had lapsed. In all, he believed there was no evidence of wrongdoing and the case had no chance.

NABU said it had three more days to investigate, a fact that was supported by the High Anti-Corruption Court. They also said they had all the evidence needed and the victim was the country of Ukraine.

Both Demkiv and his predecessor Ponomarenko exceeded their authority in the Rotterdam+ case and acted like they the ultimate deciders of the fate of the case, Rykovchev believes.

"We see that people aren't doing their jobs and are trying to act like some kind of judge: 'Did they (the detectives) or didn't they convince me on various categories,'" he said.

Oleksandr Onishchenko, a lawyer with the firm Integrites, said that with the way Ukraine's judicial system is set up, if Demkiv failed to win a case he brought, he had a very real chance to be fired.

Experts

The main argument of whether the case is justified hinges on expert analyses commissioned by NABU.

The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) and a state bureau in Kharkiv found that the energy regulator's decision to charge extra transportation costs for domestic coal made electricity almost Hr 19 billion (\$700

million) more expensive during 2016–2017.

Private expert Iryna Ped confirmed the NABU's version that the Rotterdam+ formula caused Hr 39 billion (\$1.4 billion) in losses throughout the whole period the formula was active.

The expert found herself the victim of a targeted attack in the media. Articles said that she was ruining her reputation by participating in the case. One of them was authored by Drigval, DTEK's lawyer.

Ped's email got hacked and she received threatening letters. She refuses to talk about it in detail, saying the pressure campaign is now a subject of a criminal investigation she initiated.

The experts' conclusions are the most crucial part of the case. The main point of disagreement between the detectives and prosecutors was over whether these figures can be called "losses" for the Ukrainian public.

"Loss' is a legal category," said Onishchenko. "Whether there are losses is something that has to be determined by a lawyer and a court."

Natalia Drigval, a lawyer with the firm Credence that represents DTEK in the case said that NABU detectives purposefully narrowed the scope of their question to the experts in a manipulative attempt to get the answer they wanted.

"They asked if their calculation is correct and the expert said yes, it's arithmetically correct," she said. "The question didn't concern whether this formula was justified."

"In our opinion, the Rotterdam+ case has nothing to do with law, justice, or market economy," DTEK added. "We have repeatedly stated that applying the principle of import pari passu to determine prices for energy products... is the only correct and transparent approach."

Expert Ped countered that it's not her job to say if the formula was justified.

"That must be proved by other evidence. And it is for the court to decide," she said. ☞

Sergii Leshchenko: A serious investigation is needed of Medvedchuk and Nalyvaichenko

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involved. In reality, with Poroshenko's support, Medvedchuk regained his business influence and got his hands on the Ukrainian section of the diesel pipeline Samara–Western Direction, which allowed him to control half of the Ukrainian diesel market.

However, few people know that Poroshenko was not the only Ukrainian president whom Medvedchuk skillfully manipulated to achieve his goals.

Yanukovich's phone pal

The last months of Poroshenko's predecessor, Viktor Yanukovich, were also spent in active consultations with Medvedchuk. He acted as a proxy for Russian influence during the EuroMaidan Revolution, which ended in a bloody massacre on Kyiv's Maidan Nezalezhnosti in February 2014.

After watching Bihus' series on Medvedchuk, I became interested in Medvedchuk's role in the revolutionary events of 2013–2014. From my sources, I learned some shocking details about Yanukovich's last days in power that are important for society to know.

Let's go back in time to the fall of 2013. Ukraine was actively negotiating the signing of a political and economic Association Agreement with the European Union. Yanukovich tried to preserve his interest: to secure a historic treaty and at the same time not to amnesty the imprisoned opponent Yulia Tymoshenko, the ex-prime minister, which Europe wanted him to do.

However, at the last moment, Yanukovich rejected the Association Agreement and borrowed \$3 billion from Russia. Protesters gathered on Kyiv's central square – thus began the EuroMaidan, which would eventually escalate into a bloodbath.

A new era begins for Yanukovich. He is now on the phone with Medvedchuk a lot.

A source close to the investigation into the EuroMaidan murders told me that the investigation found that after the start of the protests in late November 2013, Yanukovich began to actively communicate with Medvedchuk. Medvedchuk always used a Russian phone number. Yanukovich talked to him both through his Ukrainian and Russian phone numbers – yes, it turned out he had a Russian number as well.

The investigation established 54 phone calls between them during



Protesters carry a demonstrator injured during clashes with police on Instytutska Street, close to Kyiv's Independence Square in Kyiv, on Feb. 20, 2014. The final days before Kremlin-backed President Viktor Yanukovich fled to Russia on Feb. 22, 2014, were bloody ones during the EuroMaidan Revolution, with more than 100 demonstrators killed by police.

the entire period of the Euro-Maidan Revolution from November 2013 to February 2014. This is what we were able to see from the phone connections. It is unknown how many times they met in person during those days. Yanukovich's Mezhyhirya palace was a 10-minute drive from Medvedchuk's mansion, located on the land of the former state residence in Pushcha Voditsa, a wooded area north of Kyiv.

When Medvedchuk was questioned in the EuroMaidan shootings case, he was unable to give a reason for these regular contacts with Yanukovich.

The investigation also established that Yanukovich was awake in the early hours of Feb. 20, 2014, when special police units opened fire against protesters in Kyiv killing about 100 people.

During those hours, Yanukovich was on the phone with Medvedchuk, then-Interior Minister Vitaly Zakharchenko, then-SBU chief Oleksandr Yakymenko, and then-head of the presidential administration Andriy Klyuyev. All of them, except for Medvedchuk, fled to Russia, as Yanukovich did.

If Yanukovich was constantly in touch with top law enforcement officials that morning, it means he could have stopped the killings of protesters at any time. But he didn't. If



Ex-head of Security Service of Ukraine Valentyn Nalyvaichenko.

Yanukovich's intention had not been to shoot people, this tragedy would not have happened.

Separatist plan

What Yanukovich's plan was and what Medvedchuk was pushing him to do has never been established. We can only speculate with a high degree of probability about what the scenario for Ukraine was. From all indications, Russia, taking advantage of the worsening situation in Ukraine, planned to split the country and establish its puppet quasi-regime to rule in one of its parts.

Another strange event points to this. On Feb. 18, 2014, Mykola Azarov – the former prime minister who had already resigned by then – flew to a secret meeting with Putin at his residence between Moscow and St. Petersburg. The presumed location of the talks was Valdai, which Yanukovich himself secretly visited a month earlier.

The airplane carrying Azarov arrived in St. Petersburg, after which, according to his guards, the former prime minister was taken in a separate car to an undisclosed location, where he spent a long time apart from his guards. At the end of the meeting, he was taken to the airport – this time not in St. Petersburg,

but in Moscow.

It's noteworthy that Medvedchuk contacted Yanukovich before Azarov flew to Putin. And when their meeting began, at the same time a violent special operation was under way to free a part of the Maidan Nezalezhnosti from protesters.

According to the investigation, at this time Yanukovich and Putin had already agreed to hold a special congress in Kharkiv. From then on, there were two possible scenarios. According to one, they were to move the governing bodies to Kharkiv, which once was the capital of Ukraine. Azarov also flew to Kharkiv right after he met with Putin.

Another scenario contemplated a deeper disintegration of Ukraine, up to the announcement of a special regime of self-government in Kharkiv for eastern and southern Ukraine as a result of the unrest in Kyiv. That is, the notorious Novorosiya project would not have been limited to Donbas. The likelihood of this scenario was also indicated by the fact that an impressive delegation from Russia, including the deputy speakers of the State Duma, had flown in to the congress in Kharkiv.

However, when Yanukovich arrived in Kharkiv, he realized that the situation on the ground was different from the reports that had been submitted to him. No one could guarantee the safety of the then-president. And the mayor and informal "owner" of Kharkiv, the late Hennady Kernes, re-refused to play

into Yanukovich's game.

Realizing that the plan to move the governing bodies from Kyiv to Kharkiv was failing, Yanukovich first rushed for help to billionaire oligarch Rinat Akhmetov as his most trusted party associate and business partner. Yanukovich's helicopters landed in Donetsk. The two spent a sleepless night talking. But Akhmetov, realizing that Yanukovich had turned from a cash cow to a toxic asset, decided to distance himself from him.

Only after that, a special military operation brought Yanukovich to Russia.

Cozy with SBU

But Medvedchuk's influence didn't stop after Yanukovich left. A source familiar with the EuroMaidan investigations told me that when prosecutors asked the SBU to establish up-to-date information about Medvedchuk's addresses and phone numbers, the service didn't do it. Informally, prosecutors were told that then-head of the SBU Valentyn Nalyvaichenko banned his subordinates from investigating Medvedchuk.

A few years later, it would become known that Nalyvaichenko, as head of the SBU in 2015, repeatedly traveled with Medvedchuk to Russia on his private plane. The visits were carried out in maximum secrecy, and Nalyvaichenko's departure in Medvedchuk's company was carried out using the documents of another person. My source in the SBU told me that the plane flew to Belgorod, where Nalyvaichenko was probably met by either a high-ranking Russian official Sergei Ivanov or by the head of the FSB Alexander Bortnikov.

One SBU employee was charged with organizing illegal crossings of the border for Nalyvaichenko. The case has been in court for four years.

