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Kyiv Post

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The Other War

Volodymyr Petrov



"When Ukraine gained independence in the early 1990s, because the country is so attractive and rich, it was plundered not only from the outside, but also from the inside by many people who are now respected businessmen. I consider them just bandits, that is, they have become multimillionaires or billionaires on what was left of the Soviet-era enterprises. They did not build them, but simply took them away, raided them. Those were the times. And these people are financial groups. Today they have real estate, yachts, by the way, in England and France, in elite regions, in Monaco. Today, they are respected businessmen all over Europe who not only visit it, but live there. That is why we need to fight all these groups. And we do it."

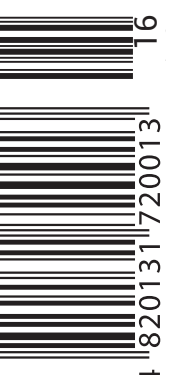
President Volodymyr Zelensky to Le Figaro newspaper in France on April 16, 2021

See coverage on pages 10 – 13

'Are you looking at me, Mr. President?'



- Rinat Akhmetov \$7.6 billion
- Victor Pinchuk \$2.5 billion
- Kostyantyn Zhevago \$2.4 billion
- Ihor Kolomoisky \$1.8 billion
- Hennadiy Boholyubov \$1.7 billion
- Petro Poroshenko \$1.6 billion
- Vadym Novinsky \$1.4 billion
- Yuriy Kosiuk \$1.1 billion
- Oleksandr Yaroslavsky \$725 million
- Dmytro Firtash \$370 million
- Viktor Medvedchuk Unknown
- Oleg Bakhmatyuk Unknown



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People walk in front of the main building of the National Technical University of
Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" in Kyiv on Oct. 19, 2020.



Oleg Petrasniuk

Here is how to revolutionize Ukraine's education system



Mikheil Saakashvili

The quality of education in Ukraine is getting worse year by year, and over 50,000 Ukrainian students leave the country to go to Poland. The situation is tragic since we are losing our most valuable asset: young people.

More than 70% of Ukrainians consider the quality of higher education in Ukraine to be medium, low or very low. In 2019, almost 50% of the officially registered unemployed in Ukraine were with high education. For comparison, the share of unemployed among those who received vocational education is 30%. Almost 40% of Ukrainian students believe that educational programmes do not meet the needs of the labour market. Given the crucial role education plays in shaping future generations, such numbers are a cry for reform.

\$1.5 billion in spending

Although higher education in Ukraine is by and large very accessible, it doesn't yield the returns on government funds fueled into it. In Ukraine, 51% of young people do not work by profession. Education is a right, but the way the right to get education in Ukraine is provided should be transformed. In particular, we need to change the way incentives work. We need to empower students to decide how the funding for their education is distributed as opposed to having the state as the sole — and rather ineffective — manager.

In total, in 2020, expenditures for financing higher educational establishments amounted to Hr 41.3 billion — nearly \$1.5 billion. Out of

the total, Hr 39.9 billion came from the state budget and another Hr 1.4 billion from local budgets. More than 50% of those funds were allocated through the system of public procurement of the training of professionals in higher education institutions. However, state universities are generously funded, they don't pay taxes which entices corruption and creates losses to the state budget.

The funding mainly depends on the budget of previous years. In 2020, the minimum and maximum change in the budget of each higher educational institution was 95% and 120% from 2019, respectively. An insignificant part of the funding depends on the scale of the university, target students, regional coefficient, positions in international rankings, the number of funds for research that the university attracts from business or international grants, employment of graduates.

Finance students directly

Higher education can either be financed directly through the state budget or students themselves. As the numbers show, the first option doesn't work well in Ukraine. Therefore, we at the Office of Simple Solutions and Results propose to opt for a grant system that would make students responsible for deciding where the money goes. Our reform will kill two birds with one stone: increase competition among students and ensure tailored management of the funds dedicated every year to education in Ukraine through competition among universities.

Thanks to the grant system, students will be able to decide which educational establishment to pay for, and that will also include a possibility to study abroad.

Based on the external evaluation exams and social needs, the money will basically follow students. To enable the reform, the government will fix the maximum price of education in public universities and put together a list of students according to External Independent Test (EIT) results.

Grants will be awarded for studies at private universities or universities abroad and only for full-time education.

Two great examples

It is important to stress that Ukrainian private universities such as the Ukrainian Catholic University and the Kyiv School of Economics are highly competitive and provide great education mainly because their funding system isn't rooted in favouritism, unlike that of public universities. Also, rectors need to be seen as managers to ensure the effective development of educational institutions.

Since students will be the sole managers of the funding, the amount of funding received by higher education institutions will directly depend on the number of enrolled students. Moreover, it will be possible to diversify the size of grants so that students can get 100%, 70%, 50%, or 30% of the price covered while at the moment, it's either the full amount or nothing.

Our policies will significantly decrease the existing inefficiency in Ukraine's education system and make universities compete for students. After the reform, in order to survive, Ukrainian universities will need to focus on providing the best services so that students choose them.

Radical & revolutionary

The essence of this education reform is very radical and revolutionary.

The student himself will choose an educational institution and single it out of the rest by deciding to pay for it with the money given to them by the government. Such an approach will prevent corruption in the higher education system, and the introduced competition will improve the quality and efficiency of education as such thereby driving Ukraine faster towards economic prosperity. Funding will not depend on previous budgets that have been lobbied for by state universities. However, the government will still have a role to play. It will be able to increase funding for priority areas of education, determine the number of social grants etc. This will allow the government to prioritize careers which it deems are important at specific stages of the country's development.

Last month, the Office of Simple Solutions and Results established cooperation with the Verkhovna Rada committee on education, science and innovation. We agreed to create an interdepartmental working group, within which we are working together with the Ministry of Education, the committee and other stakeholders on the needed legislative amendments.

Both the Ministry of Education and the committee support our ideas. I am delighted to see that there is political will for such a timely new approach to education policy.

Mikheil Saakashvili has been the chair of the executive committee of the National Reforms Council since May 7, 2020. He served as governor of Odesa Oblast from May 30, 2015, to Nov. 9, 2016. He was president of Georgia from Jan. 25, 2004, to Nov. 17, 2013. 🇯🇵

Anti-corruption court better than others, but still not good enough

By Oleg Sukhov
sukhov@kyivpost.com

Historically, Ukrainian courts have been seen as places where judges get rich by protecting corrupt interests, rather than pursuing justice. Consequently, they've become among Ukraine's most distrusted institutions – no small feat in a nation that largely distrusts its government and political leaders.

Two years ago, Ukraine created the High Anti-Corruption Court with the help of foreign experts to achieve a breakthrough.

So far, the new anti-corruption court is working better and faster, anti-corruption activists say. It has delivered 28 guilty verdicts in corruption cases.

"The High Anti-Corruption Court is making historic decisions that were previously unthinkable at conventional courts," Vitaly Shabunin, head of the Anti-Corruption Action Center's executive board, told the Kyiv Post. "Suspects in high-profile cases are afraid of the anti-corruption court's decisions."

But not all the reviews are favorable.

Vitaly Tytych, ex-head of judicial watchdog Public Integrity Council, is more skeptical about the new court. He says that the National Anti-Corruption Bureau and the High Anti-Corruption Court were created to jail "big fish" – the highest-ranking officials – but so far only small fry have been punished.

Consequently, corruption remains endemic and impunity still reigns.

Firstly, only lower-level officials tend to be jailed for graft. More powerful and influential ones escape corruption charges, either getting cases closed or getting them delayed interminably.

Secondly, several judges of the High Anti-Corruption Court are themselves accused of corruption and have made dubious rulings.

Thirdly, Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova has arbitrarily taken cases away from this body and sent them to conventional courts. She has denied the accusations of sabotage.

The High Anti-Corruption Court did not respond to requests for comment.

Statistics

Since 2019, the anti-corruption court has issued 28 guilty verdicts, including 14 jail sentences. It also acquitted two suspects.

"In general we assess the court's work positively, except for some of the judges," Olena Shcherban, an expert at the Anti-Corruption Action Center, told the Kyiv Post. "Compared to other courts, the High Anti-Corruption Court is several steps ahead."

The highest-ranking convicts are two former members of parliament.

Oleksandr Chernenko, a former lawmaker from ex-President Petro Poroshenko's party, was given a three-year suspended sentence for unlawfully getting Hr 582,000 from the state to buy an apartment. Hennady Bobov, a former member



President Volodymyr Zelensky's deputy chief of staff, Oleh Tatarov speaks with journalists in front of the Anti-Corruption Court on Dec. 24 in Kyiv. The bribery case against him has been buried by prosecutors and judges.

of parliament, was fined Hr 51,000 for false information in his asset declaration.

The court has also sentenced eight lower-level judges to jail terms ranging from two to nine years for bribes ranging from \$500 to \$20,000.

Other convicts include the CEOs of several medium-sized businesses, an investigator, lawyers and a member of a Kyiv Oblast legislature.

The highest-ranking suspects on trial have not had verdicts yet.

These include Roman Nasirov, the former head of the State Fiscal Service; Mykola Martynenko, a former lawmaker from Interior Minister Arsen Avakov's People's Front party; Odesa Mayor Hennady Trukhanov and Yaroslav Dubnevych, a lawmaker who previously represented Poroshenko's party.

Cases against other top suspects – President Volodymyr Zelensky's deputy chief of staff Oleh Tatarov and Pavlo Vovk, head of the Kyiv District Administrative Court – have been effectively buried.

Controversial party

When the head of the anti-corruption court, Olena Tanasevych, was spotted at a party with major corruption suspects in December, it raised many critics' eyebrows. The Slidstvo.info investigative program first reported on the party.

The partygoers included Pavlo Vovk, head of the Kyiv District Administrative Court, and Oleksandr Tupytsky, head of the Constitutional Court. The event was hosted by controversial pro-Russian ex-lawmaker Serhiy Kivalov.

Tanasevych confirmed attending the party but said she had not spoken to Vovk and Tupytsky.

"The worst thing is that her presence at such an event undermines the court's reputation as an institution, and the High Anti-Corruption Court's head appears not to be

aware of it," Halia Chyzhuk, a judicial expert at the Anti-Corruption Action Center, wrote on Facebook.

Tanasevych's presence at the party coincided with controversial rulings by her court that helped Vovk escape responsibility in a corruption case.

Bitsyuk's rulings

Vovk's reprieve came from Andriy Bitsyuk, a judge of the High Anti-Corruption Court, who's accused of sabotaging the country's most high-profile judicial corruption case.

In 2020 Vovk and other judges of his court were charged with organized crime, abuse of power, bribery and unlawful interference with government officials. Vovk is seen by civil society as the epitome of judicial corruption and impunity in Ukraine.

In January Bitsyuk refused to bring Vovk to court for a bail hearing by force, although he later allowed the NABU to do so. The attempts failed because Vovk hid from the bureau.

In March Bitsyuk also refused to extend the Vovk investigation, leaving the prosecutors just two options: send the case to trial in five days or close it. The case was not sent to trial by the deadline and is likely dead.

Bitsyuk was pressured into his decision by the High Council of Justice, the judiciary's highest governing body, according to the Anti-Corruption Action Center.

Hours before Bitsyuk refused to extend the investigation, the High Council of Justice warned him and accused him of violating procedure in the Vovk case. Members of the council have been implicated in Vovk's alleged corruption schemes, according to audio recordings released by the NABU.

The council did not respond to requests for comment.

Moysak's decisions

Another judge of the High Anti-

Corruption Court, Serhiy Moysak, has been extremely lenient towards suspects in major corruption cases.

