

Independence Day Special Edition

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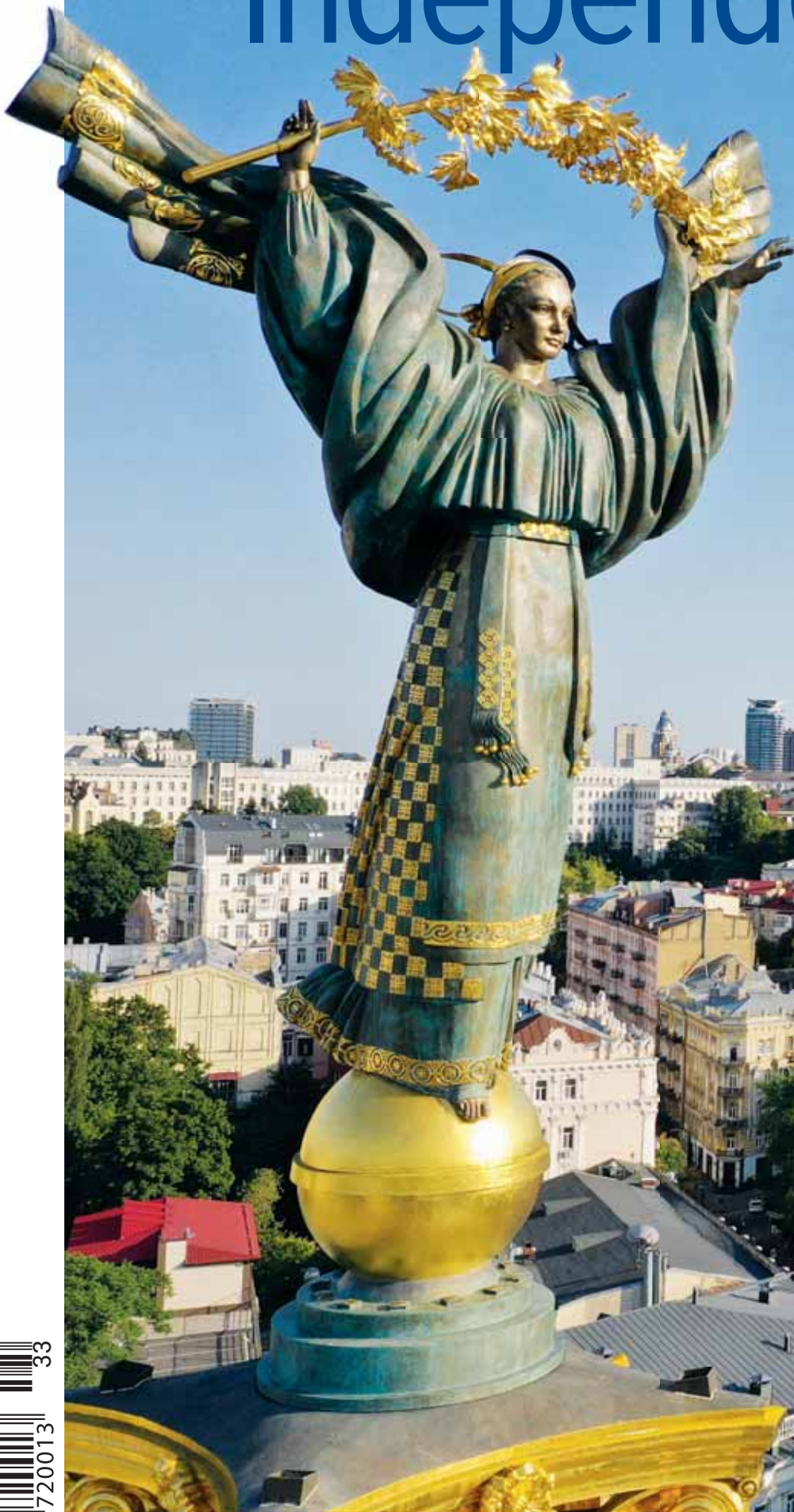


Kyiv Post

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year!**

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Happy Independence Day! 30



Volodymyr Petrov



The drone picture shows an aerial view of the Independence Monument in Kyiv on Aug. 18, 2021. The 61-meter monument, featuring a woman dressed in traditional Ukrainian clothes, was installed in 2001 to mark the country's 10th Independence Day anniversary. It is located in the middle of Independence Square, or Maidan Nezalezhnosti, which was the scene of Ukraine's three revolutions that safeguarded the country's freedom and brought Ukraine to the upcoming celebration of the 30th Independence Day on Aug. 24.

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Arms parade, concerts & more options for celebrating Independence Day

By Elina Kent

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Ukraine's 30th anniversary is a landmark and the country has prepared grand celebrations.

The festivities such as an arms parade, festivals, concerts and exhibitions will take place on the big day of Aug. 24, as well as days before and after the holiday. The Kyiv Post has gathered a list of celebrations planned in Kyiv:

Pylyp Orlyk Constitution

For the first time in history, the original Constitution of Pylyp Orlyk will be available for public viewing at St. Sophia's Cathedral. The 1710 document was written by the Hetman of Cossack Ukraine. The constitution established the principle of the separation of powers in government, limited the authority of the hetman and established a Cossack parliament. Some historians consider it to be the first constitution in history. The document predates the American constitution by over 65 years.