Medvedchuk, during his interrogation in the case, refused to talk about the trips, referring to an article of the Ukrainian Constitution that allows not to testify against oneself.

All the events described here are not the author's speculation, but the materials of criminal cases that are being investigated in Ukraine.

And sooner or later they must start looking at Medvedchuk's role in the events of the EuroMaidan Revolution and Yanukovich's escape. This means that the current high treason charges may not be Medvedchuk's last.

Sergii Leshchenko is a Kyiv Post columnist and a member of the supervisory board of Ukrzaliznytsya. He is a former investigative journalist and a former member of Ukraine's parliament. ☎



Viktor Medvedchuk, a lawmaker and one of the leaders of the pro-Kremlin party Opposition Platform For Life, leaves the Prosecutor General's Office in Kyiv on May 12, 2021.



EDITORIALS

Kremlin hit squads

The recent testimonies in the International Court of Justice confirmed what the world has known for a long time: Russia shot down the Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in Donbas in 2014, killing 298 people on board.

In the latest hearing on June 9, the court reviewed multiple fragments of the Buk ground-to-air missile that destroyed the aircraft and killed its passengers and crew. Two witnesses told the court that they saw the missile launched from a location controlled by Russian-backed forces.

This wasn't a secret. Russia's involvement was documented by independent investigators years ago. Everyone knew that Russia murdered European citizens in its quest to destroy Ukraine as an independent nation. No response followed. No response will follow. Europe is continuing to close its eyes on Russian atrocities, hoping they will one day stop. They won't.

In 2014, Russia has shot down a passenger plane, launched a military invasion that has left the Kremlin in control of 7% of Ukrainian territory, killing nearly 14,000 people so far. Russia blew up arms depots in the Czech Republic, killing two people, and in Bulgaria. It carried out murders in the U.K., war crimes in Syria. The list is endless.

Europe showed that it has no intention to strongly defend its values as long as money can be made with Russia.

The testimonies in the Netherlands confirming that Russian forces shot down the MH17 flight come just as Europe is getting deeper into bed with the Kremlin by allowing the completion of the \$11 billion, Ukraine-bypassing Russian-German gas pipeline, Nord Stream 2.

The U.S. could lead by example, but instead, it lifted the sanctions from Nord Stream 2 companies. President Joe Biden said on June 9 that he wants a "stable and predictable relationship" with a Russian dictator who routinely orders assassinations of critics and opponents with chemical weapons. He will get only instability and unpredictability.

What happened to opposition leader Alexei Navalny, writer Dmitriy Bykov, the Skripal family and many others shows that Russia has an active death squad ready to assassinate anyone, anywhere. No one is safe.

Instead of drawing up reprisal sanctions, Western countries seek a dialogue with Russia. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg even suggested holding a summit with Russia.

The West is making all the wrong moves. Russia respects only brute force. Ahead of the June 14 NATO summit and the June 16 Biden-Vladimir Putin meeting, the Kremlin has escalated the crackdown on its opponents and banned Navalny's supporters from Sept. 19 parliamentary elections, which will be rigged for Putin's party.

Now Putin can promise to roll back the most atrocious measures as a pretend compromise. The West will pronounce it a win for democracy. And the Kremlin will continue to kill. It knows it won't be punished by the weak Western leaders. It knows it can buy off sellouts like Gerhard Schroeder.

Until the MH17 court trial confirmed Russia's involvement, Europe could keep pretending that Russia's war on Ukraine was a distant problem. But the truth is that Russia is at war not just with Ukraine, but the civilized world. Ukraine has been fighting for its survival for seven years. Will Europe ever wake up and join?

Patriotism for sale

Ex-President Petro Poroshenko based his entire electoral strategy on presenting himself as the only bulwark against Russian aggression and the only true patriot among Ukrainian politicians.

Yet leaked recordings published by the Bihus.Info investigative journalism project in May-June reveal that Russian dictator Vladimir Putin's main Ukrainian ally, Viktor Medvedchuk, was a key business and political partner of Poroshenko.

Medvedchuk has allegedly discussed introducing an intermediary company, believed to be controlled by Poroshenko, into Ukrainian power supplies to the Russian-annexed Crimea, according to the tapes. Medvedchuk has also allegedly delayed a prisoner of war exchange with Russia and its proxies in order to help Poroshenko stage a publicity stunt.

There's nothing new here: This newspaper and other independent media have reported on the Poroshenko-Medvedchuk alliance for years. The tapes just confirm a well-known fact.

Poroshenko's fan club is in denial. After portraying all of the former president's critics as Kremlin agents for years, now they find the tables turned against them.

But "Medvedchukgate" is entirely logical. Many knew that Poroshenko used pseudo-patriotic rhetoric as a façade for a kleptocratic regime ready to sell out to anyone, including the aggressor country.

Poroshenko's successor, Volodymyr Zelensky, has tried to show that he's different and sanctioned Medvedchuk. Zelensky's loyal prosecutor general, Iryna Venediktova, has charged Medvedchuk with high treason.

This is a good beginning but there is a cause for concern: Medvedchuk has connections that he can use to fight off the attack.

Lawyer Maksym Yakubovsky, a former employee of Medvedchuk, is still one of Venediktova's deputies.

Andriy Kholodov, who is still a lawmaker from Zelensky's party, is also linked to Medvedchuk. Oksana Marchenko, Medvedchuk's wife, became the godmother of Kholodov's son in 2018.

Zelensky's friend Ivan Bakanov, the head of the Security Service of Ukraine, attended a birthday party of Medvedchuk's business associate, oligarch Grigory Surkis in 2019, according to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

Given this, we're anxious to see if the Medvedchuk case is a real thing or a PR stunt that will result in nothing.

Meanwhile, Poroshenko was charged with abuse of power in 2020. However, the case is dubious and has stalled for a year. So far, there is no indication that Poroshenko will be successfully prosecuted for corruption.

We are rooting with equal enthusiasm for a fair investigation and prosecution of both — Medvedchuk and Poroshenko.



NEWS ITEM:
On June 4, Ukraine's border control officers detained two German tourists who crossed the border from Poland to Ukraine illegally. The tourists said they thought that Ukraine was part of the European Union and therefore, they didn't need to go through border control.



NEWS ITEM:
On June 7, the Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv stripped Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenko of the honorary doctorate that he had been granted in 2009. The university's council voted to seize the title in response to Lukashenko's ongoing violent crackdown on the opposition, anti-government protesters and journalists.

NEWS ITEM:
A four-part series featuring leaked phone conversations of pro-Russian politician Viktor Medvedchuk, published by an investigative journalism team Bihus.Info, suggested that Medvedchuk cooperated closely with ex-President Petro Poroshenko. Poroshenko has avoided commenting on the tapes, while his party European Solidarity denied all accusations against its leader.



NEWS ITEM:
The Union of European Football Associations, or UEFA, has conceded to Russia's demands and ordered Ukraine's team to remove a part of the national salute, "Glory to Heroes," from the Ukrainian national team's jerseys. Russia also demanded that the map of Ukraine, which features Russia-occupied Crimea, was removed from the jerseys, calling it a provocation.

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Ukraine's Friend & Foe Of The Week



Friend

Rob Portman, U.S. senator
The Ohio Republican this week grilled Secretary of State Antony Blinken over the Biden administration's decision to wave off wave off broad sanctions on the Russian-German gas pipeline Nord Stream 2, which "undermines Ukraine and U.S. national interests." Ukraine is lucky to have such a friend.



Foe

Sebastian Kurz, the chancellor of Austria
The Austrian premier was the only European leader participating in Russia's pompous business forum in St. Petersburg — and offering all sorts of support for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline bypassing Ukraine, always music to Kremlin ears.

Feel strongly about an issue? Agree or disagree with editorial positions in this newspaper?
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World in Ukraine: Norway



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Events dictate Norwegian envoy's first-year agenda

By Brian Bonner
bonner@kyivpost.com

When such great friends of Ukraine as Norway are unhappy with the investment climate in Kyiv, the nation's leaders have a big problem to fix.

Two of Norway's leading renewable energy companies, Scatec and NBT, made big investments in solar and wind power in recent years on the Ukrainian government's promise of a high guaranteed payment for the electricity generated, known as a feed-in tariff.

The government not only reneged on the promise. It retroactively cut the rates in a compromise reached last summer with the energy companies. Then it reneged again on the promise of paying the lower amounts on time.

Ukraine's government today is hundreds of millions of dollars in debt to energy providers such as Scatec and NBT who are, of course, telling fellow Norwegians about the raw deal they are getting from Ukraine's government.

Since his arrival last August, Ambassador Erik Svedahl has devoted most of his attention to trying to get the Ukrainian government to live up to its commitments.

His first-year focus

"I haven't had a lot of choices other than to focus on renewable energy," Svedahl said. "The government is paying but it is still behind on the debt from last year and not paying according to the schedule. It has taught me that you need to be very careful and if something sounds too good to be true, maybe it is. I'm talking about feed-in tariffs. You should be able to trust what the government signs off to."

Even the intercession of Norway's longtime Prime Minister Erna Solberg with Ukraine's top leaders has not helped. "We have tried everything from the top down," he told the Kyiv Post in an interview at the Norwegian Embassy on June 7. "All to no avail."