"He has issued very dubious rulings in many cases," Shcherban said. "Moysak has also missed deadlines set by the Criminal Procedure Code."

Moysak has considered the high-profile smuggling case against businessman Vadym Alperin. In March 2020 Moysak refused to make Vadym Alperin pay his Hr 70 million bail despite the fact that Alperin violated the bail conditions.

In May 2020 Moysak went even further, canceling all restrictions imposed on Alperin. These included an electronic bracelet and the requirement for him not to speak to other suspects.

The court's spokeswoman Vira Mykhailenko defended Moysak's decisions in the Alperin case, arguing that they were lawful.

In 2019 Moysak released another suspect, former lawmaker Maksym Mykytas, on Hr 5 million (\$180,000) bail in an embezzlement case.

Activists lambasted this amount as miniscule. In the same month, the High Anti-Corruption Court's appeal chamber canceled Moysak's decision and increased the bail to Hr 80 million.

Meanwhile, Mykytas has testified that he gave a \$600,000 bribe to employees of the High

Anti-Corruption Court when Moysak released him on bail, law enforcement sources told the Kyiv Post. President Volodymyr Zelensky's deputy chief of staff Oleh Tatarov allegedly acted as an intermediary for the bribe, according to Mykytas' testimony.

Rotterdam+

Another controversy surrounds the NABU investigation into the Rotterdam+ pricing scheme, which benefited oligarch Rinat Akhmetov's energy company DTEK.

Under this scheme, regulators raised energy prices across Ukraine, supposedly to pay for the delivery of coal from Rotterdam. Only about 5% of coal came from abroad and none of it was from Rotterdam, which means the Ukrainian public overpaid Hr 39 billion for electricity over three years, which DTEK allegedly pocketed, according to the NABU.

In September 2020 Kateryna Shyroka, a judge at the High Anti-Corruption Court, upheld the Special Anti-Corruption Prosecutors' decision to close the Rotterdam+ case. The Anti-Corruption Action Center believes the decision to be unlawful.

The court's spokeswoman, Mykhailenko, dismissed the accusations and in turn accused the watchdog of pressuring the court.

A different judge of the court eventually revived the case but prosecutors closed it again in April.

Procrastination

The anti-corruption court is also infamous for procrastinating.

Since 2019, the court has not even completed the legal formalities preceding substantial consideration in 30 corruption cases, according to Vadym Valko, a legal expert at the Anti-Corruption Action Center.

Such cases are often artificially delayed by suspects and their lawyers and judges of the High Anti-Corruption Court have been unable to resist their manipulation, Valko said in an op-ed in online newspaper Ukrainska Pravda in 2020.

These include graft cases against ex-lawmaker Oleksandr Onyshchenko; former Poroshenko Bloc lawmaker Yaroslav Dubnevych and his brother Bohdan; ex-People's Front lawmaker Maksym Polyakov, former Poroshenko Bloc lawmaker Borys Rozenblat, and top executives of the Odesa Portside Plant and railway monopoly Ukrzaliznytsia.

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EDITORIALS

Don't be fooled

For whatever reason, Russian President Vladimir Putin says he has decided to send 100,000 troops that he has massed for the last month on Ukrainian borders back to their home bases — for now.

Why? Perhaps he got what he wanted: A display of military superiority, an attempt to bully Ukraine and President Volodymyr Zelensky, a show of hands among the West on who would get tough with him and who wouldn't.

Maybe it was a victory for Western resolve in standing up to the botoxed dictator. Or perhaps Putin, feeling constrained by national protests over the deteriorating health of imprisoned Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, didn't want an international crisis and a domestic one simultaneously.

Or perhaps he's lying to lull Ukraine and the West back into complacency.

But another reason seems more likely: He doesn't feel it's the right time for an assault on Ukraine, one of the fading levers he has over the nation.

So there is no reason for the West — or Ukraine — to relax.

In terms of economic sanctions, the West collectively is not even where it should have been more than seven years ago at the outset of Russia's invasion of Crimea and the eastern Donbas.

We again call on Western leaders to wake up to the fact that Putin's foreign policy has only two aims: to reassemble as much of the former Soviet Union and to destroy democracies and their institutions globally.

This means that the answer is isolating Russia as much as possible.

This means deeper sanctions against Russia's major sectors of energy and banking. And yes, it means Germany must give up on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. It means disconnecting Russia from the global SWIFT system of banking transfers — all the better to cut off money laundering. It means sanctions against Putin and his inner circle of oligarchs, including asset freezes and visa bans. It means legal action to hold the Kremlin responsible for its war crimes and international law violations that have killed tens of thousands of its own citizens, especially in Chechnya, and abroad, in Ukraine and Syria. It also means exclusion from international organizations — such as the 57-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe — whose democratic values Russia routinely violates.

Instead, the West wants to avoid painful sacrifices and confrontation with Putin, a stance that will only embolden his menacing 22-year dictatorship. The assassinations and torture of his domestic critics, the suppression of political opposition and the muzzling of the press are more evidence that Putin has no place in the civilized world.

Yet Western leaders see every Russian transgression in isolation, rather than weaving them together into a big picture that demands concerted action. And they continue to gullibly accept Russia's false version of events — that this is a civil war happening in Ukraine.

Even Putin's State of the Nation address on April 21 revealed his "gopnik" — street thug — ways. He declared that if the West crossed any of his "red lines," which he would define when and how he saw fit, he would respond with overwhelming punishment.

His "red lines" obviously include waging wars against his own people and neighbors. So the West is just supposed to stand down because Putin has declared it his right to kill people and invade neighbors?

Not a chance. The West doesn't need to go to battle against Putin militarily to defeat him. Collectively, Western economies are so much stronger, especially if US and Europe live up to their highest ideals and insist on upholding these values worldwide. Russia's big cash cows — oil & gas — are going to fade in importance as the world moves to a greener future.

If there's a silver lining to this last month of tension, Ukrainians have come away with a deeper understanding of who their friends are and of the need to accelerate their split from Russia. And, if Putin continues to treat his own people as badly as he does, we hope that Russians themselves will successfully organize themselves for a brighter future.

Hoping for a good fight

Once, a new and promising president of Ukraine met with a group of oligarchs and told them to play by the rules from now on. They nodded along.

The president was Viktor Yushchenko and the year was 2005.

The oligarchs were Ihor Kolomoisky, Victor Pinchuk, Rinat Akhmetov, Oleksandr Yaroslavsky, and others.

Sixteen years later, Yushchenko is long retired and oligarchs still don't play by the rules.

Every president of Ukraine since Yushchenko has promised to stop the oligarchs' rule. It ended the same. The oligarchs remained untouched.

Now, it's President Volodymyr Zelensky's turn to try. Like every other presidential candidate in decades, he campaigned on anti-oligarch rhetoric, but only now, two years into his term, he appears to be getting serious.

Zelensky put it well in a recent interview with Le Figaro: oligarchs "call themselves business people, but they are bandits who plundered Ukraine.

His words have not been without action. He went hard after Russia-backed oligarch Viktor Medvedchuk, stripping him of his media empire and gas pipeline. He's been investigating ex-President Petro Poroshenko and members of his circle for abuse of office.

Finally, Zelensky cut the appetites of Kolomoisky, a former business associate. Their relationship was so close that when Zelensky was elected, observers were alarmed that he was only a puppet for Kolomoisky.

He also suggested an anti-oligarch bill to limit their influence.

We look at it with cautious optimism. While Zelensky's latest actions are encouraging, it's almost more important to look at who he doesn't go after.

That list includes Akhmetov, Pinchuk, Dmytro Firtash, and other smaller oligarchs.

It also must be noted that the three oligarchs Zelensky went after were his two political opponents and an ex-ally who played too aggressively and got sanctioned by the U.S., Ukraine's most important ally.

We will soon know if Zelensky's anti-oligarch drive is a cover to go after opponents, or, for the first time in 20 years, the real thing.

NEWS ITEM:

Mykola Tyshchenko, a lawmaker with the Servant of the People party, has ignored lockdown rules for the second time. Tyshchenko has celebrated his wife's birthday in a hotel in Kyiv, reportedly inviting around 30 guests amid the strict lockdown in the capital. According to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, guests weren't wearing masks; they were asked not to post photos on social media and get a COVID-19 test before coming.



Looks like you dropped a match, friend



NEWS ITEM:

After Czech police identified two Russians in connection with the blast at a Czech arms depot in 2014, the Czechs expelled 18 Russian diplomats. Russia mirrored the action by expelling 20 diplomats. Russia dismissed the allegation, saying the Czechs are to blame for the explosion because the depot was allegedly given to a private firm.

NEWS ITEM: Former President Petro Poroshenko announced on Twitter that he would give interviews to three Ukrainian channels: Channel 5 and Priamy, which he owns, and Espresso, which is loyal to him.



NEWS ITEM:

Two hundred gold ingots worth about \$8 million has been found in possession of Cypriot firm Energypoint Holding Limited controlled by the family of Yaroslav Dubnevych, a lawmaker from the For the Future faction, according to journalists from Bihus.info. Reportedly, the ingots were sold right after Ukraine's parliament allowed the prosecution of Dubnevych, who's been accused of corruption. The gold wasn't arrested by the High Anti-Corruption Court like his other assets. Dubnevych denies all wrongdoing.



See these features online at kyivpost.com

Ukraine's Friend & Foe Of The Week



Friend

Jan Hamacek, acting foreign minister of the Czech Republic
Hamacek has asked NATO allies to expel Russian diplomats after Czech police alleged that the Kremlin was behind an ammunition depot blast in Czech that killed two people in 2014.



Foe

Milos Zeman, Czech president
Zeman has been reticent regarding his country's diplomatic crisis with Russia. This silence has sparked outrage among many, including Czechs. Zeman parrots Kremlin messages, including denying the presence of organized Russian troops in Ukraine.

Feel strongly about an issue? Agree or disagree with editorial positions in this newspaper?

The Kyiv Post welcomes letters to the editors and opinion pieces, usually 800 to 1,000 words in length. Please email all correspondence to chief editor Brian Bonner, at bonner@kyivpost.com. All correspondence must include an email address and contact phone number for verification.

The importance of combating crimes that harm our planet



Iryna Venediktova

The prosecutor's office has moved to the forefront in the fight against environmental enemies.

In March, we held a large-scale joint meeting of the leadership of law enforcement and other government agencies to step up the fight against environmental crime. We coordinated joint activities to strengthen state control and ensure the inevitability of liability for violations of the law.

We noted relative progress last year, but set out to increase efforts to save the environment and keep the population healthy.

This period also coincided with the approval on March 23 by presidential decree of an important decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, which identified challenges and threats to Ukraine's national security in the environmental sphere and priority measures to neutralize them. According to this decision, the Cabinet of Ministers has been instructed to immediately develop and approve the National Action Plan for Environmental Protection for 2021–2025.

The prosecutor's office and public authorities should work in unison for the sake of nature conservation. We have identified the counteraction to criminal offenses against the environment as a priority. Moreover, after the joint meeting, the efforts of all law enforcement and other government agencies have been consolidated. We immediately set about implementing the steps planned at the joint eco-meeting.

In just the past month we have made a number of significant achievements.

Costly crimes

Notably, 24 interagency working groups, set up by orders of the chiefs of regional prosecutor's offices, have started working in the regions. Representatives of executive and state supervision bodies are involved in their work.

In addition, law enforcement officers have already revealed about a thousand of criminal offenses in the field of environmental protection during this period.

Thus, the facts of illegal mining of more than three million tons of

coal – easily worth many hundreds of millions of hryvnias – have been revealed in Donetsk Oblast.