St. Sophia's Cathedral (24 Volodymyrska St.) Aug. 20 onward. Free

'For the Freedom of Ukraine!' exhibition

This showcase will unite exhibits from 19 museums, archives and libraries from Ukraine and the U.S. It will feature 176 unique artifacts from 1914–1921, covering the Ukrainian War of Independence and the history of the Ukrainian army in the early 20th century. It will also offer a peek into the history of military uniforms from the Ukrainian People's Republic, Ukrainian Sich Riflemen and Cossacks.

Five leading Ukrainian scientific and cultural institutions from the U.S. will be featured in the exhibition. They include the Ukrainian National Museum in Chicago, Ukrainian Museum in New York, the Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford and more.

National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the World War II (24 Lavrska St.) Aug. 20, 2021 – Aug. 20, 2022. Hr 10–50

Etnika festival

The Etnika festival will demonstrate works of folk art and offer master classes with professional artists. Twelve types of folk art will be presented with celebrity guests assigned to each craft as an ambassador. The guests include Eurovision fan favorite band Go_A, Ukrainian rapper Alina Pash, Olympic medalist Daria Bilodid, prima ballerina Kateryna Kuhar and others.

Ten tents will host workshops of pottery, carving, painting, blacksmithing, embroidery and more. Products of collaborations between these craftsmen and modern Ukrainian brands will also be on display.

National Museum of History of Ukraine (2 Volodymyrska St.) Aug. 21. 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Free



Volodymyr Petrov

A child sits and enjoys the rehearsal for the Independence Day military parade in Kyiv on Aug. 18, 2021. Anyone is free to visit the city center to witness the event that hasn't been held since 2019.

Travel Ukraine festival

The Travel Ukraine festival celebrates Ukraine's birthday by featuring the best aspects each region of Ukraine has to offer. Organized by the State Agency for Tourism Development of Ukraine with the support of the culture ministry, the festival aims to promote domestic tourism in Ukraine. Each of the country's 24 oblasts and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea will present their most prominent events, cultural and gastronomic strengths, as well as hold workshops on traditional Ukrainian crafts. Attendees will also be able to buy souvenirs and products from all corners of Ukraine.

National Museum of History of Ukraine (2 Volodymyrska St.) Aug. 22. 3 p.m. – Aug. 24. 8 p.m. Free

Ark Ukraine: 10 centuries of Ukrainian music

The Ministry of Culture invites all to the Ark Ukraine concert to celebrate the country's independence through decades of Ukrainian music. Held on Mykhailivska Square in central Kyiv, the show will feature performances of old carols, ancient spiritual songs, Ukrainian baroque music, classics and pieces by modern Ukrainian composers.

The program includes twenty music acts such as acclaimed band DakhaBrakha, Eurovision winner Jamala, Okean Elzy frontman Sviatoslav Vakarchuk, rapper Alina Pash, ethno-group Kurbasi, the youth symphony orchestra of

Ukraine and more. The concert will be accompanied by a multimedia installation with holographic projections and augmented reality special effects.

Mykhailivska Square. Aug. 22. 9 p.m. Free

State Flag Day

On the State Flag Day, Ukrainian national flags will be raised all over the country. The largest ever Ukrainian flag will be unveiled at Kyiv's Peremohy Park. A map of Kyiv Oblast will be set up next to the 72-meter flagpole of greenery. In the Ukrainian capital, people will also be able to observe the flags flying on the parliament's building, the National Opera, the Palace of Ukraine, TsUM department store and the Gulliver shopping mall.

Near the fountain at Peremohy Park (Henerala Zhmachenka St.) Aug. 23. 9 a.m. Free

Independence Day Parade

This year, Ukraine will have its first full-fledged military parade on Independence Day since President Volodymyr Zelensky was elected in 2019. The parade will involve more than 5,000 military personnel, 400 weapons and equipment and 100 aircraft including iconic cargo plane Mriya. The parade will take place in the city center with the armed forces walking down Khreshchatyk Street, accompanied by the cheers of onlookers. After that, Kyivans can relocate to the embankment near the River Port to

witness a boat showcase on Dnipro River.

Independence Square, Khreshchatyk Street. Aug. 24. 9:30 a.m. Free

Andrea Bocelli concert

Grammy-winning Italian opera singer Andrea Bocelli will give a show at Constitution Square near Mariinsky Park on Independence Day. The performance will be accompanied by the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine and the Hryhoriy Veryovka Folk Choir. The funds raised during the concert will be used to create a center of contemporary art museum named after prominent Ukrainian artist Ivan Marchuk.