Consequently, new investment from Norway has dried up as word spread that the Ukrainian government doesn't honor its commitments to investors. The Nordic Environment Finance Corporation, known as NEFCO, which has financed \$56 million in Ukraine's renewable energy projects, has frozen new investment in the sector, citing the unresolved situation. The projects that NEFCO financed had a total capacity of 155 megawatts from solar energy and 266 megawatts from wind energy.



Ambassador of Norway Erik Svedahl talks with the Kyiv Post on June 7, 2021 at his office in Kyiv.

Erik Svedahl

Position: Norway's Ambassador to Ukraine since August 2020.

Personal: His wife is Australian and his three adult children have settled in Sydney, Australia.

Did you know? He's an avid football fan.

How to succeed in Ukraine? "Persistence, long-term approach and cultural awareness."

"NEFCO has already in 2020 decided to stop investing in new projects in the renewable energy sector in Ukraine due to the green tariff situation, which hasn't been solved yet. NEFCO is disappointed that the Ukrainian government is cutting the green tariffs retroactively for projects already approved. This has a negative effect on attracting new investments and on Ukraine's transition to clean energy and energy independence. A predictable and sustainable framework is needed," the finance corporation said in a June 4 statement.

Reputational damage

There are other problems, however.

"In addition, NEFCO believes that introducing an excise tax on renewable energy is a step in the wrong direction. In fact, clean energy should be subsidized, whereas fossil energy should be subject to a CO₂ tax," the statement said. "The reason for not investing in new renewable energy projects is, however, based on the green tariff agreements not being fulfilled."

Svedahl said Ukraine is suffering a lot of damage because of the

ing, at least current investors have not left the market yet and some Norwegian companies – such as those who sell seafood, Norway's biggest export to Ukraine – are doing well.

"The interest is there. Ukraine is a country with huge potential and a lot of opportunities," the ambassador said. "But if there's not stable and predictable framework for them to operate, they will go somewhere else."

1980 border guard

Svedahl is a seasoned diplomat, with a diverse service record that has sent him to Beijing, Bangkok and London, among other destinations. But he's specialized in former Soviet republics.

This geopolitical interest was kindled more than 40 years ago when, because of Norway's obligatory military service then, he became a guard along the country's 200-kilometer border with Russia – which was then, of course, the commanding nation of the Soviet Union.

"I found it every exciting. It was the height of the Cold War. Everything was tense," he recalled. "So I decided to learn Russian."

As the Soviet Union started opening up with Mikheil Gorbachev's glasnost in 1985 until the collapse of the Moscow empire in 1991, Svedahl discovered that his Russian-language skills were in demand by

unfulfilled promises. "It's a short-term gain for Ukraine, but it's a long-term loss because of the lack of confidence in investment climate," he said. "This is something that people know about in Norway. It gives Ukraine a bad name."
While no new investors are com-

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Norway's Itera says digitization is an answer to world's problems

By Liliane Bivings
bivings@kyivpost.com

When it comes to storing their data, big industrial companies are lagging behind. Even today, some of the biggest players are storing their data on outdated systems, or worse, on paper.

Not only is this inefficient in a data-driven world, it is an obvious sign that the world's largest companies need help digitizing — especially if they want to become more environmentally friendly and sustainable.

One of the companies guiding these giants into the 21st century is Itera. The Norwegian company specializes in digitalization, helping companies to become more data driven, that is, using data to make better, more informed decisions and ultimately, to become greener.

"Whatever we need in life we have on our phone — this is the process that we are going through when it comes to industrial data. Digitization is the answer to how to make the world a better place," says Dennis Fjellseth, senior communications advisor at Itera.

The company's nearly 600 employees are spread out among Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, as well as Slovakia and Ukraine, operating in 20 countries in major sectors including banking and insurance, healthcare, energy, utilities, and retail.



Itera's employees at Aker BP's oil rig in Norway in January 2020 where they went to implement Cognite's Data Fusion platform. The team included three Ukrainian IT specialists.

Nordic to the core

Despite its international reach, Itera derives its strength from its roots. Norway is one of the world's largest oil and gas exporters. The country also has big ambitions to be an inter-

national leader in the fight against climate change.

Itera too reflects its home country's seemingly odd marriage of an highly efficient oil and gas sector with the desire to become leading innovators of renewable energy technologies.

The company has partnered with Cognite, a data software company that specializes in the digital transformation of heavy industries around the world. Cognite is owned by Aker — one of the largest Norwegian oil and gas companies, and as of this year, one of the biggest investors in renewables.

In May, Cognite raised \$150 million in new funding, putting the company's value at \$1.6 billion. It was one of the largest funding rounds for a European software-as-a-service company.

Cognite's 'Data Fusion' system, a data operations and contextualization platform, makes data more accessible and obtainable to both people and AI-based applications. BP, Mitsubishi, and Saudi Aramco all use the platform in their operations.

BP uses the system to predict oil contamination in water using historical data and 200 physical and 100 virtual sensors in and around production wells and equipment at oil and gas facilities. The system allows engineers to immediately detect water contamination and to respond to the problem much faster.

This pioneering platform has contributed to the company growing threefold since November, according to Cognite. Growth that Itera has played a role in.

According to Cognite's leadership, they chose to partner with Itera because they have the right competence in house to under-

stand Cognite's sophisticated platforms, how to maximize its efficiency and to push it and present it to other businesses on the market.

Itera

Year founded — 1998

CEO — Arne Mjøse

Number of employees

— 500+

Motto: "Make a difference"

What separates you from other companies? — "We measure our success by our customer's success."

stand Cognite's sophisticated platforms, how to maximize its efficiency and to push it and present it to other businesses on the market.

According to Fjellseth, Itera is also working with partners to develop a cutting edge scanner that can show the foundation of the earth all the way down to 1000 meters, identifying each different layer in real time, helping oil companies to drill more efficiently.

It's also a viable tool in the renewable sector. In carbon capture, engineers need to understand the foundation and layers of the earth where carbon will be stored. This tool will help them do so.

"I know these two platforms will revolutionize the market. This isn't something I'm trying to pitch, it's huge."

Unique business model

Itera's success as a partner is due in large part to its unique business

model. The company calls it their 'hybrid delivery model', that involves multidisciplinary teams working across borders.

Instead of an army of employees, Itera is able to deliver its products and services by scaling its team to fit the specific needs of the client, in many cases sending their employees directly to the customer.

Itera's employees went straight to BPAker's oil rig to help its engineers implement Cognite's Data Fusion software. Their team included three Ukrainian IT specialists.

Yulia Malich, public projects manager at Itera, says this model makes Itera more efficient than its competitors because it allows them to both "help our customer to build a solution and then further sell the same solution to other customers."

According to one senior level executive, Itera sends its Ukrainian employees directly to the client on average four times more often than the next outsourcing company. In 2019, these employees took almost 1,500 trips abroad, and their Scandinavian counterparts visited almost 500 times.

Their hybrid business model was recognized as providing the world's best customer experience by the Global Outsourcing Association and for having the best Project Management Office in Europe by the PMO Global Alliance in 2020.

Going to Ukraine

As part of scaling their workforce to fit the client, the company has tapped into the fourth largest pool of digitally talented people just a few hours away in Ukraine.

The decision to open an office in Kyiv in 2008 felt natural to the company's Norwegian leadership — in addition to Ukraine's attractive pool of IT talent, the cultures mesh well, according to Malich.

"A very mature market in IT outsourcing, the diversity of people in the market — especially the rising high share of women — and an outstanding capability of Ukrainians to bridge well with the Nordic business culture," were all reasons Itera came to Ukraine, says Malich.

But Itera isn't just interested in recruiting existing talent. Itera actively cooperates with three universities in Ukraine — the National Aviation University, Kyiv Polytechnic Institute and the Kyiv Mohyla Academy to develop future talents.

For the company, working in Ukraine is also a part of its human rights policy — according to its leadership, the establishment of workplaces in Ukraine has contributed to the living standards of employees in the country. 🇺🇦



Norway at a glance

Government type: **parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy**

Monarch: King Harald V
Prime Minister: Erna Solberg

GDP, PPP: \$362 billion (2020)
GDP per capita, PPP: \$67,180 (2020)

Total area: 385,207 square kilometers
Population: 5.31 million

World Bank's Doing Business Ranking: 8
Credit ratings: S&P — AAA (stable), Fitch — AAA (stable), Moody's — Aaa (stable)

Main economic sectors: Crude oil and gas production, renewables, seafood industry, shipbuilding, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, metals industry

Trade: \$371 million
goods - \$315.6 million, services - \$55.8 million

Exports from Ukraine to Norway: Ukraine exports textile, furniture, sunflower oil, grains, wood and wooden products, precious and semi-precious stones \$27.03 million
Imports to Ukraine from Norway: Ukraine imports fish, fertilizers, nickel (metal) and nickel products, plastics \$288.6 million

Norway foreign direct investment in Ukraine: **\$6.2 million (2020)**

Sources: World Bank, International Monetary Fund, State Customs Service, State Statistics Service



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Norway takes a patient, long-term view of Ukraine's transformation

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the Norwegian foreign service. Just before coming to Ukraine, the married father of three adult children served for three years as consul general in northern Russia's Murmansk near the Barents Sea. Of the outreach, he said: "The economic aspect is not as well developed as cultural exchanges and people to people contacts — sports clubs, librarians, people getting to know their colleagues on the other side of the border."