Law enforcement officers of Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast exposed a group of officials who legalized illegally felled wood and sent it to Moldova on a monthly basis. The value of the exported wood is almost Hr 15 million.

Furthermore, the channel for the large-scale export of valuable tree species abroad under the guise of low-grade products at low prices has been blocked in Kirovohrad Oblast. Every month, 500 cubic meters of wood were sold in such a way, the estimated value of which is over Hr 5 million.

During this period, persons were notified of suspicion of having committed 135 criminal offenses against the environment.

In particular, one of the heads of the branch Industrial Management Center of Ukrzaliznytsia, who allowed five illegal explosions and extraction of almost 219,000 cubic meters of gabbro-anorthosite and granite, was notified of suspicion. Damage to the environment amounts to approximately Hr 500 million.

The investigation has been completed in a number of proceedings against three dozen officials, half of whom are members of an organized group who illegally felled trees in the territory of one of the state forestry in Zhytomyr Oblast, resulting in a total damage of more than Hr 9 million.

135 cases to court

Criminal proceedings for committing 135 offenses have already been referred to court.

Thus, an indictment was sent to court against the chairman of the company's board, who organized illegal sand extraction in the capital through his subordinate enterprise, which caused losses of Hr 626 million.

The former first deputy head of the State Service of Geology and Subsoil of Ukraine will also be tried, who as a result of official negligence allowed the illegal use of minerals without proper permission, which resulted in damage of more than Hr 38 million.

Indictments against three forestry



This forest was destroyed by illegal amber mining in the Olevsk district of Zhytomyr Oblast, here pictured on June 19, 2015.

officials in Zakarpattia and Kharkiv oblast have been filed with court for illegal forest devastation. Losses from such illegal activities total almost Hr 20 million.

Over the last month alone, prosecutors have filed lawsuits totaling Hr 1.3 billion to protect the state's interests in the field of environmental protection.

So far, the court has satisfied the prosecutor's claim to recover from the company Hr 4.4 million in damages for taking water from boreholes in the capital in excess of the limits.

Preserving our planet

During this time, the courts have opened proceedings upon lawsuits filed by prosecutors in a number of cases to stop the illegal reduction of

territories and objects of the nature reserve fund with a total area of more than 1,500 hectares worth almost Hr 791 million. In particular, in Zaporizhzhia Oblast these are the lands of two reserves of local significance, in Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast – the Hutsulshchyna National Park, in Odesa Oblast – the Dnistrovski Plavni Nature Reserve and in Mykolaiv region – the Mishkovo-Pohorilove Forest Reserve.

Within a month, the court decisions for more than Hr 335 million in the field of environmental protection were actually executed.

What are the plans of the prosecution service in the near future? We are currently working on the introduction of specialization of inquiry officers, investigators and prosecu-

tors in criminal proceedings in the field of environmental protection.

We are also examining the improvement of legislation that establishes liability for violations in the field of environmental protection, as environmental crimes are usually minor crimes, but are one of the most socially dangerous and common types of illegal acts.

We remember that we do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children, so we must all work together to preserve and save it.

Iryna Venediktova is the prosecutor general of Ukraine. She took office in March 2020. She is a former acting head of the State Investigation Bureau and ex-chair of the Committee on Legal Policy of the Verkhovna Rada.

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Ukraine's IT Edge

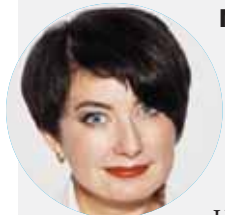
Editor's Note: Ukraine's information technology sector accounts for 4% of the economy, a share that will likely rise. This is why the Kyiv Post's IT Fellowship, backed by 10 tech firms, is so important. The support allows the newspaper to devote a full-time reporter to the sector. In this edition, we profile five of the 10 partner companies. The other five companies will be profiled in future editions and online.

What tech sponsors think about IT Fellowship



Iulia Stupak, head of human resources at SimCorp

Participation in the Kyiv Post IT Fellowship is a great opportunity for us to support publications about the IT industry in the English-language press, offer important topics for discussion and share our experience.



Marianna Konina, chief public engagement officer at Techiiia

There's an imbalance in perception of IT in the world and in Ukraine.

In the world, we are recognized as one of the best countries to provide IT services; (they recognize) our mathematicians and physicists. In the Ukrainian media, meanwhile, there are fewer projects about technologies, there are fewer journalists who want to understand the topic. By supporting this project, we want to correct this perception, to show that tech is what can make our life better.

We are rooting for the industry and want more Ukrainians to get inspired by our example and by example of other companies to create their own startups, tech business and thus develop the economy of Ukraine.



Kseniia Druchenko, public relations specialist at Parimatch Tech

The world is ruled by knowledge and technologies.

That's why we support projects and initiatives that help develop and scale knowledge about tech and innovations. And since we are reading the Kyiv Post ourselves, it was an easy decision for us. Topics and relevance of publications, deep analytical approach make us sure that this project brings value to the whole market.



Nina Vasylova, communications director at EPAM Ukraine

Unfortunately, (the press and public) don't get enough information about the tech sphere, its opportunities and projects.

With the appearance of the Digital Transformation Ministry, the informational vacuum about digitalization of the country is being filled. But there's much to work on on the level of understanding of the business, its key challenges and existing myths.

We hope our support of the Kyiv Post IT Fellowship and free access to the tech section will help form and share knowledge about the industry.



Mariia Kucherenko, director of corporate reputation at SoftServe

The Kyiv Post has been a source of quality information in English for international readership for years. We, tech companies, apart from generating interesting news pegs, represent the industry that has incredible export potential for Ukraine and can be a reliable technical partner for clients in the U.S. and Western Europe.

That's why it's our strategic task to support the media that create quality English-language content about IT, enlightening foreign readership about the industry and its companies.



Andrii Okseniuk, CFO at Ciklum

Ciklum is devoted to supporting independent journalism represented by the reputable Kyiv Post. We believe that its team of unbiased professionals builds better Ukraine, including by highlighting important topics in the tech industry. By supporting IT Fellowship, Ciklum joins forces with the Kyiv Post in order to promote Ukraine's technology industry, a vital part of Ukraine's economy.



Roman Hapachylo, vice president at Intellias

The Kyiv Post is one of the most honorable Ukrainian media that is read all over the world. As an active IT industry player, Intellias praises how the Kyiv Post covers the development of the Ukrainian tech, which is playing an important role for the economy of Ukraine. Attention of professional journalists to the topics about technologies is a huge contribution to the establishment of a global IT hub in Ukraine. We are glad that the newspaper spreads the news about the IT sphere not just to those in the IT community but beyond.



People work at the coworking Creative States of Arsenal in Kyiv on March 5, 2021.

Oleg Petrasuk

Kyiv Post, IT firms join forces to give the rising sector the attention it deserves



Denys Krasnikov
krasnikov@kyivpost.com

We live in a world where Netflix algorithms decide what we watch, Spotify suggests music and Uber knows where we live to take us home.

Science fiction isn't that fictional anymore, especially in the realm of health care, agriculture, communication and entertainment, where real life has tightly intertwined with artificial life.

At the same time, some people, especially the older generation, still don't see it. They still dismiss the idea that playing games can be a sport. But esports is already more popular than the National Basketball Association. Nearly 60 million people watched the final of "League of Legends" while just 30 million watched the NBA finals, according to Goldman Sachs. Another fact: The video game industry is worth \$140 billion annually, roughly three times the box office take for films.

And yet another fact: Out of 10 richest companies, seven develop tech. This includes Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Facebook.

We can go on. The point is: today, money flows into tech. And if we are sticking to capitalism — and we are — then we need to realize that tech will rule the world's economy.

Business journalists, whose profession is to cover today's realities, must realize that too and devote more time and skills to covering this sphere.

That's what the Kyiv Post is doing. Ukraine is proud of its tech sector. And yet, local firms keep moving to the United States, seeking capital and rule of law. With time, it's easy to forget that it was Ukraine's fertile tech ecosystem that nourished them before they moved to Silicon Valley and other greener pastures.

Ukraine has some 200,000 tech specialists, with 16,000 graduating every year. Many companies started here, including Grammarly, GitLab, People.ai and BitFury. Some still have the core of their staff in Ukraine. The Kyiv Post covers this, promoting Ukraine's technology industry.

We are not alone. Liga.net, Ain.ua, Dou.ua, Forbes and MC Today all write about technology. But only we write in English, and our tech coverage, while widely read internationally, is mainly online and isn't attractive to traditional advertisers.

We need sponsors to carry on. Thankfully, we managed to find support from the local tech community in 2014, when we launched our

IT coverage. Today, 10 companies support us: Ciklum, ELEKS, EPAM, Intellias, Intetics, Itera, Parimatch, SimCorp, SoftServe and TECHIIA.

These are some of the biggest tech firms in the country that employ 26,000 people combined. They're certain that Ukrainian minds can build global tech products. After all, they made their business on developing software for international companies.

By working with foreigners in this highly intellectual sphere, companies like these help change the perception of Ukraine and the reputation of Ukrainians: Ukraine is not just a coal mine at war with Russia, it is the place from where many smart and highly skilled engineers come from, engineers who will change the world.

Such companies change the perception of what Ukraine is among Americans and Europeans, making them much more willing to travel to Ukraine and invest into the country.

Perhaps willing to amplify their stance, they support the Kyiv Post. They fund a tech reporter, giving us \$2,500 each per year. Having been one until I was promoted to editor, I'm grateful.

Thanks to their help, we are able to publish at least one tech story a day, highlighting Ukraine as one of the countries that build the world's tech-driven economy in which we all live but don't always notice. 🇺🇦

Ukraine's largest tech firm EPAM works with Google, Epic Games

Editor's Note: This story is part of the Kyiv Post series of profiles of information technology companies that work in Ukraine. EPAM is a sponsor of IT Fellowship, a program that supports the Kyiv Post's tech coverage.

By Daryna Antoniuk
antoniuk@kyivpost.com

When Belarus-founded software engineering company EPAM entered Ukraine in 2005, the local information technology market was promising but small.

At that time, EPAM employed around 20 people, who worked from a small office in Kyiv. But even back then, the company already wrote code for big-name clients like Google and Microsoft.

In 16 years, EPAM has become the largest local tech company, employing over 10,000 specialists — the army that develops software for companies around the globe, from

EPAM

Year founded: **1993**
CEO: **Arkadiy Dobkin**
Number of employees: **10,000+**
Motto: **"Engineering the Future"**

What separates you from other companies? **The Ukrainian branch of EPAM is the largest tech company in the country by number of employees. It employs even more techies than Belarus, the country where the company was founded.**

British clothing brand Burberry, Spanish spirits company Bacardi to U.S. consumer goods company Procter & Gamble.

One of the world's most popular game developers, Epic Games, has even hired EPAM to work



An event organized by information technology firm EPAM in Kyiv. EPAM is the largest tech company in Ukraine, employing more than 10,000 people.

Courtesy of EPAM

on its hugely popular video game "Fortnite," which has over 350 million players worldwide.

Like other tech firms that work in Ukraine, EPAM sells its services abroad — to the United States, Europe, Asia and Australia.

The pool of employees across EPAM's 13 Ukrainian offices is even larger than in its native Belarus where local offices are shrinking due to the ongoing political unrest.

Last year many Belarusian tech companies, including EPAM, relocated their workers to Ukraine and Poland as the country was engulfed in mass protests against self-proclaimed Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.

Some of the tech specialists who took part in protest were arrested.

Ukraine is safer and more open for technology companies than Belarus, chief executive of EPAM Yuriy Antoniuk told online tech community Dou.ua in November 2020. "It's chaotic here, but it is favorable for growth," he said.