Constitution Square. Aug. 24. 5 p.m. Free

Independence Day Concert

The "Independence in our DNA" concert will take place at the Olympic Stadium, with 33 star musi-

cians, performing with ballet dancers and Kyiv Symphony Orchestra. The lineup features Okean Elzy, Jamala, Ruslana, Verka Serdushka, Monatik and many more. The artists will perform nonstop, each giving way to the next performer until the very end of the concert, when a fireworks show will start.

Olympic Stadium (55 Velyka Vasylkivska St.) Aug. 24. 9 p.m. Free

Spalakh music festival

The Spalakh music festival will celebrate new Ukrainian culture with concerts, markets, art exhibitions and other cultural activities. The spectacular lineup of artists that will perform on two different stages include Cape Cod, Zbaraski, Stas Korolyov, Palindrom, Hyphen Dash, Vagonovozhatye, Komissiya and more.

Platforma Art Factory (1 Bilomorska St.) Aug. 24. 12 p.m. Hr 549. 📍



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EDITORIAL

Victorious at 30

Ukraine's first three decades as an independent country were a rough ride. This time was marked by corruption, poverty, inequality, revolutions, war and brain drain that depleted Ukraine's potential.

Ukraine gained independence with a stroke of a pen. Looking back, it seems that we took it for granted.

So many things have gone wrong since then.

Ukraine is the largest and poorest country in Europe. The country was able to preserve democracy and maintain free and fair elections, yet those elected were far from being up for the task of leading a developing country.

Ukraine's first five presidents have closed their eyes or participated in endemic corruption, malfunctioning courts, police brutality, enrichment of the few and the impoverishment of most everyone else. The sixth has yet to prove he's any different.

The country's heavy industry is creaky and polluting, while a good share of Ukraine's workforce seeks employment abroad. Meanwhile, a group of rich business people intertwined with political elites have made themselves and their business interests more important than that of the state.

The group, spearheaded by a handful of oligarchs, has milked the country of its wealth. They bought plants and factories for a pittance and whitewashed their names through their TV stations.

Even Ukraine's cherished democracy was shattered by the authoritarian tendencies of Ukraine's incompetent leaders.

Prominent journalists, activists and politicians were killed. Journalists Georgiy Gongadze, Pavlo Sheremet and activist Kateryna Gandziuk are among the best known. Justice hasn't come in any of the cases.

Over the course of these years, Ukrainians witnessed hyperinflation, two revolutions and a war. What they haven't seen are respectable salaries (\$500 monthly is still the average), courts that dispense justice and transformational reforms that establish independent and capable institutions.

Ukraine had to rebuild its military after the Russian invasion of 2014, which continues to bleed the nation. But there's a lot of work yet to do in improving the nation's defenses. Judges, prosecutors, police and security agencies remain dismal, corrupt or incompetent.

Ukraine's medical staff, teachers and all essential workers are the least paid – both in the country and among their colleagues in Europe – while bribe-taking corrupt judges and officials live luxuriously, exposing the nation's perverted values.

Ukraine has been failing on so many fronts. But on the whole, Ukraine has won.

The very fact that Ukraine, against so many odds, is marking the 30th anniversary of independence is a victory worth celebrating.

Unlike so many of its neighbors and former Soviet states, Ukraine has great freedom of speech and real, democratic elections. It is something that Ukrainians for centuries have fought and died for.

Ukrainians fought for their right to choose their leaders in the 2004 Orange Revolution against an attempt by Viktor Yanukovich to rig the election. Then they inexplicably ousted the same Yanukovich in 2010, but sent him fleeing to his Kremlin backers in 2014 during the 100-day EuroMaidan Revolution in which 100 people were killed.

When Russia invaded Ukraine to force it back into submission, the leadership wasn't ready to respond. It was the Ukrainian people who took the stand. Ukrainians formed volunteer battalions and made sacrifices for their homeland.

Ukrainians armed the country's army, neglected for years, with modern equipment. Ukrainians donated their money and blood to protect their country.

Ukrainians, led by civil society experts, pushed for reforms when the government didn't want to move. It was Ukrainian activists and volunteers who pushed for decentralization and for transparency paving the way for ProZorro procurement and anti-corruption institutions.

Many things are yet to be done. It's a to-do list. And we are confident that Ukraine will eventually check off all items on the list.

We also know who will do it: Young Ukrainians. Help, but not salvation, will come from the rest of the nation, the West and other friends. But mainly it will come from within.

According to the recent polls, the new generation of Ukrainians is optimistic and eager to change this country. Young Ukrainians are pro-European, pro-democratic and are passionate to see the world. They overwhelmingly support women's rights and the rights of the LGBTQ community.

This new generation is the best testament to Ukraine's success.

On this Independence Day, we are celebrating them and the future that awaits Ukraine – a free, independent, and democratic country.

Afghanistan lessons

Ukraine needs to watch the Western exit from Afghanistan very carefully. It remains an unfolding disaster that could easily get worse if the Taliban takes Westerners hostage, offers a staging base for global terrorism and beats women into submission. The U.S. debacle was a long time in coming – 20 years and \$2 trillion, of which nearly \$100 billion went directly to build Afghan's military capabilities to prevent the Taliban, routed in 2001, from taking over the nation.