With Russia, Norway and its Scandinavian neighbors have intensified cooperation in the Barents region. He also characterizes cooperation in the Arctic Ocean region as "peaceful and quite regulated. It's an area of low tension."

Cooperation will be even more important in the far north because "the Arctic is where you can see the effects of climate change most visibly and notably. The ice is shrinking. The fish are migrating to where they haven't been before. The whole ecosystem is in play. It's a very serious development that you can see if you go there."

Changes coming

For Norway, which has made a tre-

mendous fortune from its oil and natural gas reserves, the future means replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy.

In this transition, Norway has big advantages. Its economy is 2 1/2 times the size of Ukraine's — despite having less than 6 million people compared to 42 million in Ukraine. The Nordic nation has also invested wisely. It has a sovereign wealth fund with an estimated \$1.32 trillion in assets, virtually assuring that future generations of Norwegians will live well.

"I think sooner or later the demand for oil and gas will disappear," Svedahl said. "We will have to find other ways to secure our income. I don't think we have any choice. We are working hard at finding green alternatives for our economy."

Norway's largesse

Ukraine and Norway had extensive top-level political meetings and economic conferences, in Kyiv and in Oslo, before COVID-19 curtailed traveling. The last big event was the Norwegian-Ukrainian Business Forum in Oslo on Jan. 28, 2019.

It's not clear when such events will resume. Norway coped well the virus, suffering less than 1,000 deaths compared to Ukraine's more than 51,000 already. Norway, which relies on



A surfer looks at Northern Lights on March 9, 2018 in Utakleiv, northern Norway, Lofoten islands, within the Arctic Circle.

tourism as well, has restricted entry to most foreigners.

The pandemic has forced Svedahl to cut back on travel around Ukraine, although he's been able to get to the eastern Donbas a couple of times and other cities, such as Odesa and Kharkiv. He'd like the Norwegian government to take on a greater role in helping to de-mine the war zone. He also wants to step up cultural events as travel restrictions ease.

Norway has also had a remarkably long-serving government, with Solberg at the helm for the last eight years. Parliamentary elections are in September, but don't expect many foreign policy changes no matter who wins.

"We have a very stable and predictable foreign policy irrespective of who is in charge of government," Svedahl said. "Ukraine will continue to be a priority for us. We are in it for the long term."

Ukraine has been the beneficiary of \$25 million in annual bilateral aid from Norway. It's focused on democracy, human rights, free speech, corporate governance, energy efficiency and other projects, including possible help by Norway's Petroleum Geo-Services in finding new Black Sea oil and gas deposits.

Norway has since 2015 also funded a Young Entrepreneurs exchange program. It also teaches the Norwegian language in Kyiv and Lviv, among

other endeavors. An estimated 7,000 Ukrainians live in Norway.

Even more importantly, Norway — a member of the 30-nation NATO military alliance but not the European Union — supports economic sanctions against Russia because of its war against Ukraine, including the illegal seizure of Crimea by the Kremlin's military in 2014.

Russia retaliated by banning Norwegian seafood imports, but the sanction hasn't done lasting damage, the ambassador said.

"We will not change our position," Svedahl said. "The demand for Norwegian fish and seafood is more than we can supply. It's our biggest export to Ukraine." ❄️

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Scatec manages its environmental and social impact: in Ukraine company has already allocated more than UAH 16.5 million for community development projects.



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Education and Environment
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Water management
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Youth leadership support
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Infrastructure (water supply)
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Infrastructure (roads)
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Norwegian says running business in Ukraine gave him biggest personal growth in his life

By Daria Shulzhenko
shulzhenko@kyivpost.com

Norwegian Andreas Loevstad Tranoey was immersed in acting in his home country when an unexpected idea invaded his mind. He couldn't stop thinking about Ukraine, a dynamic post-Soviet country he had visited several times.

"Someone falls in love with Paris, and I fell in love with Ukraine," Tranoey told the Kyiv Post.

By that time, Tranoey's father, a Norwegian businessman, had already opened two clothing stores in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city. He asked Tranoey to assist him in developing the business in the mysterious Eastern European country.

Fascinated by the opportunities, Tranoey, 36, decided to quit his acting career and moved to Ukraine in 2017. Little did he know he was about to start one of the greatest adventures of his life. "I witnessed how the country was developing and its market growing, and I wanted to become a part of these changes," Tranoey says.

Chaotic and intriguing

There has always been an interest in Eastern European countries in Tranoey's family. Curious about other cultures and landscapes, the Norwegian family traveled a lot, including to the Czech Republic and Bulgaria.

In 2006, Tranoey's mother and sister went to Odesa to study Russian at a local language school. Tranoey decided to visit his relatives. He came way pleasantly surprised by Odesa, the Black Sea port city of 1 million people 500 kilometers south of Kyiv.

"It felt like some southern country," Tranoey says. "Beautiful architecture, buildings, streets, big avenues, great beaches and good food."

Fascinated by Ukraine, Tranoey's family soon came again, this time

Courtesy of Andreas Loevstad Tranoey



Norwegian Andreas Loevstad Tranoey poses for a photograph at his I Can clothing store in Kharkiv on June 9, 2021. Tranoey relocated to Ukraine in 2017 to take over his father's business in the country. He now runs the chain of three clothing stores in Kharkiv offering garments from Scandinavian designers.

to visit Crimea, years before Russia stole the peninsula by military force in 2014. They traveled to some of the most prominent cities, Yalta, Sevastopol and Simferopol, did hiking in the mountains and stayed at the houses of local babushkas.

Tranoey was surprised by people offering to take photographs with wild animals such as crocodiles,

snakes, and monkeys — a business prohibited in Europe but still common in Ukraine's tourist destinations — as well as casinos on every corner.

"It felt very chaotic but also very intriguing and different from conservative Oslo," Tranoey says.

In the years to follow, Tranoey would come back to Ukraine many

times to explore its hidden gems and well-known attractions.

He was pursuing an acting career at a Norwegian traveling theater and local TV series when his father launched the first I Can clothing store in Kharkiv, a city of 1.4 million people some 478 kilometers east of Kyiv, in 2011.

By that time, Tranoey had acquired some experience in the fashion business as he worked at a high-end clothing store in Oslo for nearly five years as a student.

After the opening of the second store in 2013, Tranoey started traveling to Ukraine often. He says he was amazed by the transformation Ukraine underwent after the EuroMaidan Revolution ousted pro-Kremlin ex-President Viktor Yanukovich in 2014. The uprising inspired a new generation of entrepreneurs and creators.

"When I went to Kharkiv 10 years ago for the first shop opening there was almost nothing here, only some restaurants and several shops. But it started to change so quickly," Tranoey says.

That's when Ukraine started to occupy his mind. Although he enjoyed acting, Tranoey says there were times when he was on the stage thinking about the stores in Kharkiv. "When I was at home in Oslo my mind was flying back to Ukraine," Tranoey says.

So in 2017, he finally moved to Ukraine to head the I Can chain and start a new life.

NUCC support

Seeking a better understanding of the market, Tranoey temporarily relocated to Kyiv in 2018.

He soon found an opportunity that suited him perfectly and offered a quick dive into all things business. It was the Young Entrepreneurs program run by the Norwegian-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce. The program educates beginning entrepreneurs about the markets of the two countries. It is also offered for free since it's funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Tranoey had lucky timing. The year he applied was also the first time the NUCC opened entries for the textile industry.

The program combined online and offline seminars in Ukraine and Norway, packed with useful business insights. Young Entrepreneurs connected him with like-minded people with an interest in Ukraine. It also gave him the feeling of support in a foreign country and was a way to "erase the borders between the cultures," he says.

Almost three years after he finished the program, Tranoey is still in touch with the NUCC.

"They can support you in anything, if you have questions or difficulties they will try to find solutions," Tranoey says. "If you have a good idea and you want to do something in Norway or Ukraine, they will stand by your side."

Scandinavian fashion

When Tranoey relocated to Ukraine four years ago, he wanted to change the concept of the I Can chain.

I Can used to sell mainly Italian and Spanish apparel for men and women. "Everyone does that in Ukraine," Tranoey says.

Apart from that, a Norwegian offering Italian and Spanish brands in Ukraine didn't make much sense to him. His roots turned out to be the answer. He transformed the chain into multi-brand stores that sell clothes from Scandinavian designers, rarely found in Ukraine. "The kind of store that I would shop in," he says.

There are currently three I Can stores in Kharkiv, with the latest one opened nearly two weeks ago. The chain offers the best of Scandinavian fashion, selling simple and high-quality products from such acclaimed brands as Swedish Dr. Denim and Danish accessory label Nunoo.

Tranoey hasn't been to Norway for nearly two years, joking that he's afraid he would not understand the Norwegian language anymore. He says he feels a bit more Ukrainian now. "Every year my friends ask me how I want to celebrate my birthday and I usually say that I want it the Ukrainian style, which means we will go to some park, rent 'besedka' and do the 'shashlik'," he laughs.

Even though Ukraine has its challenges, Tranoey plans to continue developing his chain and even test the new waters of the restaurant industry.