Global companies are willing to work with Ukrainians because it is cheaper, while the services are of the same quality.

Despite the success on the global market, Antoniuk doesn't want Ukraine to stay perceived as the world's "outsource hub" forever.

Last year outsource of services brought Ukraine over \$5 billion in export, but when the country has more startups, it can boost the economy even more, he said.

To promote tech in Ukraine,

EPAM invests in the education of tech specialists — it works with local universities and has courses for young techies within the company.

EPAM's specialists can work in any Ukrainian city, even if the company doesn't have an office there.

EPAM has continued to hire people even during the pandemic when many companies suffered from financial losses and layoffs. At the moment, the company has about 900 vacancies.

Antoniuk, who's been leading the company in Ukraine since 2005, told the Kyiv Post that the company had several goals when it started operating in Ukraine: to hire talented techies, to improve education and to build the brand that people can trust. 🇺🇦

IT firm Intetics taps into post-Soviet technical talent since early internet

Editor's Note: This story is part of the Kyiv Post series of profiles of information technology companies that work in Ukraine. Intetics is a sponsor of IT Fellowship, a program that supports the Kyiv Post's tech coverage.

By Asami Terajima
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When British computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee launched the first-ever website in 1991, few people could even see it. But Belarusian Boris Kontsevoi was intrigued.

Four years later, Kontsevoi founded the software company that would later be known as Intetics to develop software for the early internet.

Belarus did not have its own internet provider at the time, so Kontsevoi and his four partners used their single laptop to connect to a host in Germany and access the web.

"The internet company was established without the internet," Kontsevoi told the Kyiv Post.

Kontsevoi had already been a computer system designer before founding Intetics in January 1995, but only after the Soviet Union collapse did he come to believe he could run his own tech business.

At first, his company operated under the name Client-Server Programs. It was renamed Intetics in 2003, which is a combination of

Intetics

Year founded: **1995**
CEO, president and founder: **Boris Kontsevoi**
Number of employees: **700+**
Motto: **"Be one step ahead of the competition."**

What separates you from other companies? **A group of engineers established Intetics in Minsk, Belarus even before there was internet in the country.**

three words: Internet, Technology and Ethics.

More than two decades have passed since then, and Intetics is now a global software company that has over 700 employees operating from 11 offices in six different countries: the United States (Naples, Chicago and Wilmette), Germany (Dusseldorf), the United Kingdom (London), Belarus (Minsk), Poland (Krakow) and Ukraine (Kyiv, Kharkiv and Lviv).

Headquartered in Naples in southwest Florida, Intetics is now an American company with Belarusian roots. It develops software for different purposes.

Professional teams of specialists

at the company conduct interviews with clients to understand their needs and elaborate on their ideas. Though the company mainly focuses on software product development, it also provides other services like IT support, quality assurance and data processing.

"We don't just produce software — we come up with solutions for our customers," Irina Dubovik, the company's digital marketing director, told the Kyiv Post.

Intetics serves customers all over the world, but most of its developers are based in Eastern European countries like Ukraine. Kontsevoi said he sees a lot of "technical talent in Ukraine."

One of the company's most significant contributions is the creation of a digital map in Ukraine. The navigation system is used in more than half of the cars in the country, according to Kontsevoi, who is also a member of Forbes Tech Council.

The IT firm has also created and adopted a framework called Predictive Software Engineering that helps companies assess the performance of outsourcing companies and track development progress.

Serving wide range of industries from agriculture to education, Intetics has been recognized as one of the world's best outsourcing service providers by the International

Association of Outsourcing Professionals for 15 years in a row.

The company is one of the few businesses that have specialized in web development since the inter-

net's early days. Now Kontsevoi's goal is "to grow faster than the competition and move into top 10 outsourcing companies in eastern Europe." 🇺🇦

ON THE MOVE

Advertisement

Oleg Chayka joined Arzinger law firm's team as Partner and Head of Tax / Deals and International Taxation practice



Oleg Chayka

Oleg Chayka is a well-known expert in tax matters, including tax disputes, deals and international taxation. He is renowned in Ukraine and other jurisdictions and regularly featured in national and international rankings.

"I am very pleased to welcome Oleg Chayka to our team. The market acknowledges him as a great expert! The priority tasks and goals for Oleg include growth of the firm's market presence and visibility in business

deal taxation and implementation of new tax solutions. For many years, Arzinger has actively strengthened its position in the tax consulting and tax dispute market, and we have succeeded in becoming one of its unquestionable leaders. Oleg's expertise and experience will reinforce Arzinger's role as the leading player on the tax advisory market," said Timur Bondaryev, Managing and Founding Partner of Arzinger.

arzinger.ua

ARZINGER

Founded 30 years ago, ELEKS develops software for Fortune 500 companies

Editor's Note: This story is part of the Kyiv Post series of profiles of information technology companies that work in Ukraine. ELEKS is a sponsor of IT Fellowship, a program that supports the Kyiv Post's tech coverage.

Courtesy of ELEKS

By Liliane Bivings
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Despite being one of the top 100 global outsourcing companies in the world, ELEKS is run like a family business.

Indeed, the company began as a father-son company when its two founders, Oleksiy Skrypnyk and his son Oleksiy Skrypnyk Jr., took on the difficult task of creating software to help newly independent Ukraine's state-owned power companies regulate their electric systems after the fall of the Soviet Union. That system, DAKAR, is still on the market today.

Andriy Krupa, CEO of ELEKS, says this family-owned business company culture willing and capable to take on complex, present-day challenges is the lasting perception of the company, just on a different scale now.

Since its founding, ELEKS has grown to more than 1,600 employees worldwide, with 1,200 of them in Ukraine. Nearly all of ELEKS's business now takes place outside of Ukraine.

Today the company provides custom software development services, all the way from an idea through development and design to final product deployment and support. The company works with Fortune 500 companies and large enterprises across all sectors, helping them transform their businesses digitally.

The first Fortune 500 customer



Employees of tech firm ELEKS take part in a meeting. The company works with Fortune 500 companies and large enterprises across all sectors, helping them transform their businesses digitally.

ELEKS

Year founded: **1991**

CEO: **Andriy Krupa**

Number of employees: **1,600+**

Motto: **"Empowering best talent, continuous growth."**

What separates you from other companies? **"People-centric is probably what distinguishes us the most."**

came to them in 1998, right when Ukraine was experiencing a current

cy crisis and ELEKS was desperately in need of cash.

ELEKS programmers turned around a task in 24 hours for a stocks-trading company that hadn't been able to figure out the issue for six months. That company is now a part of The Bank of New York Mellon Corporation and is one of ELEKS longest and largest customers. ELEKS has a team of 100 employees working with them.

Krupa says that from there it was all organic growth. According to him, ELEKS always wanted to be a company that could do something complex,

but with people with whom you want to work and grow with and learn from.

"This people-centric idea is probably what distinguishes us most," says Krupa.

Krupa says their founder often uses their work with TAIT, a leading provider of live entertainment in the world, as an example of the company's ability to take on extremely difficult tasks, but always with a focus on people.

ELEKS helped TAIT create the Navigator Platform, a product line of both hardware and software control systems that manages thousands of

independent machinery elements of any show, combined in a single coherent system.

According to Jim Love, vice president of engineering and head of research and development at TAIT, the development of the Navigator Platform "has led us to be the leader in the industry because we have a platform no one else does."

And Eric Grossman, chief business officer of TAIT, says that out of all the companies they partner with, ELEKS is the one they trust the most. "In some ways, (ELEKS) is part of our business now. That's what happens after 15 years," Grossman said.

But Krupa notes this people-centric attitude extends not only to its customers, but to their employees as well.

Retaining talent is a big priority for ELEKS and the company does so through creating opportunities for growth of a more challenging nature and by enhancing the project portfolio within the company, says Krupa.

He says they are currently working on a corporate startup incubator at ELEKS to create possibilities for senior talent that have good ideas to bring these ideas to life.

Krupa also says the company wants to keep expanding upon career opportunities for their employees to develop their talents.

He says the company is moving to be more globally distributed, sending "ELEKS investors" to go work at Fortune 500 companies abroad, hoping they will return to Ukraine with new skills and expertise.

"If you take good care of people, they will take good care of your business," Krupa says. 🍷

Ciklum calls pandemic 'chief transformation officer,' helps famous brands adapt

By Natalia Datskevych
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Editor's Note: This story is part of the Kyiv Post series of profiles of information technology companies that work in Ukraine. Ciklum is a sponsor of IT Fellowship, a program that supports the Kyiv Post's tech coverage.

Inspired by famed car manufacturer Henry Ford and Prussian general Carl von Clausewitz, late Danish native Torben Majgaard founded a tech company in Ukraine in 2002.

Majgaard called it Ciklum and started with a small team of programmers working in a Kyiv apartment.

Two decades later, despite political and economic turbulence in Ukraine, Ciklum has become one of the largest IT companies in the country with offices also in Belarus, Spain, Britain, Poland and Pakistan.

"No matter what happens around us, IT is free," Torben told the Kyiv Post in an interview back in 2017.

Ciklum

Year founded: **2002**

CEO: **Kulraj Smagh**

Number of employees: **3,500+**

Motto: **"Inspiring businesses to bring innovative ideas to life."**

What separates you from other companies? **"Building hi-tech products and platforms in highly complex environments."**

As a software development and outsourcing company, Ciklum works in electronic commerce, cybersecurity, automation and data analysis.

In late 2015, George Soros's fund invested in Ciklum. He bought the major share of the company. Currently, Recognize Partners, a U.S.-based private investment firm, is the majority shareholder after it acquired a controlling stake last year.

Awarded with dozens of international IT prizes, the company has recently added another one from the Global Sourcing Association

for Ciklum building an online B2B marketplace for Germany's biggest retailer Metro in just nine months.

As a result, Metro now offers thousands of non-food products online — kitchen equipment, office supplies, tableware — for hotel, restaurant and catering industries under its own brand and products from around 300 vendors.

In another project, the Ciklum team helped Dacadoo, a Swiss-based company, to grow from a small startup into a global platform. The company developed software for them.

Dacadoo's app measures health



Courtesy of Ciklum

About 80% of Ciklum's tech specialists — software developers, designers, product managers, data scientists — work across the company's Ukrainian offices in Dnipro, Lviv, Vinnytsia, Odesa, Kharkiv and Kyiv.

from 0 to 1,000 by tracking activity, sleep, nutrition and bad habits like smoking and drinking alcohol and other parameters. It has 200 million clients in 40 countries.

Moreover, a few years ago, during the Cities Hackathon in the U.S. Santa Clara, Ciklum's engineers created a smart defibrillator, a device to treat people with sudden cardiac arrest. When someone starts to charge the device, it automatically calls 911 and tracks the closest ambulance.

According to Ciklum CFO Andriy Oksenyuk, nearly 80% of Ciklum's tech specialists — software developers, designers, product managers,

data scientists — work in Ukrainian offices in Kyiv, Dnipro, Lviv, Vinnytsia, Odesa, and Kharkiv.

"Ciklum is its people," said Oksenyuk. "We are religiously focused on high-level professionals, and we need the most talented of them."

The company has managed not only to save the team and projects amid the pandemic, it actually continues to hire people. In fact, Oksenyuk called the pandemic "chief transformation officer" as it increased the need for tech solutions amid booming e-commerce.

"We are currently looking for over 400 more talented people to enhance our team," he said. 🍷

Dubbed Ukraine's best IT employer, Intellias builds software for HERE Technologies, Siemens, Deloitte

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By Natalia Datskevych
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A mobile application that can build routes for car drivers, show real-time traffic information and provide voice navigation is a tool that today is deeply rooted in the lives of millions of people.