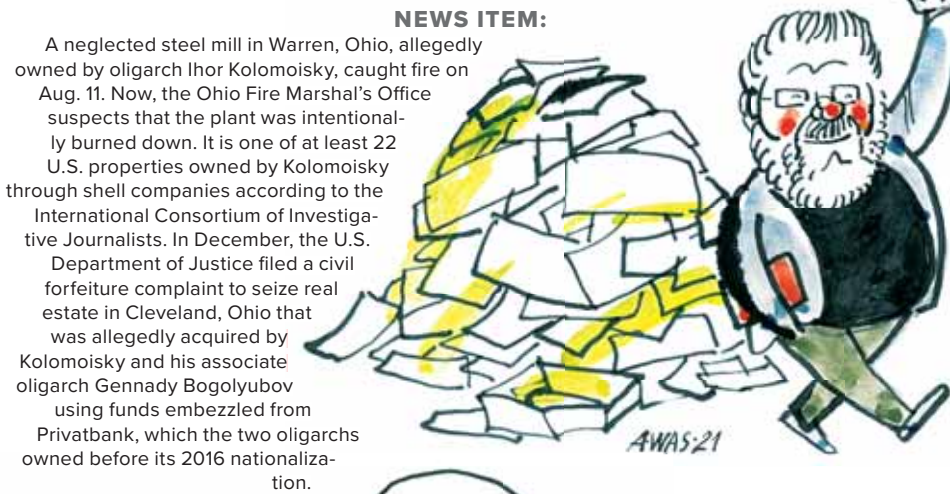
The U.S. desire to exit was understandable. Corruption ate up much of the aid. Afghanistan has proven to be hostile and untameable to the British, Soviets, and now the American forces. Criticism from Germany, the United Kingdom and other Western allies amounts to impotent carping.

The lesson for Ukraine and President Volodymyr Zelensky: U.S. President Joe Biden and Americans have limited patience with Ukraine's stalling and obstruction on the anti-corruption front. Western aid should not be taken for granted. It could come to an abrupt end at any time. It is doubtful that Biden will be pleased with Ukraine's progress when Zelensky meets him in the White House on Aug. 31. Hard deadlines may be coming soon.

NEWS ITEM:
Law enforcement authorities recently exposed a "tow truck scheme" in which some towing companies in Kyiv illegally seized hundreds of cars per day to make car owners pay illegal fines. The scheme was allegedly run by five unnamed officials from the Kyiv City State Administration. The investigation comes amid a long-running row between Vitali Klitschko, Kyiv's mayor and former heavyweight boxing champion, and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky.



NEWS ITEM:
Ex-judge Mykola Chaus, a suspect in a bribery case, fled to Moldova in 2016 and was kidnapped there in April 2021 by Ukrainian authorities, according to Moldovan prosecutors. He re-emerged in Ukraine in July. Since then, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) and the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) have fought over who would investigate him.



NEWS ITEM:
A neglected steel mill in Warren, Ohio, allegedly owned by oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky, caught fire on Aug. 11. Now, the Ohio Fire Marshal's Office suspects that the plant was intentionally burned down. It is one of at least 22 U.S. properties owned by Kolomoisky through shell companies according to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. In December, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a civil forfeiture complaint to seize real estate in Cleveland, Ohio that was allegedly acquired by Kolomoisky and his associate oligarch Gennady Bogolyubov using funds embezzled from Privatbank, which the two oligarchs owned before its 2016 nationalization.



NEWS ITEM:
German Chancellor Angela Merkel, due to meet Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky on Aug. 22 in Kyiv, announced she would meet Russia's President Vladimir Putin on Aug. 20 in Moscow first. The impromptu visit to Putin provoked an outcry in Ukraine, where Germany is seen as dangerously close to the Kremlin on Nord Stream 2.

See these features online at Kyivpost.com

Ukraine's Friend & Foe Of The Week



Friend

Tobias Thyberg, Swedish ambassador to Ukraine
Thyberg-represented Sweden agreed to give Ukraine the original Latin version of Pylyp Orlyk's Constitution to be exhibited during the celebration of the 30 years of the country's independence. The document has never been seen in Ukraine before.



Foe

Nikolai Patrushev, Russia's secretary of the Security Council
Patrushev said that Ukraine "obsequiously serves" the interest of the U.S., so one day the U.S. will abandon Ukraine just like it abandoned Afghanistan, when it withdrew its troops, letting the Taliban seize the country.

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.

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A field of wind turbines of the Prymorska wind farm on July 10, 2019, in Zaporizhia Oblast. The installation belongs to DTEK Renewables.

With Ukraine importing 1/3 of its energy needs, a path to independence is essential



Maxim Timchenko

Ukraine celebrates 30 years of independence. This is a significant milestone in our country's history. For three decades, we have been steadily building the country dreamed of by previous generations. Much success has been observed along the way. However, there is even more work ahead of us. Fortifying our energy independence has always been and will continue to be an important factor in determining Ukraine's de facto political independence.