"There is room for so much in Ukraine," Tranoey says. "For me, it's the most interesting country in Europe and even the world." 🇺🇦

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Could Ukraine become a hub for processing Norway's fish?

By Asami Terajima
terajima@kyivpost.com

Ukraine has the potential to become a major processing hub for Norwegian seafood – if Norwegian producers come to trust the investment climate here.

High labor costs in Norway have forced its seafood processors to look elsewhere. Approximately 95% of

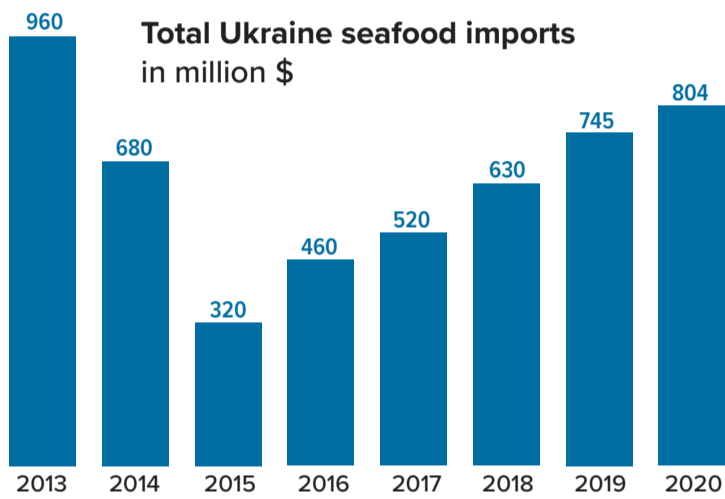
fish raised in Norway is shipped abroad for processing, according to Christen Mordal, consultant for the Norwegian Seafood Council.

Poland is currently a major processor of Norwegian seafood. Ever since Warsaw joined the European Union in 2004, Norwegian investments in fish processing plants has “skyrocketed,” says Stian Halsen, project manager at the Norwegian-



Universal Fish Company

Workers pack Norwegian salmon fillets in vacuum packs at the Universal Fish Company's seafood processing plant in Kyiv Oblast.



Source: Association of Ukrainian Importers of Fish and Seafood

Ukraine's appetite for seafood has grown steadily in the last six years, with more than 25 percent of the \$804 million in imports coming from Norway in 2020.

Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce, whose 104 members include the Kyiv Post.

However, to protect its own producers, the EU has set “a lot of trading barriers” on the Nordic non-member, according to Halsen. Despite low labor costs, exporting raw seafood to an EU country like Poland still comes with substantial customs duty, he says.

Operating in Ukraine, however, would make it possible for Norwegian seafood exporters to circumvent EU trade barriers: there is currently no customs duty for most of the raw fish exported from Norway to Ukraine. Low labor costs in Ukraine can also

attract Norwegian investors.

Once seafood is processed in Ukraine, it gains a Ukrainian origin and when exporting back to the EU carries almost no customs duty. Norwegian raw mackerel carries a 20% customs duty when it's exported to Poland. To Ukraine, the customs duty would be close to nothing.

Oleg Kiriyevesky, managing partner at the First Chair Legal law firm, says it isn't difficult for Norwegian seafood to gain a Ukrainian origin when exporting to the EU; it only needs to surpass minimal operation, which is little more than packaging and labeling the product.

A trade agreement signed in

September 2020 means this is still a new concept for both Norwegian investors and Ukrainian companies. And Norwegian companies will be looking for partners in Ukraine that comply with EU food safety regulations, which may pose a challenge.

Still, “it's a large, steadily growing market with untapped potentials,” Kiriyevesky says.

Rising star

Universal Fish Company (UFC) is the most prominent player in Ukraine when it comes to reprocessing Norwegian seafood and re-exporting

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POWERING THE GREEN FUTURE

Ukrainian-Scandinavian Center serves as gathering place for Nordic culture

By Toma Istomina

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The Scandinavian global influence has been gaining momentum, dominating home design trends with its minimalistic approach and contributing the concepts of “hygge” and “lagom.”

For a while, Ukrainians had few opportunities to explore Nordic culture and meet people who share an interest in Scandinavia. But with the foundation of the Ukrainian-Scandinavian Center in 2017, it has become much easier.

The center is “a Scandinavian platform where different people with common interests can meet,” Dmytro Novashok, chairman of the board at the Ukrainian-Scandinavian Center, told the Kyiv Post.

The center is registered as a non-profit that mostly lives off their students’ payments. Some of their projects are supported by the embassies of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, which have provided funds, promotion or organizational resources for the center’s events.

2014 start

It started as an initiative of four enthusiasts in 2014. After they completed their studies in Norway and returned to Ukraine, the four realized there was no place for fans of Scandinavia. So Anastasia Antonyk, Anatolii Kyrlyuk, Kateryna Kolomiets and Oleh Sashchenko decided to provide the opportunity.

First, they organized a Ukrainian-Scandinavian summer school in Chernivtsi, a city of 265,000 located 530 kilometers southwest of Kyiv. The two-to-three-week camp brought together Ukrainians who wanted to learn Nordic languages and Scandinavians who wanted to learn Ukrainian. Aside from language classes, the participants explored each others’ cultures at lec-



Students of the Norwegian language attend a class at the Lviv office of the Ukrainian-Scandinavian Center in the fall of 2019. The center has another office in Kyiv and serves as a hub for fans of Nordic cultures and languages.

tures and traveled around Ukraine together.

‘Bigger than expected’

By 2017, the initiative grew into a full-fledged cultural center with an office in Lviv, the regional capital of 730,000 people more than 500

kilometers west of Kyiv. Just a year later, another office of the Ukrainian-Scandinavian center opened in the capital. “It has become bigger than they expected,” the center’s head says.

There are no academic studies on Scandinavian languages in Ukraine,

while few schools offer private classes, Novashok says. Ukrainian-Scandinavian Center, meanwhile, offers four-month courses of Norwegian, Swedish, Danish and Finnish.

The classes are based on textbooks developed by native speakers, offering a comprehensive introduction to the Scandinavian countries by not only focusing on grammar and vocabulary, but also paying a great deal of attention to local people’s mindset, cultures and traditions.

3 start dates

The courses are available for different levels and cost Hr 14,000 (\$500). Enrollment starts three times a year: in August for the fall course, in January for the one in spring and in May for the studies in summer.

Over the four years since the center’s foundation, nearly 250 students attended its classes. However, the audience has been growing rapidly after the center started offering online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, attracting students from all corners of Ukraine.

“It turned out that in other cities, there is this same need for learning Scandinavian languages,” Novashok says. “They are just fond of this culture, languages, and they come to us to learn them for personal growth.”

Why they study

There are also those who have a professional interest since they do

business with the Nordic region or work for international companies closely tied to the area. A smaller share is made of Ukrainians whose relatives live in Scandinavia.

Aside from the classes, the center organizes speaking clubs, creating an opportunity for their students to talk to native speakers and practice their knowledge. There are also lectures focused on topics that might be of interest for the students, including Nordic history, Ukrainian-Scandinavian business connections and professional ethics.

But it’s not a one-way street. Since 2020, the center has also started offering online classes of Ukrainian to foreigners in Nordic countries. Novashok says that the demand mostly comes from foreigners living in Scandinavia who are eager to learn about Ukraine or those who are motivated professionally.

The center has been forced to move most of its activities online for the time of the pandemic, however, they hope to resume in fall and continue moving towards the goal of becoming the biggest Nordic community in Ukraine, similar to what Goethe-Institut is for Germans here or British Council for the U.K. expats.

“So that everyone knows that if there’s something that concerns Scandinavia, it has to do with us,” Novashok says.

Sign up for a language course or other events at www.ukr-scandinavian.org.

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Wind farms help move Ukraine to energy future



Magnus Johansen,
Ingrid Sara Grimstad
Amundsgård

NBT is a Norwegian company that develops, owns and operates large-scale wind projects in markets that has an ambition to increase the share of renewables and reach CO₂ emission targets. With over 1,000 MW developed and a strategic target of reaching 2 GW in construction or operation by 2025, we want to become a renewable powerhouse with a special focus on southeastern Europe.

NBT works closely with leading international financiers, such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other international development banks. In 2019, we were awarded the "Sustainable Energy Bronze Award" by the EBRD – an important recognition for NBT. The company prefers to work with financing partners that understand the complexity of constructing large-scale wind projects in challenging markets. "The fact that NBT is working with most of the European development banks proves that we comply with the highest international standards on environment, social responsibility and corporate governance. We represent an attractive and meaningful vehicle for channeling funds to develop clean and renewable energy projects of the future," says Joar Viken, the founder of NBT.

Kherson Oblast

A good example of a project developed by NBT is Syvash – a 246

MW wind farm located in Kherson Oblast.

NBT started the development of the project to international standards in 2017 and successfully secured debt of 262 million euros from eight development banks and funds (EBRD, Proparco, Green for Growth Fund, Finnfund, Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, IFU, FMO and NEFCO). The project is constructed and operated together with Total Eren, a subsidiary of the French oil major Total. The total investment in the wind farm is 376 million euros. The large number of lenders was necessary due to challenges of attracting debt finance into Ukraine. For this achievement, NBT was awarded the "Wind Developer of the Year" (2019) by #FinanceWind Europe. This project will generate enough electricity to supply 250,000 households and includes construction of the largest private substation in Ukraine.