But not many know that hundreds of engineers from Ukraine have contributed to creating such services, including those who work for Ukraine-founded company Intellias.

Intellias has developed navigation software for Here Technologies, a global firm that provides mapping and location data. And it's just one of the fields in which the contributions of Ukrainians are seen.

Intellias, like many other local tech firms, works in urban logistics, fintech, real estate, energy efficiency, e-learning and health care.

In all these industries, we are "breathing life into great ideas with the power of digital technologies," said its CEO Vitaly Sedler. And it seems the company succeeds in it.

Today the company employs nearly 1,600 software developers and keeps growing fast, by an annual 40–50%, even during the pandemic. "We have 300 open vacancies. It's the company's record," Sedler said.

But nearly two decades ago, 25-year-old Sadler and his business partner Michael Puzrakov were two young techies who were only dreaming big. They founded Intellias in 2002 in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv. "We weren't afraid of anything, we were young," said Sedler.

Now the company has branches in five Ukrainian cities: Lviv, Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv and Ivano-Frankivsk. It also has offices in Poland, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Germany, and the United States.

Intellias
 Year founded: **2002**
 CEO: **Vitaly Sedler**
 Number of employees: **over 1,600**
 Motto: **"Engineering by people."**
 What separates you from other companies? **"The concept of being a deeply human-oriented company."**

In January this year, Intellias was named the best employer in the IT industry by Forbes Ukraine.

"We put many years into becoming a really good employer," Sedler said.

And it's not only about a comfortable office, coffee and cookies, it's even more about internal communication and "humane attitude," when the company can sacrifice extra profits to save a good team.

The Intellias CEO is proud that 60% of the company's employees are senior developers, twice the proportion of other IT companies in Ukraine, which means that the company has

a lot of skilled workers.

"Our business is made by people and for people," he said. "The processes will not always be perfect, there will always be glitches, but firstly we need to focus on the needs of employees and customers."

This is how "cool products" and "cool teams" are created, he added.

For example, Intellias engineers developed a bot, a special application, to help a transport company with hundreds of trucks reduce its costs. The app measures speed, location and other parameters of every

vehicle. As a result, it shows the driver which road and what speed is best to use to save the fuel.

"It saves tens of millions of hryvnias," said Sedler.

Nearly all Intellias clients are companies from Western Europe, the Middle East and the U.S., such as London-based Deloitte and German Siemens just to name a few.

In Ukraine, Intellias works with the country's largest mobile operator Kyivstar, which serves tens of millions of customers. The IT company helps it run its telecom services

smoothly and prevent them from collapsing.

In the next 4–5 years, the company plans to file for an initial public offering, most likely on the U.S. stock market.

But today the company's CEO is full of ideas and plans to keep hiring more engineers as he sees "excellent conditions, market development, plus many talents in Ukraine."

"Intellias will benefit from (hiring) and build a global company with roots in Ukraine," said Sedler. 🇺🇦



Nearly all clients of Ukrainian tech firm Intellias are companies from Western Europe, the Middle East and the United States, such as London-based Deloitte and Germany's Siemens just to name a few. In Ukraine, Intellias works with the country's largest mobile operator, Kyivstar, which serves tens of millions of customers.

Courtesy of Intellias

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Is Zelensky willing, able to tame Ukraine's oligarchs?

By Oleksiy Sorokin
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President Volodymyr Zelensky ordered the National Security and Defense Council to draft legislation to limit the powers of Ukrainian oligarchs on April 15.

For decades, oligarchs have used their economic might and political influence to bend governments to their will and win privileges. Now, in the president's words, the oligarchs must become law-abiding business people.

Zelensky made a similar promise during the 2019 campaign that got him elected president.

Yet, two years into his presidency, Ukrainian oligarchs wield tremendous power over the media, industry and politics.

And while Zelensky have taken some oligarchs down a peg, others still have free reign over key sectors of the economy.

Since early February, the Zelensky-led Security Council has been stripping possessions from pro-Kremlin politician Viktor Medvedchuk, who co-heads the 44-member Opposition Platform – For Life party. He was deprived of his propaganda-spewing media empire and his other vast business interests in Ukraine.

Across the aisle, ex-President Petro Poroshenko, worth \$1.6 billion, has also come under pressure. At one point, Poroshenko, the leader of the 27-member European Solidarity faction, had 27 criminal cases opened against him for corruption, abuse of office and even treason. Several investigations are ongoing.

The latest oligarch to fall out of favor with Zelensky is Ihor Kolomoisky, after the U.S. Department of Justice filed a civil forfeiture complaint accusing him of profiting from corruption and money laundering.

However, Ukrainian oligarchs who haven't overtly interfered with the president's agenda remain untouched.

Rinat Akhmetov, Ukraine's wealthiest man, has been successfully using

Matthew Kupfer



Billionaire oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky talks to journalists at the Yalta European Strategy conference in Kyiv on Sept. 13, 2019.

the state-owned railway monopolist Ukrzaliznytsia to transport iron ore and coal at below-market prices, costing the company billions.

Dmytro Firtash and Victor Pinchuk are rarely mentioned by top officials and the media. Firtash has monopolies in the nitrogen fertilizer sector, the titanium market and controls most regional gas companies. He also owes state-owned Naftogaz close to \$1 billion for gas supplies. Pinchuk is the king of pipe production.

The oligarchs' adaptability is not surprising.

Six Ukrainian oligarchs own over 65% of Ukraine's TV market and control over 150 lawmakers in parliament, making fighting them all at once an uneasy task.

"The problem has multiple layers – regulations, courts, law enforcement, executive authorities. One law can't perform a miracle," says Andriy Gerus, head of the

parliament's energy committee who represents Zelensky's 246-member Servant of the People faction.

"Yet, the fact that it was made public is already a big plus, because it is turning into a big nationwide discussion," says Gerus. "Now they will need to act on it."

King of coal and iron

The biggest oligarch in Ukraine has so far got no attention from Zelensky.

Akhmetov dominates several industries. His Metinvest controls over 50% of Ukraine's iron ore market and the oligarch's energy conglomerate DTEK extracts nearly 70% of Ukraine's coal. In both areas, he benefits from weak policies.

In Ukraine, the government regulates prices for freight transportation, while parliament sets prices for resource extraction. Both are alleged to be below the market rate, which benefits Akhmetov.

Today, rent for iron ore extraction in Ukraine is 12% of its cost price which is around \$20 per ton. Since 2019, iron ore's market value jumped from \$80 per ton to over \$178, yet the extraction rent remained the same.

Akhmetov also enjoys big discounts for transporting goods. Akhmetov pays \$4.73 per ton to move ore and coal across Ukraine. These rates don't even cover the rail operator's expenditures and are one of the reasons why Ukrzaliznytsia lost more than \$450 million in 2020.

"If they pay fewer taxes, have lower tariffs and rent, they gain excess profit which they then invest into media and politics to keep the prices low," says Gerus.

Ukrainian journalists attribute Akhmetov's good standing to his Ukraine TV channel, the most-watched in Ukraine, where Zelensky enjoys favorable reporting.

According to Bihus.Info news outlet, Akhmetov allegedly influences at least 30 lawmakers from Zelensky's Servant of the People party, based on how they vote.

The low-profile ones

Similarly, Firtash and Pinchuk have kept their empires since Zelensky's inauguration.

Firtash maintains a grip on Ukraine's titanium market and chemical production. He has a monopoly on nitrogen fertilizer and owns most regional gas companies.

The oligarch maintains political influence through his popular TV channel Inter and his ties with pro-Kremlin politicians in Ukraine, such as his business partner and Opposition Platform co-head, lawmaker Serhiy Lyovochkin.

In 2019, the Anti-Monopoly Committee of Ukraine ordered a break-up of Firtash's fertilizer monopoly. In December 2020, the court of appeals overturned the decision.

In December, the Anti-Monopoly

Committee fined Firtash's regional gas distribution companies Hr 380 million (\$14 million) for abusing their monopoly position.

However, nothing followed, and Firtash's political and economic influence is holding strong, despite him facing corruption charges in America. He has been fighting extradition on bribery charges and lives in exile in Austria.

Pinchuk has successfully dodged all the scandals. He rose to prominence with the help of his father-in-law, ex-President Leonid Kuchma in the late 1990s, and stayed afloat ever since.

As soon as Zelensky took office, Kuchma reprised his role as Ukraine's representative in the Minsk peace talks with Russia. His return was negotiated in Pinchuk's presence.

Pinchuk has been whitewashing his name with the help of the Pinchuk Art Center, Ukrainian breakfasts in Davos and the annual Yalta European Summit Conference.

Pinchuk's Interpipe was also one of the beneficiaries of the so-called "green metallurgy law" passed by Zelensky's Servant of the People party, which will provide lower electricity prices for steel plants that reduce carbon emissions once the bylaws are worked out.

Oligarchs out of luck

Not all oligarchs were as lucky. Pro-Kremlin politician Medvedchuk has been the biggest loser.

Under Poroshenko, he increased his political clout by spreading pro-Kremlin propaganda from his media outlets.

His world came crashing down on Feb. 2, when Zelensky sanctioned Medvedchuk's closest ally, lawmaker Taras Kozak, and closed his nationwide TV channels – NewsOne, Channel 112, and ZIK. With the stroke of a pen, Medvedchuk lost his 4% share of Ukraine's media market.

On Feb. 19, the NSDC imposed sanctions on Medvedchuk himself, freezing his assets, restricting his financial operations for five years and nullifying all his permits and licenses.

Soon, the High Anti-Corruption Court ordered the seizure of an oil product pipeline that was controlled by Medvedchuk, while his gas station chain was searched by the Security Service, accused of a "major" tax evasion scheme.

Meanwhile, Poroshenko, Zelensky's biggest rival, learned to live with the constant legal pressure, using it to mobilize his electoral base.

From the campaign trail, Zelensky made it clear that he would go after Poroshenko for alleged corruption and abuse of office. When Zelensky took office, cases against Poroshenko began piling up.

In June 2020, Poroshenko was finally charged for abuse of office. The case revolved around the allegation of unlawfully appointing a state official. However, the case

Volodymyr Petrov



A drone picture shows an aerial view of the DTEK tower and the N°1 Kyivenerho heat supply station in Kyiv on Dec. 7, 2020. DTEK is owned by Rinat Akhmetov, the wealthiest oligarch in Ukraine, and produces the lion's share of Ukraine's coal-fired electricity.

Ukraine has not put much of a dent in oligarchy – at least not yet

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has stalled and Poroshenko remains free.

Love-hate Kolomoisky

Zelensky's relationship with Kolomoisky was seen as the biggest weather vane for how the president will handle oligarchs.

In 2019, Kolomoisky's 1+1 media empire played a big role in Zelensky's election.

After Zelensky's victory, Kolomoisky maintained good relations with the president. More than 30 lawmakers in Zelensky's newly established Servant of the People party were associates or former employees of Kolomoisky.

He also backed a new party, For the Future, which now includes 22 lawmakers.

Kolomoisky's first year under Zelensky went well. Kolomoisky gained control of Centrenergy, a state-owned energy company, and preserved his control over Ukrnafta, a state-owned petroleum producer where he owns a big minority stake.

In 2020, Ukrnafta was supposed to get a fresh start with a new independent director. Kolomoisky was able to keep a favorable CEO in place.

The case of Centrenergy, which covers 15% of Ukraine's energy production, is the best example of the oligarch's influence. After Zelensky took office in 2019, Kolomoisky began milking the company by selling it overpriced gas and receiving cheap electricity in return. According to Bihus.info, this has made him \$13 million in 2021 alone.