Today, in the same vein as 30 years ago, Ukraine is one of the largest energy markets in the world. An important characteristic of how we have grown stronger over the years is that every energy sector in Ukraine has maintained self-sufficiency.

Energy production drops

However, over the years, our local gas, oil, and coal markets have shrunk significantly. In 1991, we produced 135.5 million tons of coal. Yet today, this figure stands at only 28.8 million tons.

Natural gas production has also declined over this period, from 24.4 billion cubic meters in 1991 to 20.2 billion cubic meters today.

Despite this, we have seen posi-

tive structural changes in the electricity sector, namely the 8% share of electricity now produced from renewable energy sources.

Alarmingly, we are still dependent on imports for a third of our energy.

According to the International Energy Security Index, a ranking of the world's 25 largest energy markets, Ukraine has been consistently placed last. Notably, for instance, neighboring Poland has moved from 22nd to 12th, and China from 23rd to 8th position on the list.

A natural question arises, what needs to be done to ensure real energy independence? Where should our efforts be directed to achieve energy security?

Move to decarbonization

First of all, it is decarbonization.

Decarbonization broadly presupposes a fundamental transformation of our economy.

On the one hand, it is a very complex task that depends, among other things, on political will.

On the other hand, there are very specific steps to be taken in adopting new technologies, creating new business opportunities, and devising new economic models which should be based on the experience and goals of European countries under

the Green Deal. Ukraine needs to attract investment and direct funds towards the development and transformation of its own economy, especially the energy sector, to ensure the competitiveness of our goods and services in world markets.

Today, Ukraine can make a significant contribution to decarbonizing the European continent, and even become a leader in decarbonization in Eastern Europe. After all, the synchronization of plans for the clean energy transition is a practical implementation of our country's course towards European integration.

Decarbonization is a global trend that no company or country can ignore today. Over the past few years, Ukraine has managed to provide the preconditions for large-scale changes in the renewable energy sector and to embark on a gradual phaseout of coal-fired generation. In DTEK's New Strategy 2030, we support this trend and strive for at least 33% of DTEK's electricity to come from renewable sources. By 2040, DTEK seeks to achieve carbon neutrality.

EU integration

Achieving energy security for Ukraine also means pursuing integration into European Union markets. Ukraine is slowly moving in this direction: a liberalized market was launched two years ago, and the RAB system for grids was introduced last year. But in the next two years, we need to complete the

energy sector reform and stop the practice of market interference. It is a matter of political will because synchronization with EU markets is of geopolitical importance, as there are forces that want Ukraine to remain connected to Russia's power systems. Therefore, aligning with the European energy system should become our national goal.

Trust is key

The path to energy independence is fully in line with the national interests of both the government and private players in this market. To expedite this process and ensure its success, we need to work through partnerships, and that requires trust. Over thirty years, we, as a society, have already learned to trust and unite at critical junctures throughout our history. We are well able to consolidate our forces to combat danger, and the latest evidence of this has been the joint and swift action taken by the private and public sectors in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Now we must learn to combine our efforts to create something new, to create vision and models of a common future. Trust in relations between the government, private business, and society is the key to strengthening Ukraine's independence and achieving energy self-sufficiency.

Maxim Timchenko is the CEO of DTEK, Ukraine's largest private energy company. 🇺🇦

Sanctions as an instrument of the Ukrainian Government



Kateryna Tsvetkova
Counsel, Attorney at law

Recently, sanctions became a hot topic. This is not surprising, because since the beginning of 2021, Ukraine has applied a record number of new sanctions against foreign and Ukrainian companies and citizens, as well as other countries.

In 2021, Chinese investors in Motor Sich were the first to be sanctioned. At the same time, sanctions were imposed on three Chinese investment companies. Subsequent sanctions were directed against the Republic of Nicaragua, given the fact that the country has opened its consulate in the territory of occupied Crimea.

The most resonant decisions were made by the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine in February. These include sanctions against people's deputies Taras Kozak, Viktor Medvedchuk and a number of TV channels, including 112, ZIK, and NewsOne. In March, economic sanctions were imposed on former officials and others who helped strengthen Russia's occupation of Crimea and Donbas, including Viktor Yanukovich and Mykola Azarov.

There was much discussion about sanctions against 10 Ukrainians and 79 smuggling companies in April. The latest wave of sanctions in May-July 2021 targeted so-called code-bound criminals and criminal leaders, people and companies involved in Russian aggression, Fuks, Firtash and Putin's entourage, as well as Russian retailer Wildberries.

The active sanctions policy of the state has provoked discussions about the role of restrictive measures in modern conditions: a situational political instrument or a justified restriction of the rights and freedoms of individuals? Let us try to understand.

The procedure for imposition of sanctions

The Law of Ukraine "On Sanctions" (hereinafter referred to as the Law) has been in force since August 2014. It was adopted out of a need for an immediate response to threats to Ukraine's national security in the context of Russian military aggression in Crimea and Donbas.

Sanctions can be applied to:

- a foreign state;
- a foreign legal entity;
- a legal entity under the control of a foreign legal entity or a non-resident individual;
- foreigners;
- stateless persons;
- entities and individuals engaged in terrorist activity.