"Syvash is a landmark project for Ukraine. It is one of the biggest wind farms built in Ukraine and for NBT it has represented a great platform to secure more foreign investments into the country. We represent exactly what Ukraine and President Volodymyr Zelensky is looking for – an international company, with solid track record, that can bring more foreign direct investments into Ukraine and help drive the ener-



A picture taken on April 7, 2021, shows the 246 megawatt Syvash wind farm in Ukraine's Kherson Oblast.

gy transition in the most efficient way," Viken says.

Zaporizhia Oblast

This summer NBT will start construction of the first part of the Zophia wind project in Zaporizhia Oblast. We plan to erect 75 wind turbines with 338 MW of capacity. The project also includes the construction of a large substation and associated grid expansion, which will benefit the national transmission system.

If successful with this second project, NBT will become the largest Norwegian investor in Ukraine, attracting close to 1 billion euros in foreign direct investment. As the European Union is pushing for an emission free future by 2050, wind farms play a core role with over 600 GW of new wind power capacity expected. By using the experience and knowledge of existing wind developers in Ukraine, of which around 50% are internationals, Ukraine can contribute to creating a sustainable future line with international and European objectives and commitments.

Ukraine benefit from our wind farms in many ways. By replacing thermal power production, we reduce air pollution, which is a major problem for Ukraine. Our wind farms will reduce carbon emissions by approximately 1.6 million tons of CO₂ annually. We will build new grid infrastructure and we will invest in the local communities through

targeted investments in social infrastructure and community projects. We will create jobs locally both during construction and in operation both through direct employment of local employees and through use of local subcontractors. Since sustainability is the core of the NBT business model, we adhere to the highest standards and create significant benefits for regional development of Ukraine. NBT believes that a natural part of the development of a new wind farm includes significant support for projects in the local communities through various programs focused on education, medical services, environmental issues, infrastructure, sport, culture and gender equality.

Cheapest renewable

Since the wind blows more than the sun shines in Ukraine, wind farms are the cheapest renewable energy source, and significantly cheaper than any new conventional power plants such as nuclear, coal or gas fired power plants.

It has a much lower feed-in tariff than solar power plants and after expiration of the fixed tariff in 2029, our wind projects will continue to produce clean and renewable electricity for decades, facilitating competition and reduction of electricity prices for the Ukrainian consumers.

Active since 2013

Due to the high penetration of international investors in the wind

sector in Ukraine, this sector also represents key reference points for the Ukrainian government to attract investments to rebuilding aging electricity infrastructure. Every project that is successfully financed and implemented in Ukraine will create trust from international investors, leading to reduced country risks and cost of capital. This is the main reason why the Ukrainian government should comply with its obligations toward the renewable energy investors. This will allow this group of investors to continue to build trust and confidence from investors in other sectors of the economy.

NBT has been active in Ukraine since 2013 and we are proud to call ourselves a great "ambassador of Ukraine". We want to help drive the renewable energy revolution in Ukraine, creating economic growth and a more sustainable future for all.

Magnus Johansen is vice president for business development at NBT. He has broad experience working with emerging markets. While living in Ukraine, he has focused on government relations. He is a strong advocate for the renewable industry in the country.

Ingrid Sara Grimstad Amundsgård is head of communications and public relations with NBT. She has extensive experience working with international business development, communications and sustainability issues with a special focus on corporate social responsibility.

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Norwegian renewables can supply power to 600,000 Ukrainian homes

By Max Hunder

hunder@kyivpost.com

Despite numerous challenges in Ukraine's renewables sector, Norwegian companies Scatec and NBT haven't given up on Ukraine's transition towards green energy.

Scatec specializes in solar energy, and entered the Ukrainian market in 2017. It currently operates three power plants with a capacity of 133 megawatts, but when construction is completed on plants at Progressivka and Chigirin, this will increase dramatically to 336 megawatts.

NBT focuses on wind energy. It came to Ukraine in 2018 and has two projects: a 246 megawatt facility in Kherson Oblast which has started to operate in phases, and a 793 megawatt facility under construction in Zaporizhia Oblast.

When all the above-mentioned projects are finished, Norwegian renewable energy companies will be able to supply electricity to up to 600,000 homes in Ukraine.

Both companies are well positioned to help Ukraine's government meet its target of 25% renewables

in the country's electricity mix by 2035. Norway is already generating 100% of its power using renewables meaning NBT and Scatec bring with them their national expertise.

However, progress has slowed in the last two years as the Ukrainian government's decisions have become a barrier to creating more renewable energy source, or RES, plants.

Crisis follows gold rush

Both Norwegian companies entered Ukraine when times were good for the renewable industry: between 2014 and 2019, a total of over \$7 billion of foreign investment was pumped into the market, with \$4.5 billion invested in 2019 alone. This was driven by Ukraine having some of the highest feed-in tariffs in the world.

The lofty rates were put in place under President Viktor Yanukovich in 2010, mostly for the benefit of his associates Serhiy and Andriy Klyuyev.

However, the green energy gold rush didn't occur until further market reforms in 2015. The tidal wave of investment in 2019 caused the crisis that has embroiled the sector



Oleksiy Feliv

since 2020: the state-owned purchaser of renewable electricity, the Guaranteed Buyer, couldn't cope with the sharp rise in payments which it had to make and soon spiralled into debts of almost \$1 billion.

Oleksiy Feliv, one of the preminent energy lawyers in Ukraine, says that things came to a head after the unbundling of the electricity transmission system in 2019.

Under the new market rules, renewable energy producers are paid by the Guaranteed Buyer, which raises funds from Ukrenergo, the national electrical grid operator.

This arrangement immediately created a conflict between industrial consumers, Ukrenergo, and RES producers.

"The large industrial (players) more or less started a war against renewables and they succeeded as the government just stopped paying renewable producers," said Feliv.

This has led to a drawn-out battle between RES producers and the Ukrainian government, which was supposed to be resolved by the signing of the green energy memorandum in June 2020. Both parties agreed to a reduction of rates, but

the government committed to paying the tariffs for existing plants until 2020.

However, the state has thus far shirked many of the commitments it made in the memorandum, and debts to producers are still piling up.

According to Feliv, high renewable tariffs are necessary as the cost of financing RES projects in Ukraine is extremely high due to lenders seeing the country as a risky investment.

This sentiment is echoed by Magnus Johansen, vice president for Business Development at NBT, who is concerned that the government's actions are making it even more difficult to obtain funding.

"The (renewables) situation contributes to increasing the overall country risk profile and will likely result in higher cost of capital. There is also a risk that investors will delay investment or simply invest elsewhere," Johansen said.

Time to change

The potential for a collapse of foreign investment into renewables becomes even more alarming when one considers that many of Ukraine's existing coal-fired power stations will reach the end of their lifespan in the next 10 years.

The impending obsolescence of the old thermal plants coincides with the introduction of the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, which will impose import tariffs on goods from countries with high CO₂ emissions. This measure poses a big risk to Ukrainian exporters.

Maintaining investor confidence will therefore be crucial in the coming years, especially as RES technology costs drop rapidly and become more economically viable every year.

Raymond Carlsen, the CEO of Scatec, told the Kyiv Post that market analysts forecast the cost of renewable electricity decreasing

by 40–50% in the next ten years, and that he thinks moving towards renewables is the only sensible choice for Ukraine.

"The global renewable market is going to grow from 10 or 12 terawatts to 60 terawatts. It's better for Ukraine to jump on the renewable train than to continue with nuclear and coal power plants," said Carlsen.

"The cost of solar panels has been reduced by 95% over the past ten years. Batteries are following suit. New coal plants are not worth building because they will be more expensive than renewables. Old coal plants will be more expensive to operate from next year than renewables."

This makes Ukraine's current battles with renewable investors even more frustrating, as the country could risk missing out on a global transition to RES.

"In our experience, those countries that are predictable with regard to their renewable portfolio, in terms of tariff reductions and sticking to old agreements, are the most successful. We have experience in more than 40 countries, and in that respect Ukraine is an exception," Carlsen said.

At present, there are few indicators that the Ukrainian government is ready to make decisions which appropriately address the severity of the situation. A new draft law is currently going through the parliament which would impose a 3.2% excise tax on renewable producers.

"It's like reducing the tariff again. It should not be allowed and it's not building confidence," Carlsen said of the proposed measure.

Time will tell whether necessity will force Ukraine's government to improve its renewables policy. Foreign investors have already begun filing international arbitration claims, so the sooner this happens, the better for the country.

Top foreign renewable energy companies in Ukraine

Company	Type	Megawatts
VR Capital (US/UK)	Solar	536
Scatec (Norway)	Solar	336*
Vindkraft (Sweden/Ukraine)	Wind	335
CNBM (China)	Solar	301
NBT/Total Eren (Norway/France)	Wind	253
LongWing/Vitol/ GE Capital (US/UK)	Wind	200
Acciona (Spain)	Solar	100
TIU Canada (Canada)	Solar	55
Green Genius (Lithuania)	Solar	47

Source: Scatec Ukraine *After commissioning of Progressovka and Chigirin

Norwegian companies occupy two of the top nine spots among foreign companies in the production of renewable energy.