He even helped sack the pro-reform government of Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk, which tried to pry the oligarch's grip from Centrenergy.

But recently, Kolomoisky's fortune has turned for the worse in the fight over PrivatBank, which was taken away from the oligarch and nationalized in 2016. Ukrainian prosecutors allege that Kolomoisky used insider lending to fleece the bank of \$5.5 billion, forcing nationalization and a massive taxpayer bailout.

In December, the U.S. moved to seize the oligarch's stateside properties and all but accused him of money laundering. On March 5, Kolomoisky and his family were banned from entering the U.S.

Ukraine got the hint, the State Property Fund changed Centrenergy's leadership, while Kolomoisky's associates in Ukraine were charged with embezzlement. In March, top former PrivatBank officials were charged with embezzling \$315 million and one was even pulled out of a plane when he tried to flee Ukraine.

Anti-oligarch bill

Zelensky's anti-oligarch bill is unlikely to succeed in parliament.

Zelensky's Servant of the People faction in parliament officially controls the majority of seats. In reality, it hasn't been able to pass any

substantial piece of legislation alone since early 2020.

Servant of the People lawmakers linked to Kolomoisky and Akhmetov have successfully lobbied their masters' interests in parliament.

"Sometimes we see ad hoc alliances between the oligarchs," says Agiya Zagrebelska, founder of the Antitrust League and an ex-commissioner of the Anti-Monopoly Committee. "A bill that would have any kind of provisions that would endanger the oligarchs' influence has a very low chance of passing."

The courts have also served the oligarchs well.

In early April, the Special Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office closed a case concerning the Rotterdam+ coal pricing scheme that cost Ukrainians Hr 39 billion (\$1.4 billion), according to anti-corruption detectives.

"The problem is that these decisions later go to court, which is a whole separate problem," says Gerus.

Political will?

However, the president recently showed that he sometimes doesn't need parliament or courts to advance his agenda.

Zelensky can force Ukrainian oligarchs to follow the law without passing additional ones. Ukraine's Anti-Monopoly Committee and National Energy and Utilities Regulatory Commission can be his tools.

"Despite the fact that it looks hard at first glance, it's not," says Zagrebelska, adding that the state has all it needs to tame the oligarchs.

In March 2021, the Regulatory Commission imposed the maximum possible fine of Hr 5.1 million (\$182,000) against three DTEK plants for deliberately cutting coal supplies during the coldest weeks of winter.

Ukraine's Finance Minister Serhiy Marchenko has also been pushing for tax code reform, asking the parliament to increase the rent for iron ore extraction.

According to the Finance Ministry's proposal the iron ore extraction rent would be calculated not as a percentage of the cost price but the resource's actual cost on the market. This would force Akhmetov's Metinvest to pay \$22 per ton instead of the current \$3.

"If we bring taxes and tariffs to European standards then we can control their influence," says Gerus. "We need fair competition and here, the role of the Anti-Monopoly Committee is crucial."

On March 30, the Anti-Monopoly Committee completed a five-year investigation into collusion by fuel companies associated with Kolomoisky and imposed a \$170 million fine.

"Today, under Ukrainian law, there are more than enough tools for the government to fight oligarchic influence," says Zagrebelska. "The question is simply who and how uses them." ❁

Anti-corruption court still has thin record of accomplishments

page 3 —>

The anti-corruption court has also dragged its feet investigating false information in assets declarations, according to Andriy Savin, a lawyer at the Anti-Corruption Action Center. As a result, the court missed the deadlines set by the statute of limitations in many such cases.

The problem was exacerbated in October 2020, when the discredited Constitutional Court issued a ruling that effectively destroyed Ukraine's entire asset declaration system for state officials. All charges of lying in asset declarations were dropped as a result, letting everyone off the hook.

Selection

Some of the problems that the court faces may stem from the way its judges were selected.

A panel of foreign experts vetoed 40 candidates for the anti-corruption court who did not meet ethics and integrity standards. This vetting was viewed as progress compared to how conventional courts are chosen.

However, according to anti-corruption watchdogs, seven candidates had previously failed to meet integrity standards but were appointed nonetheless.

Tytych also believes that the assessment methodology for candidates was arbitrary and that the selection of judges was manipulated and rigged by the High Qualification Commission, a judicial governing body that denied the accusations of wrongdoing.

He says that foreign experts should have played a stronger role and selected the best possible can-



Ex-lawmaker Maksym Mykytas, who has been charged with embezzlement, listens to judges of the High Anti-Corruption Court on Oct. 22, 2019. Mykytas has testified that he bribed the court to cut his bail, according to the Kyiv Post's sources.

didates based on experience and ethics instead of just vetoing the worst ones, Tytych said.

Some of the judges who got into the court turned out to be "dark horses" – candidates about whom little is known and whose integrity could not be assessed, Shabunin said.

Obstruction

The High Anti-Corruption Court has also faced obstruction from the Prosecutor General's Office. Despite its exclusive jurisdiction in graft cases, prosecutors have whitewashed influential suspects by transferring them to corrupt conventional courts.

That's what happened in the bribery case against Zelensky's deputy chief of staff, Tatarov.

In December, Kyiv's Pechersk Court ordered Prosecutor General

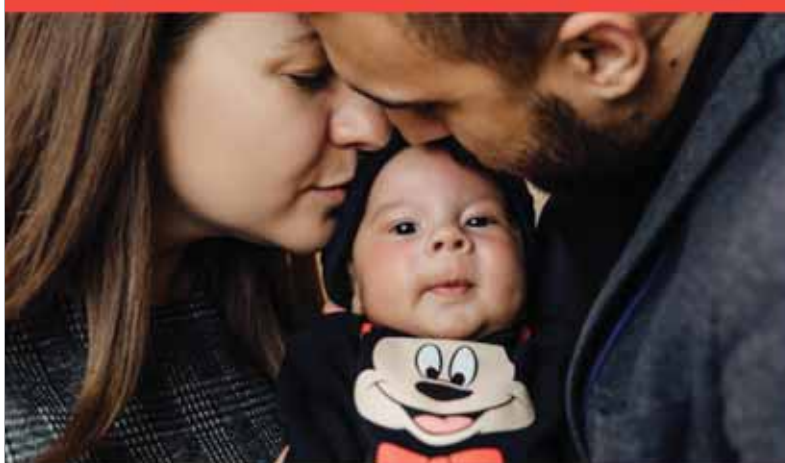
Venedikova to take the case away from the NABU. Venedikova's deputy, Oleksiy Symonenko, used the Pechersk Court ruling as a pretext to give the case to the more politically pliant Security Service of Ukraine.

The NABU believes the transfer of the Tatarov case to be unlawful.

Under Ukrainian law, the Tatarov bribery case falls squarely into NABU's jurisdiction. NABU cases cannot be considered by other law enforcement agencies. Jurisdictional disputes can only be considered by the High Anti-Corruption Court, and the Pechersk Court has no authority to hear them.

In February, the case was eventually buried. Kyiv's Shevchenkivskiy District Court refused to extend the Tatarov investigation, and prosecutors failed to send it to trial by the deadline. ❁

Ukrainian family needs \$2.3 million to treat newborn's rare disorder



The family of Maria Svichynska and Vitaliy Svichynskiy hold their newborn son Dmytro, who was diagnosed with a rare genetic disorder Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA). The parents are raising \$2.3 million for their son's disease treatment with Zolgensma, known as the world's most expensive drug.

The family of Vitaliy Svichynskiy and Maria Svichynska are raising \$2.3 million to save their four months old son Dmytro. The baby boy was diagnosed with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) Type 1, the most severe type of the rare genetic disorder that gets worse over time without treatment often leading to death.

Dmytro needs a single dose of Zolgensma, the world's most expensive drug, which costs \$2.3 million. For the treatment to be effective, the boy needs to get treatment before he turns six months. The family has so far raised over Hr 23 million (\$844,941), or 36% of the needed money.

How to donate to Dmytro's treatment:

Gofundme



PayPal



Kyiv Post

Meet the oligarchs



Rinat Akhmetov
Net worth: \$7.6 billion*
Main areas: Steel, coal, energy, media, real estate, agriculture
Companies: SCM

(holding company), DTEK, Metinvest, Media Group Ukraine, Esta Holding, UMG Investments, PUMB bank.

Key facts: Akhmetov is believed to have many lawmakers in his pocket. DTEK is being investigated for the Rotterdam+ scheme that inflated coal prices. Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal is a former DTEK manager.



Victor Pinchuk
Net worth: \$2.5 billion

Main areas: Steel, steel pipes, real estate, media.

Companies: Interpipe, StarLightMedia Group, Eastone Group (holding company).

Key facts: Pinchuk is the son-in-law of ex-President Leonid Kuchma, whom Zelensky appointed to negotiate with Russia in 2019–2020. Pinchuk once advocated giving up Crimea in exchange for peace in eastern Ukraine. He controls the biggest share of Ukrainian TV.



Kostyantyn Zhevago

Net worth: \$2.4 billion

Main areas: iron ore, mining, banking, media.

Companies: Ferrexpo, Arterium, Espresso TV channel.

Key facts: Zhevago is a fugitive steel tycoon. He is wanted in Ukraine for allegedly vacuuming \$178 million through insider trading from his Finance and Credit Bank. The bank filed for bankruptcy in 2015.



Ihor Kolomoisky & Hennadiy Bogolyubov

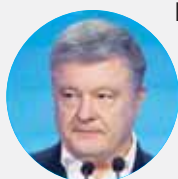
Net worth: \$1.8 billion & \$1.7 billion

Main areas: oil and gas, metals, media, real estate.

Companies: Ukrnafta (42%), Ukratnafta, Nikopol Ferroalloy Plant, Dniprozot, Dneprospetsstal, 1+1

Media Group.
Key facts: Kolomoisky and Bogolyubov have had a shared business since the early 1990s. Kolomoisky is under the U.S. sanctions for corruption; he and his family are banned from entering the U.S. Kolomoisky has open court battles in the U.K., Ukraine, Israel and the U.S. He is alleged to have stolen \$5.5 billion from PrivatBank, which he used to own.

Key facts: Firtash is fighting an American extradition warrant in Austria. According to American prosecutors, Firtash gave \$18.5 million in bribes to Indian officials to get a lucrative mining deal to sell titanium to Boeing. He owns most regional gas companies in Ukraine.



Petro Poroshenko

Net worth: \$1.6 billion

Main areas: confectionery, agriculture, banking, media.

Companies: Roshen, Ukrprominvest Agro, International Investment Bank, Channel 5, Pryamii Channel.

Key facts: Poroshenko has been a big political player since 1998, the president of Ukraine in 2014–2019 and a lawmaker ever since. He is a harsh critic of Zelensky. His closest circle was often implicated in corruption scandals during his presidency, including in defense procurement, and he's been investigated multiple times.



Vadym Novinsky

Net worth: \$1.4 billion

Main areas: Steel, energy, mining, real estate.

Companies: Smart Holding, Metinvest, Enwell Energy.

Key facts: Novinsky is the main business partner of Akhmetov. He's an independent pro-Russian lawmaker and an active supporter and sponsor of the Russian Orthodox Church.



Dmytro Firtash

Net worth: \$370 million

Main areas: fertilizers, chemical production, gas, media

Companies: Group DF (holding company), Ostchem, Regional Gas Company, Inter Media Group

Key facts: Kosiuk is Ukraine's poultry king. He was President Poroshenko's adviser at large. Under Poroshenko, Kosiuk's MHP was accused of receiving government subsidies. According to SOMO, while receiving subsidies, the company used offshore activities to avoid taxes.