The grounds for sanctions are the actions creating real or potential threats to national interests, national security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine or promoting terrorist activities and/or violating human or civil rights and freedoms, public and national interests. For instance, sanctions can be applied for supporting the annexation of Crimea, the occupation of Donbas; cyberattacks on critical infrastructure; information threats, including propaganda of separatist sentiments in the territory of Ukraine; support of economic (business) relations in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine, etc.

The Law contains 24 types of sanctions, including blocking assets, restricting trade operations, stopping the transit of resources, flights and transportation through Ukraine, preventing movement of capital outside Ukraine, suspending of economic and financial obligations, revoking or suspending of licenses and other permits, etc.

The application of a certain type of sanctions against a particular person is preceded by a procedure as prescribed by law, which includes several successive stages.

Thus, decisions to impose sanctions are made by a special coordinating body under the President of Ukraine – the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (NSDC) on the basis of proposals of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the President of Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers, the National Bank of Ukraine and the Security Service of Ukraine. Decisions of the National Security and Defense Council are enforced by a decree of the President of Ukraine and are binding.

This procedure allows the state to respond very quickly to significant threats to national interests and effectively block the activities of certain persons. However, there are a number of reasons why the Law is reasonably criticized.

What are the challenges of imposition of sanctions?

Firstly, one of the most legally controversial questions is the legality of the imposition of sanctions on citizens and legal entities of Ukraine. The Law stipulates that restrictive measures may be applied to the latter only if they are attributed to persons engaged in terrorist activity. At the same time, the Law of Ukraine "On Combating Terrorism" provides a fairly broad definition of "terrorist activity". In addition, the Criminal Code of Ukraine establishes criminal liability for terrorism. And according to the national legislation, prosecution is possible only by a court conviction, which has entered into force.

According to many human rights advocates, sanctions against the citizens of Ukraine without ascertainment of their guilt in the manner prescribed by law may indicate a violation of the presumption of innocence established by Article 62 of the Constitution of Ukraine: a person is presumed innocent of committing a crime and cannot be subjected to criminal punishment until his/her guilt is proved in a lawful manner and established by a court conviction.

That is why it is necessary to immediately regulate the issue of sanctions against Ukrainian citizens at the legislative level.

Secondly, there are no clear mechanisms for monitoring and control over the implementation of the decisions of the NSDC. For instance, in pursuance of the Law, certain state bodies (the National Bank of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine, the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine) have adopted acts regulating the procedures for implementation of sanctions restrictions. However, as of today, there is no act of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine that would regulate the procedure for imposition and monitoring the effectiveness of sanctions by executive authorities.

Thirdly, there are no administrative, criminal, or financial liabilities for non-compliance with decisions on the imposition of sanctions.

Of course, sanctions are a political tool, but they must meet such a criterion as legal certainty. Therefore, amending the Law and adopting bylaws to eliminate the above shortcomings is a priority for the state to successfully implementation of sanctions policy.

Do Ukrainian courts lift sanctions?

The decree of the President of Ukraine that enacts the NSDC's decision, is subject to appeal. Sanctioned persons may appeal to the Supreme Court. A plaintiff is deprived of the opportunity to appeal the previous stages of the decision to impose sanctions as a result of the implementation of the decision of the NSDC by Presidential Decree.

However, a look into the Supreme Court's practice shows that overturning the President's sanction decrees is a challenge. As of today, there is only one decision of the Administrative Court of Cassation in the Unified State Register of Judicial Decisions, ruling that such a decree is illegal.

In the above case, the plaintiff, Tolexis Enterprises AG, was sanctioned for the supply of products (titanium dioxide), which were allegedly produced at a plant illegally expropriated by the Russian Federation in the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea. However, the plaintiff managed to prove that the goods are of Ukrainian origin, as they were registered under Ukrainian law and before the occupation of Crimea. As a result, the Supreme Court found lifted the restrictive measures (the decision of June 18, 2020 in case No. 9901/259/19).

However, in all other cases, courts dismiss the claims of the sanctioned persons. In its decisions, the Supreme Court emphasizes that the sanctions were imposed by the state taking into account a pro rata principle, i.e. for purposes defined by law, in compliance with the national security interests and the degree of interference with fundamental rights and freedoms (for example, the decision of the Supreme Court dated June 1, 2020 in case No. 9901/405/19, the decision of the Grand Chamber of the Supreme Court dated November 4, 2020 in case No. 9901/138/20).

Once a person has exhausted all available effective national remedies, he or she has the right to apply to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). In considering the case, the ECtHR will analyze whether the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms has been violated by the state in imposing sanctions, whether the Law of Ukraine "On Sanctions" meets the quality requirements of the Law and whether it is clear, understandable and predictable.

Taking into account that Ukrainian courts currently support the state's sanctions policy and are extremely reluctant to revoke decisions on the imposition of sanctions, a number of complaints to the ECtHR against Ukraine in connection with the imposition of sanctions should be expected in the future.