If Ukraine can convince Norway it's a good catch, money will come

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it to other countries, including the EU, according to Halsen.

Roughly 70–80% of UFC's imported fish comes from Norway, with salmon and trout being the most commonly reprocessed fish for further exports, according to Tatyana Krupenko, marketing director of the fish processing company in Ukraine.

In 2020, UFC's overall revenue in the internal Ukrainian market was around Hr 5.6 billion (\$206 million) and Hr 500 million (\$18.4 million) in exports of reprocessed fish.

Though the majority of the reprocessed products stay in Ukraine, Krupenko says the next priority is to develop exports to other countries, particularly the EU.

"We are trying to develop fish processing at an even higher level than Poland," she says.

Krupenko says that the UFC is one of the few companies in Ukraine that owns processing centers and that is ready to cooperate with Norwegian exporters so that they can re-export

more products with lower tariff rates to the EU.

The golden circle

Ukraine can also play an important role in the Norwegian seafood industry by providing fish feed to the Scandinavian country.

Norway imports "at least a couple of billions in dollars worth of fish feed" due to the lack of supply, according to Halsen. He says about 75% of what goes inside salmon and trout in Norwegian fish farms are plant-based, made of ingredients such as wheat, corn and rapeseed.

Ukraine grows most of the ingredients for the fish feed and yet it isn't on the list of suppliers in the Norwegian aquaculture industry, Mordal says. Despite being known as the breadbasket of Europe, "basically none of it comes from Ukraine."

Halsen thinks that Ukraine and Norway can create a "golden circle" together in the seafood sector: Ukraine can produce fish feed for Norwegian fish farms, and Norway

can export raw seafood to Ukraine so it can be reprocessed there and re-exported to the EU and other countries.

In 2020, Ukraine imported \$219 million of the total \$804 million worth of seafood from Norway, the largest supplier of fish in the country, according to the State Customs Service of Ukraine.

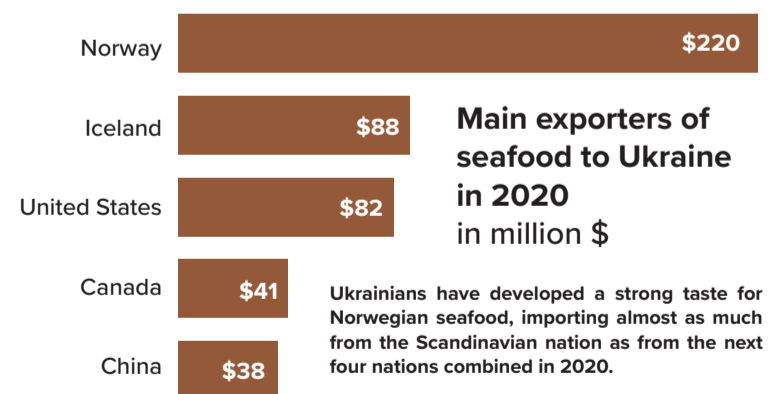
"The seafood sector has a really huge untapped potential for bilateral trade," Halsen says.

Investments needed

Ukraine needs to improve its investment climate in order to attract Norwegian entrepreneurs.

While Norwegian exporters can work with Ukrainian companies that already own seafood processing facilities, Ukraine will only get the status of a hub when the Norwegian side decides to make further investments, says Kiriyevsky.

Despite the attractive almost zero-rated customs duty conditions that Ukraine offers, many Norwegian



Source: Association of Ukrainian Importers of Fish and Seafood

businesses have already invested in Poland, building dozens of fish processing facilities there. Halsen says it would be "too hard" to move the plants to another country.

"Unfortunately, Ukraine was once more a bit late to the party," Kiriyevsky said.

The cost of building a large, advanced seafood processing factory can be about 50 million euros, and

Norwegian companies are not ready to take such a gamble in Ukraine yet, says Halsen. The country lacks transparency, predictability and security for investments.

To become an attractive investment destination, Halsen says that first Ukraine needs to make big progress in the World Bank's Doing Business index by fighting corruption and reforming the judicial system.

Lifestyle

Savor the night while dancing to the hits of Ukrainian rock band Pianoboy at the summer terrace of Vsi Svoi D12 (12 Desiatynna St.) at 7 p.m. on June 13. Entrance is Hr 550-1,250



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Ukrainian female conductor makes history across the world

Oleg Panov

Ukrainian conductor Oksana Lyniv performs at the LvivMozArt festival in August 2019. LvivMozArt is an annual event co-founded by Lyniv that brings some of the world's best musicians to the western Ukrainian city of Lviv.



By Yana Mokhonchuk
mokhonchuk@kyivpost.com

Ukrainian conductor Oksana Lyniv has made history in the male-dominated world of classical music. Twice.

First, she became the first female general music director of the Austrian Graz Opera since its founding in the 17th century.

This year, she is set to become the first female conductor at the prestigious 145-year-old opera event, the Bayreuth Festival, started by none other than iconic German composer Richard Wagner.

Lyniv, 43, says that women lead only about 3% of the world's top orchestras. She believes she made the cut thanks to her dedication and tireless improvement. But she still finds the achievements overwhelming.

"There are no words to describe what I feel," Lyniv told the Kyiv Post.

Based in Düsseldorf, Germany, she now works as a "freelance conductor," performing at multiple operas all over the globe. Despite her busy schedule, Lyniv spares the time to travel home and popularize classical music in Ukraine through her own initiatives.

"I feel the need not only to achieve something for myself, but also to invest my opportunities and contacts in new projects in Ukraine," she says.

A man's world

Lyniv was surrounded by music since the earliest days of her life.

She was born into a family of music teachers in a small town of Brody, Lviv Oblast, located 450 kilometers west of Kyiv and inhabited by about 23,000 people. Two of her other family members, including one of her grandfathers, were conductors.

It took Lyniv exactly one visit to a music school to decide she would carry on the ancestral tradition and master the art of directing a musical performance.

"I am the third generation of conductors in our family," she says proudly.

Lyniv's academic studies taught her that she was entering a "a man's world," as she was the only female student enrolled in the opera and symphony conducting course at Mykola Lysenko Lviv National Music Academy.

Upon graduation, Lyniv hit her first milestone, becoming a finalist in a prestigious conductor contest held in the Bamberg Symphony opera in Germany. Placing third in the competition opened up new opportunities for Lyniv — she was hired as an assistant at the Bamberg Symphony. Soon after that, she started postgraduate studies at Dresden's Carl Maria von Weber College of Music, which further sharpened her skills, she says.

Lyniv's career took off when she joined Ukraine's oldest opera, Odesa National Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet, as a deputy chief conductor, diving deep into the profession for the first time. After five years in Odesa, she hit another "first" her appointment as general music director at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich.

Lyniv says that few understand a conductor's role but it carries a lot of responsibility. Conductors serve as intermediaries between the orchestra and the audience, between the composers of the past and the modern day.

"With every movement of my hand, I must, like a magician, hold everyone's attention on the tip of my baton," Lyniv says. "I must create such interpretations that will be able to transfer people 200-300 years back in time."

Historic achievements

Lyniv has always done more than what was expected.

When she first arrived in Germany, seeing the high bar of opera conducting pushed her to work harder. She practiced hand movements day and night to master the perfectly choreographed, airy performance. Even during long, 3.5 hours operas, when hands may sweat, the movements need to stay light and precise, she

says.

Through the years, Lyniv also learned what she calls seeing beyond notes. To better understand the composers and feel what prompted them to write a piece, she studies their biographies before conducting their music.

A big step for Lyniv was the decision to compete for the job of chief conductor at Graz Opera.

There were seven candidates for the position, and Lyniv was the only woman. In the first round of the competition, she had to perform for a full audience without rehearsing with the orchestra beforehand. Her hard work paid off, and Lyniv was selected to head the prestigious opera for the 2017-2018 season.

She eventually stayed there for two more seasons until taking her career to a new level. Lyniv believes that the success of a conductor should not be limited to one country or theater and she finally granted herself the freedom to work with operas and events all across the globe.

"I allowed myself to be a freelance conductor," she says.

One of her most prominent performances was in 2020 at Berlin State Opera with a 2,500 audience. It was an unforgettable moment with a very supporting crowd, Lyniv says. "There

City Life

With Oleksandra Korzh

oleksandra.korzh.work@gmail.com

These are 5 of Kyiv's best coworking spaces

The COVID-19 pandemic forced many people to work remotely, but after over a year of using home as an office, many are eager to change the environment.

Luckily, there is an alternative.

Coworking spaces have been growing in popularity ever since the world started to shift to forms of work that don't require presence in the office, like freelancing and outsourcing.

With Kyiv's vibrant IT market, coworking venues have been around for years, serving as convenient spaces for local developers, designers and other professionals to work and meet.

Now, as the country opens up after another lockdown, people are again looking for ways to get out of their homes and work in specially designed places.

As of 2020, the capital had nearly 50 coworking locations, according to online publication Liga Business. They offer all kinds of services from hot desking to whole offices for teams and even meeting rooms.

The Kyiv Post has picked out five of some of the best coworking spaces in the capital.