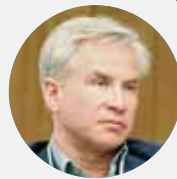
Viktor Medvedchuk**

Net worth: Unknown

Main areas: oil & gas, construction, diesel, media.

Companies: Glusco, Prikarpatzahidtrans, Ug

Energoprojekt, NZZP Engineering
Key facts: Zelensky sanctioned Medvedchuk and his allies in February, shutting down his three nationwide TV channels and his other businesses. The High Anti-Corruption Court ordered the seizure of a pipeline that's allegedly Medvedchuk's. The lawmaker is a personal friend of Russian President Vladimir Putin. He keeps a shadow business empire in Russia.



Yuriy Kosiuk

Net worth: \$1.1 billion

Main areas: agriculture, food
Companies: Mironivsky Hliboproduct (MHP)

Key facts: Kosiuk is Ukraine's poultry king. He was President Poroshenko's adviser at large. Under Poroshenko, Kosiuk's MHP was accused of receiving government subsidies. According to SOMO, while receiving subsidies, the company used offshore activities to avoid taxes.



Oleksandr Yaroslavsky

Net worth: \$725 million

Main areas: construction, banking,

metallurgy.
Companies: DCH Group (holding company), Kharkiv Tractor Plant, Bank Credit Dnipro,
Key facts: Partnering with Chinese investors, Yaroslavsky tried to acquire Motor Sich aircraft engine manufacturer. He failed; the manufacturer will be nationalized. Yaroslavsky maintains a strong grip over Ukraine's second largest city, Kharkiv, through businesses and real estate.



Oleg Bakhmatyuk

Net worth: Unknown.

Main areas: agriculture, banking.

Companies: UkrLandFarming.

Key facts: Bakhmatyuk is accused of embezzling a \$49-million stabilization loan that the government gave to his VAB Bank in 2014. The Prosecutor General's Office has refused to authorize Ukraine's extradition request since June. Bakhmatyuk resides in Vienna.

*Net worth estimations come from Forbes global rating of billionaires. In March 2021, Forbes updated the rating. The net worth of Ukraine's top oligarchs has grown considerably, mostly due to the growing iron ore prices. Akhmetov's estimated net worth went from \$2.8 billion in 2020 to \$7.6 billion in 2021. Net worth estimations from Forbes Ukraine 2020 rating are used for Kosiuk, Firtash and Yaroslavsky.
 ** After Security Council sanctioned Medvedchuk and his businesses in February, his Ukrainian assets have been frozen. His media empire was shut down.



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Oligarchic remote control of Ukraine



Agiya Zagrebelska

On April 15, at the meeting of the National Security and Defense Council, President Volodymyr Zelensky announced the development of the law that would define the status of an oligarch and turn them into businessmen. This is a risky legal game with guaranteed harmful consequences and populist motives.

At the same time, the Anti-Monopoly Committee of Ukraine (AMCU) can reduce the influence of oligarchs on the government and economy without any legislative spam. For instance, it is sufficient to stop the anti-competitive practices of large media groups, through which the oligarchs run the country. There is such an opportunity now — there are unprecedented proceedings initiated by one of the cable providers and its consumers against the oligarchic media quartet.

Will the AMCU dare stop the abuse of monopoly position by large media groups, thus making de-oligarchization processes irreversible?

Silver bullet for Zelensky

These days, the media groups of Rinat Akhmetov (Media Group Ukraine), Ihor Kolomoisky (1+1 Media), Victor Pinchuk (StarLightMedia), and Dmytro Firtash (Inter Media Group) simultaneously, prematurely and without giving reasons began to withdraw their TV channels from retransmission of one of the largest providers in the country. Considering that common ratings of the media oligopoly reach 70%, most consumers of this provider will change the provider already in May, and it will have to leave the market. In some eastern regions of the country, it is the only provider, thus residents may be left without Ukrainian TV content at all.

In fact, it is a punishment from the media oligopoly for the provider's refusal to participate in a cartel conspiracy over the price and filling of TV packages for viewers.

This is a textbook abuse of a collective monopoly position, and the provider for the first time dared to go the legal way and filed an application to the Anti-Monopoly Committee.

For Zelensky, these proceedings could be the silver bullet against the oligarchs. If the AMCU does its job, the influence of oligarchic TV channels on Ukrainian voters will quickly and significantly decline, along with the need for politicians to 'thank' the oligarchs for appearing on their TV channels.

Oligarchs' TV consensus

If there are periodic competitions between oligarchs for money and influence in other segments, TV consensus and concerted behavior remain on the media market for a long time. This confirms that it is more correct and easier to break the vicious circle of oligarchs-TV channels-voters-politicians-privileges-oligarchs, where the TV channels are the weakest link.

The advertising business model and economic relations of the oligarchic TV quartet with the provid-

ers are synchronized and identical. For example, none of the providers can get the right to retransmit the channels of one, two, or three media groups — it must buy from all four or from no one. The same applies to the choice of TV channels — the provider either buys everything from the menu of all media groups or does not receive any. That is, in addition to the flagship 1+1, ICTV, TRK Ukraina, dozens of unpopular and uninteresting channels, that the provider is forced to buy and impose on viewers are included in the package.

The media groups also put pressure on providers in order to redistribute funds in the TV market (to reduce the profitability of unrelated providers and TV channels, and to increase their own), withdraw their providers, and occupy dominant positions.

A similar synchronization takes place in the advertising market, where "punitive damages" are applied to advertisers, who buy airtime not on media channels of the media oligopoly, in order to maximize the profits of the TV quartet and to minimize the income of others.

The purpose of such synchronous behavior of the media oligopoly is, on the one hand, to achieve formal compliance with the requirements for break-even and transparency of financing, on the other hand, to leave other TV channels without legal income in two single segments where they can receive them (advertising and provider).

Such coordinated behavior provides the media oligopoly with preserving and strengthening market power on television. For decades, they occupy absolutely positions on views — a total rating of about 70%. However, new players, especially foreign ones, with their understanding of freedom of speech and competition, have not come to the Ukrainian media market during this time.

Also, the control over the TV market (market power) is the country's remote control in the oligarchs' hands.

What should the AMCU do on the TV market to turn oligarchs into businessmen?

For starters, launch an investigation initiated by the provider before the outflow of the customers and the company's exit from the market. For another, make a preliminary decision or recommendations on four media groups in which to condemn the described anti-competitive practices and to emphasize the need to refrain from their continued application.

As a result of the investigation, to apply lawful, fair, and severe punishment, and take comprehensive measures in order to stop anti-monopoly law infringements.

Even the implementation of only the first or second paragraphs on the AMCU's part will launch inevitable de-oligarchic processes on the TV market. Providers and small TV channels, having received from the AMCU a signal about the end of the immunity era, will begin to defend their rights, borders, and income. At the same time, oligarchic media groups under the AMCU's investi-



President Volodymyr Zelensky sits down for an interview with the journalists of four Ukrainian oligarch-owned television channels. The interview aired on Oct. 22, 2020.

Press Service of the President of Ukraine

gation will be limited in their market management capabilities, which means they will lose the oligopoly market power.

There are three more years before the next election. I believe that if the Anti-Monopoly Committee protects against monopoly abuses of oligarchic media groups, small TV channels will have time to grow up; and the providers, freed from the

pressure of the media oligopoly, will gladly help them in this.

Of course, the attention of the top public officials to the non-oligarchic media would significantly affect the ratings of the last ones. After all, only the oligarchic TV quartet was admitted to the last press conference of Zelensky. The president and prime minister consecrated their presence exclusively by their presence during

the year. This greatly affects the maintenance and strengthening of the media oligopoly influence and with it the oligarchs.

Agiya Zagrebelska is the founder of the Antitrust League and was a state commissioner of the Anti-Monopoly Committee of Ukraine from 2015–2019. She is a prominent expert on oligarchic and monopoly markets in Ukraine.

TOP 10 KYIV POST exclusives online this week

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3. Will Ukraine be able to survive Russian attack?

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5. Timothy Ash: Insane weekend around Russia

6. Too little, very late

7. Alexei Bayer: Containing Putin

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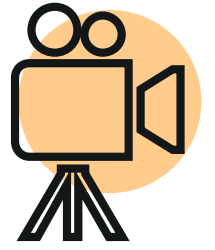
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Lifestyle

Watch the 93rd Academy Awards, or the Oscars, on April 26 at 1:30 a.m. Kyiv time. The official local broadcast will air on the Ukraine TV channel with commentary in Ukrainian.



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Getting about Kyiv with electric scooters, bikes



Volodymyr Petrov

People ride electric scooters on Khreshchatyk Street in downtown Kyiv on April 10, 2021. As the Ukrainian capital remains under lockdown with public transport available to only a small number of people, many vehicle sharing services offer electric scooters and bikes as an alternative.

By **Yana Mokhonchuk**
mokhonchuk@kyivpost.com

When the spring lockdown in Kyiv restricted public transport to a small fraction of people, demand for bike and electric scooter rentals has gone through the roof.

Unlike taxis, bikes and scooters are environmentally friendly, relatively cheap and aren't hindered by heavy traffic, which only intensified from the recent restrictions.

With increased demand, the number of transport sharing services has grown as well. Hundreds of bikes and scooters are now scattered across Kyiv downtown, available to grab.

The Kyiv Post put together the services providing alternative vehicles in the Ukrainian capital.

Scooters

Estonian taxi and food delivery ser-

vice **Bolt** was the first company to launch scooter sharing in Kyiv, and it still remains among the leaders. With some of the lowest rates, Bolt's green-hued scooters are light, fast and easy to drive. The service also covers the biggest area, in which vehicles can be used, including central Kyiv and parts of districts as remote as Holiivskyi, Obolonskyi, Sviatoshynskyi and even Darnytskyi on the left bank of the Dnipro River. To rent the company's scooter, a user needs to update the Bolt app to the latest version, switch to the scooter mode, find an available vehicle on the map, scan a QR code on a scooter and pay with a card through the app.

The cost of unlocking a scooter is Hr 9 (\$0.32), and the rate is Hr 1.9 (\$0.07) per minute. Renting a vehicle for a whole day costs Hr 490 (\$15).

No less light and convenient are electric scooters from **Scroll**, a rent-

al service from Georgia that says it cooperates with the international scooter rental company Bird headquartered in California. The service covers the central Kyiv area including Shevchenkivskyi, Pecherskyi and Podilskyi districts. To find available Scroll vehicles, a user needs to install the Bird app and check the map. From there, the procedure is the same, involving QR codes and card payment.

Scroll charges Hr 10 (\$0.36) to unlock a vehicle and Hr 4 (\$0.14) per minute after that. The required minimum tariff, however, is Hr 50 (\$2), meaning that the users will be charged Hr 50 even if they accrue less.

Another popular sharing service is **Kiwi**. Though heavier and a bit harder to navigate, Kiwi scooters have the cheapest rates in the city. The company charges Hr 8 (\$0.29) to unlock a vehicle and Hr 1.9 (\$0.07) per min-

ute. However, Kiwi requires topping up the app wallet with at least Hr 200 (\$7) to start. The service covers downtown Kyiv and requires a Kiwi app to use.

Bikes

Bikenow put 2,000 new bicycles all around the capital this spring. The service works through the Bikenow mobile app with parking vehicles available in all the districts across the city. After registration, a user finds a nearby bike using the map and starts the trip by scanning a QR code on the bike. The vehicles have to be returned to one of the required locations on the map. A 30-minute trip costs Hr 20 (\$0.7). There are also attractive subscription offers: The monthly one costs Hr 399 (\$14) and the seasonal, three-month one is Hr 1,499 (\$54). Both subscriptions make

City Life

With **Daria Shulzhenko**
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Where to buy traditional Easter bread in Kyiv

The most important holiday for Orthodox Christians, Easter, is just around the corner.