As a conclusion

The imposition of sanctions is an effective tool of the government in the event that it is necessary to respond quickly and effectively to threats to national security and national interests. However, discretionary powers of public authorities to impose sanctions should not become arbitrary. Every decision of the state must be substantiated and comply with the principle of the rule of law, which includes legality, legal certainty and respect for human rights. This will minimize the risks for Ukraine, in particular, the risk of the ECtHR making decisions against Ukraine in connection with the imposition of sanctions.

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It took more than independence for Ukraine to part ways with Russia

By **Oleksiy Sorokin**
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Ukraine's formal independence declared in 1991 didn't end its actual dependence on Russia.

For centuries, Ukrainian national revival was halted by different incarnations of imperial Russia. Even after independence, Ukraine kept close ties with the northern neighbor, following Russian footsteps politically, economically and culturally.

Ukraine's heavy industry depended on Russian consumers, Ukrainian concerts were headlined by Russian pop stars while the 1999 presidential elections in Ukraine mirrored the Russian presidential election campaign of 1996.

Still, Ukraine broke out of the loop.

It took two revolutions and a war for Ukraine to finally set itself free and speed the evolution from archaic Soviet republic to modern European nation. The transformation sparked Ukraine's modern cultural revival.

"We can say that Ukraine is experiencing a cultural revival and it began after the EuroMaidan Revolution," says prominent Ukrainian historian Yaroslav Hrytsak.

Executed Renaissance

Before gaining independence, Ukrainian culture was muted, the Ukrainian language was banned and Ukrainian poets, playwrights and activists were imprisoned or executed by Russian authorities.

Ukrainian culture was systematically erased since the late 17th century, when parts of modern Ukraine came under Russian influence.

"Culture is always tied to politics," Hrytsak says. "Russia couldn't exist (as an empire) without Ukraine, that's why they tried to erase culture that is the primary basis for a country's independence."

Ukrainian culture wasn't wiped out but it cost many lives.

The 1845 Brotherhood of Saints Kyrylo and Methodius was a short-lived Kyiv-based society focusing on Ukrainian national revival.

Famous Ukrainian author



Ukraine held a referendum on independence and simultaneous presidential elections on Dec. 1, 1991. Over 92% of the voters supported Ukrainian independence from the Soviet Union, while Soviet Ukraine Head Leonid Kravchuk was elected as Ukraine's first president.

Panteleimon Kulish and historian Mykola Kostomarov were both members of the secret society, while poet Taras Shevchenko was arrested for being a crucial figure in the 19th-century Ukrainian national movement.

The group's main goal wasn't Ukrainian independence, rather the revival of the Ukrainian language and autonomy from Saint Petersburg.

The society was shut down, and its members were deported from Kyiv.

To oppress the emerging spirit, in the late 19th century, Russian imperial authorities issued two documents — the Valuev Circular (letter)

and Ems Ukaz (decree) — effectively banning the Ukrainian language from public life.

Ukraine's second attempt to break free from Russian influence came in the late 1910s.

During the Ukrainian War of Independence (1917–1921), the Ukrainian language was permitted in education and in print, while Ukrainian playwright Les Kurbas gathered his first critically acclaimed theatrical troupe.

In 1922, Kurbas found Berezhil, a dramatic theater staging plays in Ukrainian.

"The 1920s were vibrant, Ukraine never prior witnessed such a cultural upheaval," says Hrytsak.

Yet as Russia regained control over Ukraine, a generation of Ukrainian intelligentsia was lost. Most famous Ukrainian cultural figures were either corrupted into working for the state or executed by the Soviet authorities.

They became known as the Executed Renaissance.

Communist poet Mykola Khvylovy committed suicide in 1933 after being interrogated by the NKVD, the Soviet secret police. Kurbas, painters Mykhailo Boychuk and Ivan Padalka, writers Hnat Khotkevych, Mykola Kulish and Valerian Pidmohylny were executed in 1937 during the Great Purge.

Soviet authorities have tailored Ukrainian culture to serve their own needs. The Ukrainian language was modified to resemble Russian, poets were to applaud Soviet rule, while Ukrainian history was altered to fit

the narrative of Ukrainians being part of the Russian culture.

Up until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukrainian intellectuals, who didn't accept Soviet dictate, were muted, some spent years in prisons. Prominent Ukrainian poet Vasyl Stus died in detention in 1985.

"Everything was done to deprive Ukraine of being a cultural, political, science hub," Hrytsak says. "Ukraine was left with a rural culture."

Post-Soviet Ukraine

Centuries of systematic eradication of Ukrainian cultural identity left a mark.

Ukrainian language newspapers, TV programs and artists were losing the battle to their Russian counterparts in the newly independent Ukraine. Pro-Ukrainian politicians have also had a hard time drawing support.

For 14 years since independence, Ukraine was ruled by former Soviet officials.

In December 1991, Ukraine's first independent elections crowned ex-Soviet Ukraine Head Leonid Kravchuk as Ukraine's first president. In 1994, Kravchuk lost to Leonid Kuchma, ex-prime minister and long-time head of the Soviet Yuzhmash defense plant. Kuchma was re-elected in 1999.