Kooperativ

Airy and sunny, the Kooperativ workspace located in the historic city center claims to "inspire creativity and burst innovation." Co-founded by famous marketer Andriy Fedoriv and hotelier Vasily Grogol, it has everything needed for productive work.

Kooperativ offers hot desks (big desks that multiple people share), private offices, conference and meeting rooms that all together can fit up to 660 people. Hot desks are not reserved and are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Private offices can be exclusively booked by teams of at least eight people for months. Conference and meeting rooms can be booked for any number of hours needed. There's also a center for design thinking activities.

Kooperativ clients have plenty of options to enjoy while taking a break from work — there's a rooftop with a picturesque view on Kyiv landscapes, an entertainment zone, showers and even sleeping pods.

As for refreshment, the visitors can use a communal kitchen and

Coworking in Kyiv can be productive and fun as well

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a lunch zone or enjoy a meal from a house café, which serves a variety of drinks and food, including options for vegans and vegetarians.

Kooperativ also offers multiple locations for events, like parties, film screenings and lectures, fitting 50–600 attendees.

Work aside, Kooperativ organizes a number of recreational events, like music shows, yoga sessions, lectures and parties.

Prices: hot desk – \$17 per day, \$85 per week and \$180 per month, private office – \$350 per desk per month; meeting and conference rooms start at \$12 per hour.

Hours: 24/7. 23A.

Sichovykh Striltsiv St. +38093 280 9733. www.kooperativ.cc.

Octo Tower

For coffee, fresh pastry and “stable internet connection lovers,” Octo Tower is a perfect option. The venue combines a coworking space and a cafe that promotes coffee culture and serves a number of tempting desserts like croissants, banana bread and cinnamon rolls.

The space has a bunch of convenient locations with desks, chairs and access to sockets, scattered across its six floors and outside terraces. They can be used both by the cafe’s customers and those who come to work.



People work and communicate at the Peremoga coworking space in Kyiv. Peremoga has two locations in the capital’s growing coworking market.

Courtesy of Peremoga coworking space

The spaces can’t be booked, but are occupied upon arrival.

Octo Tower also offers spaces for events, like workshops, lectures, networking, parties and screenings. For that, there are three equipped auditoriums with panoramic windows, a rooftop, a secret terrace and a photo studio designed in Scandinavian style. The locations can fit from 15

to 100 visitors. And the team offers a catering menu for events.

Prices: to use coworking, customers make a Hr 150–250 (\$5–9) deposit, which they can use to buy food and drinks; the price for event booking varies from Hr 500 (\$18) to Hr 2,000 (\$70) per hour.

Hours: Mon–Fri. 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. Sat–Sun. 10 a.m. – 10 p.m.

6 Mechnykova St. +38067490 2828. www.octotower.com.

Peremoga

The Peremoga (“victory” in Ukrainian) workspace encourages its customers to aim high and win big.

The company has two locations in Kyiv. The one on Yaroslaviv Val Street is bigger and offers a desk zone for solo residents and hot-desking area for occasional visitors. The other one, located on Yevhena Konovaltsia Street, provides personal offices and meeting rooms.

Both of Peremoga’s spots take care of their visitors’ entertainment in between working hours. There are ping-pong tables and video games consoles, as well as separate rooms for meditation or simply some quiet time. The kitchen zone provides workers with free coffee, tea and biscuits.

Prices: reserved desk per month – \$270, a desk per hour – Hr 90 (\$3), personal office – \$335 per month; premises for networking and presentations – Hr 550–2,550 (\$20–90) per hour.

Hours: 24/7.

15 Yaroslaviv Val St. +38067516 4570. 36D Yevhena Konovaltsia St. +38067515 2981. www.peremoga.space.

The Space

The Space claims to be Kyiv’s biggest coworking venue with an area of 5,500 square meters that can seat up to 750 clients at the same time.

It offers resident desks in an open space zone, hot-desking in a lounge zone, and meeting and conference halls.

The workspace has a library, where visitors can not only rest in silence but also find something interesting to read. The library contains around 100 books on various topics – from business non-fiction to novels – and is constantly expanding.

For lovers of games, The Space has prepared a big game bar where residents can play slot machines, air hockey, ping-pong and video games.

The Space also holds community events, like networking, board games

and film screenings, where its residents can get to know each other better. Unlimited coffee, tea and snacks are also free for permanent clients.

Prices: reserved desk per month – \$120; private office – \$110 per desk; networking rooms start from \$10 per hour; conference halls – \$65 per hour.

Hours: 24/7.

1A Popudrenka St. +38067210 4302. www.thespace.com.ua.

Hub 4.0

“Work, learn and grow” is the motto of Hub 4.0 coworking space, and it promises to provide a suitable environment for all three.

The company has two locations. Hub 4.0 Podil is the bigger spot that offers coworking desks in an open space for up to 80 people, separate offices for teams, conference halls and meeting rooms. There’s also a Gallery of Innovations with a free exhibition spotlighting some of Ukraine’s newest startups, assistant robots, stress trackers and other devices.

Hub 4.0 Campus was initially designed as a space for teams, which is why it has 22 offices and a coworking area for 15 people that can be transformed into a conference hall for a group of 30.

Both locations have mini-gyms with equipment to stretch after a long day behind a desk. There are also showers and a kitchen with free snacks and drinks.

The residents of Hub 4.0 get a nice bonus of attending events organized by the European Business Association either for free or with a discount.

Prices: hot desk per hour – Hr 50 (\$2), reserved desk per month – Hr 3,400 (\$121); meeting rooms – from Hr 350 (\$12) per hour; private offices – from Hr 5,000 (\$178) per month, conference hall – Hr 850 (\$30) per hour.

Hours: for temporary visitors 9 a.m. – 10 p.m., for residents – 24/7.

Hub 4.0 Podil. 1/3 Yaroslavskiy Ln. +38093170 4534. Hub 4.0 Campus. 14 Nyzhmokliuchova St. +38093170 7464. www.h4hub.com.ua.

TOP 10 KYIV POST exclusives online this week

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Lyniv aims to change classical music's conservative image

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was a burst of screams." But the performance was no less defining for Berlin Opera itself, which that night hosted a female conductor for the first time in its centuries-long history.

Though based in Düsseldorf, Lyniv spends most of her time traveling around.

Her extremely tight schedule often includes three-to-four concerts per month, all in different countries. With every performance requiring several weeks of preparation, work takes up pretty much all her time. In May alone, Lyniv had concerts in Odesa, Rome and Bologna and rehearsals in Paris.

She says that it was even hard to find room for her wedding. To be able to get married, Lyniv canceled one of her performances that was scheduled for November 2021 in Leipzig, Germany.

This summer, Lyniv is set to give another history-making performance. She will be the first female conductor at the Bayreuth Festival, Germany's iconic event dedicated to Wagner's heritage that attracts thousands of people annually. The waiting time for its sought-after tickets sometimes takes years.

At the 2021 Bayreuth Festival, Lyniv will present a new production of Wagner's "The Flying Dutchman." The five-week series of performances will begin on July 25.

Promoting classical music

Despite her busy schedule, Lyniv manages to find time to give back to



Oksana Lyniv conducts a performance by Inso-Lviv Symphony Orchestra at the final concert of LvivMozArt Festival in August 2019.

her home, Ukraine, through several of her initiatives.

One of them is LvivMozArt, an annual festival that brings some of the world's best musicians to the western Ukrainian city of Lviv.

Lyniv is the co-founder and the artistic director of the event. She says that she launched it in 2017 to promote Ukraine on the international music map. Another goal was to highlight the historical con-

nection between the Ukrainian and European cultural traditions.

One such connection even inspired the festival's name, when Lyniv discovered that the youngest son of iconic Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart lived in Lviv for 30 years. As a pianist, composer and conductor of the Lviv City Theater, Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozart influenced the city's musical development, Lyniv says.

LvivMozArt combines contemporary academic music and classical pieces performed by musicians from multiple European countries, the United States and South Africa. Its last pre-pandemic edition in 2019 drew 9,500 spectators. The next festival will take place on Aug. 26-29.

According to Lyniv, she gets asked about LvivMozArt at nearly every interview abroad, as the event keeps growing its influence.

"LvivMozArt became the calling card of (Ukraine's) cultural diplomacy in the world," she says.

Another initiative aims to cultivate people's love for classical music from a very young age and support young musicians in Ukraine.

In 2016, Lyniv founded and became the principal conductor of the Youth Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine. It now unites 70 beginning musicians, aged 12 to 22, from all across Ukraine.

"It was my big, old dream," Lyniv says. "I really wanted to give children a chance."

The orchestra performed at a number of events in Ukraine and abroad, but its proudest moment was being selected for the largest young orchestra festival in the world, the Young Euro Classic in Berlin.

At the time the orchestra existed for just a bit over a year but it aimed high by choosing a piece considered to be difficult to perform even for advanced adult collectives. They mixed Ludwig van Beethoven's "Symphony No. 7" with pieces by Ukrainian composers.

"Everyone was amazed, the applause lasted for almost 10 minutes," Lyniv says.

As the conductor continues to help youth and promote Ukrainian music abroad, she says she has another goal in mind.

"An important concept of my work is to break the stereotype that classical music is something conservative, intended only for philharmonic halls and only for a closed circle." 🎻

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