Most Ukrainians, Orthodox and Greek Catholic Christians, will celebrate Easter on May 2, nearly a month after the celebration of Protestants and Roman Catholics. It will be followed by two official holidays on May 3–4, extending the weekend to four days.

For the second year in a row, however, Easter is overshadowed by the coronavirus pandemic.

Eleven of Ukraine's 24 oblasts and Kyiv are now under strict lockdown. The Ukrainian capital will remain under restrictions at least through April 30.

Although churches are allowed to hold the traditional Easter Vigils, the authorities do not recommend attending these mass gatherings. As an alternative, some Ukrainian churches will stream their services online.

Yet the pandemic doesn't disrupt one of the main Easter traditions: Treating oneself to paska, a traditional Ukrainian Easter bread topped with icing, raisins, nuts and candied fruits.

The capital's bakeries and cafes are preparing a dizzying array of Easter bread options for all tastes. The Kyiv Post has picked out some of the most enticing offers.

Milk Bar

This Easter, the desert-focused cafe Milk Bar offers three types of paska.

Its traditional paska is made with raisins, cranberries, candied oranges and almonds. Among the unusual options is "tres leches," Easter bread with a milky flavor. The "tres leches" paska also has a creamy filling inside, made of condensed milk, mascarpone cheese and cream.

Victoria's Secret is another offbeat offer. This paska is a variation of one of Milk Bar's best-selling cakes of the same name. It also has a creamy filling of mascarpone cheese, raspberry puree and whipped cream. Just like the popular cake, the paska is garnished with pink icing and fresh strawberries on top.

Milk Bar plans to sell paskas on April 23 – May 3, asking customers to place orders no later than two days before the needed date.

Classic paska – Hr 345, tres leches paska – Hr 424, Victoria's Secret paska – Hr 565. Takeout from Kyiv

City Life

Paska for all tastes from local bakeries, cafes

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Food Market (8 Moskovska St.), TsUM (38 Khreshchatyk St.), Milk Bar (16 Shota Rustaveli St.) Delivery in Kyiv is Hr 70. Order at www.milkbar.com.ua/easter.

The Cake

For several years in a row, Kyiv's The Cake cafe has offered an impressive choice of fancy Easter bread.

Appetizing paska topped with the Pavlova cake – the meringue-like cake filled with plenty of whipped cream and raspberries – is one of the options. Inside, this paska is filled with sweet raspberry filling.

For caramel lovers, The Cake makes a paska with luscious salted caramel filling, covered with icing and caramel popcorn. Another option is paska with poppy seeds, nuts, raisins and passion fruit filling.

The most unusual option is, however, the so-called "Secret Taste" paska: The taste of this Easter bread remains a secret to those who order it until the first bite, the cafe says.

All paskas by The Cake are available in two sizes. The cafe also offers glazed Easter eggs filled with vanilla, chocolate and caramel mousse. The Cafe will deliver its paskas on April 26 – May 3. Orders should be placed in advance.

Secret taste paska – Hr 350–600, all other paskas – Hr 300–500, chocolate eggs set – Hr 210. 5 Velyka Vasylkivska St. Delivery in Kyiv is Hr 100. Free delivery for orders over Hr 2,000. Order at www.theeaster.choice.app.

Zigzag

Kyiv restaurant Zigzag has two types of Easter bread on the menu.

Apart from the traditional paska with candied fruits, Zigzag also offers an alternative made with cottage cheese and chocolate. The restaurant's paskas impress visually, coming covered with white or pink icing and topped with flowers, dried fruits and nuts.

For those who want to bake their own traditional Easter bread this year, Zigzag sells its fresh paska dough for Hr 250. The restaurant has also prepared sets for vegetarian and regular Easter meals that include a paska, a variety of savory foods and a bottle of wine.

Orders should be placed until April 30. They will be delivered on May 1–2.

Paska – Hr 365, Easter set – Hr 1,480–1,670. Takeout from 13 Reitarska St. Taxi delivery available. Order by +38068 385 6551.

Good Bread From Good People

Good Bread From Good People is the first bakery in Ukraine that employs people with mental disabilities.



This Easter, Kyiv restaurant Zigzag offers two types of traditional Ukrainian Easter bread, or paska. All of them are covered with white or pink icing and garnished with flowers, dried fruits and nuts.

The bakery offers three types of paska. Almond paska is filled with dried apricots and lemon zest, covered with icing, almond flakes and colorful meringue. Orange-flavored paska is made with raisins, cranberries, candied fruit, and garnished with icing and slices of dried oranges. Lavender-flavored paska comes with orange zest, purple icing and meringue.

The bakery also offers to do good by paying for paskas that will be given out to homeless people in Kyiv. The price for charitable paska is Hr 400. The bakery aims to raise money for 400 paskas this year and deliver them to the homeless on May 1.

Paska – Hr 500–650. 19 Kovalskiy Ln. Delivery in Kyiv is Hr 90, free for orders over Hr 1,000. Order at www.goodbread.com.ua.

March & Co

March & Co is another Kyiv bakery that offers an opportunity to help others this Easter. For every paska they sell, March & Co will bake another one for free and donate it to the Starenki (Seniors) charitable foundation that takes care of retirees in need. In 2020, the bakery donated 230 paskas to Starenki. It hopes to bake more this year.

March & Co offers a wreath-shaped paska in several variations. One comes with milky nut filling, dried cherries and cranberries, adorned with marshmallow glaze and crispy meringue. Another one has the same filling but is decorated with salted

caramel, nuts and dried fruits. An alternative choice is Italian sweet bread panettone made with almond crust, raisins and dried pears.

The customers of March & Co can choose to decorate their paska by themselves at home. The paska will be delivered plain but with material for garnishing on the side: gingerbread cookies and colorful glazing. Orders should be placed until April 26.

Paska – Hr 450, panettone – Hr 380–520. 41 Viacheslava Chornovolova St. Delivery in Kyiv is Hr 80 for orders over Hr 500. Delivery by Nova Poshta available. Order at www.march-and-co.com/easter.

Bassano Dolcetekka

The Bassano Dolcetekka cafe sells some of the most unusual paskas, perfect for cheese lovers, made with ricotta, fresh orange zest, candied fruits and nuts.

Apart from that, their menu features traditional paska with candied fruits and an Easter bread with salted caramel and peanuts. Another option here is paska topped with icing, chocolate eggs and gingerbread cookies. In addition to paskas, Bassano has a wide choice of Easter eggs made of the finest Belgian chocolate.

Paska – Hr 275–585. 100 Velyka Vasylkivska St. 8/14 Velyka Zhytomyrska St. Taxi delivery. Order at +38044 237 7991.

100 Years Ahead

This restaurant says it uses a special

recipe that makes its paskas very soft.

Serving traditional Ukrainian cuisine with a twist, 100 Years Ahead offers two types of Easter bread. One is made with dried cranberries infused with cognac, topped with meringue and wheat ears. It is available in two sizes.

Another option is the offbeat paska with matrynyka, Ukrainian seasoning similar to oregano that gives a fresh flavor. With creamy white chocolate inside, this paska is covered with snow-white meringue.

The restaurant also offers Easter meals that include various dishes in addition to a paska.

Paska – Hr 250–400. Easter set – Hr 1,050–1,200. 4 Volodymyrska St. Delivery by Nova Poshta. Order at www.100orokiv.com.ua/easter-kiev.

The Rawlands

Those on a vegan diet can try paskas from The Rawlands cafe.

It makes two types of gluten-free paskas, both made of cashew nuts, coconut and cocoa butter. One is a chocolate paska filled with cherries and adorned with chocolate and freeze-dried strawberries and raspberries. The other is an exotic vanilla paska with passion fruit and mango, which comes garnished with fresh passion fruit and berries.

Paska – Hr 750. 16V Yasnohirska St. Free delivery for orders over Hr 700 on Kyiv's right bank and for orders over Hr 1,000 on the left bank. Delivery by taxi available. Order at www.therawlands.com/shop/easter.

Madame Josy

Madame Josy cafe blends Ukrainian and French traditions in its Easter bread recipe.

The cafe's French brioche paska has a soft texture and a sweet buttery flavor. It is baked with dried cranberries and cherries, homemade candied oranges and lemon zest. It comes covered with icing and topped off with freeze-dried raspberries, chopped pistachios and a pink bird-shaped gingerbread cookie.

Madame Josy also offers a "paska for kids," which is the smaller version of the French brioche one. It is adorned with meringue, slices of dried oranges and a yellow bird-shaped gingerbread cookie. The cafe also sells unusual Easter eggs covered with bright-colored chocolate and filled with brownie or pistachio sponge cake.

Orders should be placed as early as possible and will be delivered on April 29.

French brioche paska – Hr 425, kids' paska – Hr 149, chocolate eggs set – Hr 249. 4A Borysa Hrinchenka St. Delivery within 20 kilometers from the restaurant is free. Delivery further in Kyiv is Hr 50–250. Order at www.madamejosy.com/happy.

Alternative vehicles for recreation and transportation

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the first 30 minutes of each trip free and charge Hr 20 for every next 30 minutes.

Ukrainian service **Veliki.ua** offers both bicycles and electric scooters. Its range includes bikes suitable for children or teenagers, mountain bikes and city bikes in different sizes. Veliki has seven bicycle stations in Kyiv at the VDNH exhibition center, Pyrohiv outdoor museum, Pozniaki and Beresteiska metro stations and elsewhere. The company also offers vehicles at the Mezhyhirya national park outside of Kyiv. The price depends on the type of bike and starts at Hr 100 (\$4) per hour. A customer also has to leave a deposit of at least Hr 6,000 (\$214) or Hr 250–500 and an ID. Veliki's price for electric scooter rental starts at Hr 100 (\$4) for 15 minutes.

Another bike rental, **Velokratia**, aside from regular bicycles, offers bikes built for two and four people. Their price starts at Hr 100 (\$4) per hour and Hr 400 (\$14) per day. Mountain and city bikes are available for rent for five days for Hr 550 (\$20). Velokratia has six rental locations in Kyiv, all near the popular spots for outdoor recreation. They are VDNH, Livoberezhna and Druzhby Narodiv metro stations, Mezhyhirya, Feofaniya Park and Pyrohiv museum. Renting vehicles requires customers to leave a deposit of at least Hr 500 (\$18), as well as an identity document. Electric scooters are also available and cost Hr 250 (\$9) per hour.

Those who want to cycle across the picturesque 120-hectare Holosiivskiy Park should check **Bikemotive**. The company offers various bikes, charging Hr 100 (\$4) for the first hour of rental. Every next hour is Hr 50 (\$2), while a whole day is Hr 350 (\$13). Customers will have to leave a deposit of at least Hr 5,000 (\$179) or Hr 1,000–2,000 (\$36–71) and an ID.

The **Katay** service rents bikes right in the center of Kyiv, at 12 Pushkinska St., for those who want to cycle across the city's historic area. The price for a bicycle rental is Hr 70–90 (\$3) per hour, Hr 200–350 (\$7–12) per day and Hr 1,000–1,300 (\$36–46) per week. Call to arrange a rental by +38067781 6137, +38063639 9377.

Veliki – www.veliki.ua.
Velokratia – www.velokratia.com.ua.

Bikemotive – www.bikemotive.com.ua.

Katay – www.katay.com.ua.

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