Despite Ukrainian being the sole state language, Ukrainian television was Russian-speaking, Ukraine's largest newspapers were published in Russian, while only one Ukrainian language band, Okean Elzy, was

able to sell out a soccer stadium.

Russian pop stars, news channels and political talk shows overweighed Ukrainian content.

For 23 years, Ukrainian streets bore the names of Soviet generals, politicians, writers.

Until 2014, Kyiv had a street named after the Red Army, yet didn't have a street named after many notable Ukrainian writers including Kulish and Khotkevych.

"It's odd," says Oleksiy Haran, professor at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy.

Revival

In the 21st century, clinging to its imperialistic views, Russia has tried to subjugate Ukraine, continuing to deprive the country of 42 million people of its culture and political independence.

Yet ongoing Russian attacks sparked a backlash from both Ukrainian and Russian-speaking Ukrainians.

In 2004, Kuchma's pro-Russian protégé Viktor Yanukovich was set to become president by falsifying elections. Ukrainians had none of it.

Hundreds of thousands of people gathered on the streets of Russian-speaking Kyiv to back pro-Western Ukrainian-speaking candidate Viktor Yushchenko.

After Yushchenko's victory, Ukrainian historiography witnessed a revival and for the first time — government support.

Under Yushchenko, many Ukrainians have found out about

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Ukriform

Russia's war has helped stimulate love of Ukrainian language, culture

page 8 →

Holodomor, a Soviet manmade famine that took the lives of 3–5 million Ukrainians in 1932–1933.

In 2008, the National Museum of Holodomor was opened in downtown Kyiv. Before the pandemic, 180,000 people visited the museum yearly.

Yet, Yushchenko's political shortcomings have led to Yanukovich's comeback. Under pro-Russian Yanukovich state officials had a hard time communicating in Ukrainian, while the Russian language was made de facto official in 10 regions. Yanukovich's close ties to Russia

sparked public upheaval that sparked the EuroMaidan Revolution.

Over 100 people died on the streets of Kyiv demanding democracy and closer ties with the European Union. After toppling Yanukovich's kleptocratic regime in February 2014, Ukraine found itself under attack.

The Russian invasion in March 2014 has led to many tragedies. Russia occupied Crimea, the eastern part of Donbas, killed over 13,000 people and forced more than a million people to flee their homes.

Ukrainians began cherishing Ukrainian culture more than ever before. "The Russian invasion



Kostyantyn Chernichkin

Protesters hold a giant European Union flag during the early stages of the EuroMaidan Revolution on Nov. 24, 2013.

boosted Ukrainian cultural revival," Hrytsak says.

Haran says that the revival actually began in the late 1980s with the creation of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group led by Levko Lukianenko and the Ukrainian People's Movement Rukh under Viacheslav Chornovil.

"The cultural revival began back then," Haran says. "It was a gradual process."

Yet, Haran adds, that after the

EuroMaidan Revolution, Ukrainian cultural revival has accelerated.

Today, Ukraine has some elements of a modern democracy with a thriving cultural scene. Ukrainian films collect awards at top international festivals, Ukrainian nightclubs, featuring Ukrainian artists, rank high among profiled media, Ukrainian-language bands enter European music charts, while recently a Ukrainian language book about

Ukrainian dissident Stus sold out in several days.

"Now we have an abundance of Ukrainian language literature, we have good Ukrainian music, Ukrainian-language jazz and rock, good Ukrainian films," Haran says.

However, Hrytsak believes it's just the beginning, anticipating a more vibrant beat to come.

"There's still a lot of work to be done," he says. ☺

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Bloody uprisings on the path to Ukraine's independence

By Max Hunder
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Ukraine was fortunate enough to gain independence peacefully in 1991, but its history is one of armed struggle against foreign occupation and colonization.

There are countless examples of resistance against tyranny throughout Ukrainian history. Here are four major attempts to create a sovereign Ukraine, all of which ended in failure but laid the groundwork for a future state.

1648: Khmelnytsky Uprising

The 1648 Cossack Uprising was the seventh Cossack rising since 1590, but it was the first to erupt into a serious nationwide rebellion against Polish rule.

It began after Bohdan Khmelnytsky, a petty noble, became embroiled in a land dispute with the son of a powerful Polish aristocrat.

The incident was symptomatic of the mistreatment suffered at that time by Ukrainian Cossacks and peasants at the hands of their Polish masters.

Khmelnytsky's land was taken, his young son was beaten, and eventually he was thrown in prison. He escaped, and despite having previously been a loyal servant to the Polish crown, he decided that he'd had enough.

Khmelnytsky found support in the Zaporizhian Sich and cannily made an alliance with the Crimean Tatars, whose skilled cavalymen played a crucial part in decisive battlefield victories.

The uprising led to mass killings of Jews, sparked by socio-economic and inter-faith tensions. Contemporary scholars estimate the number of deaths at around 20,000.

In August 1649, the Polish king was forced to grant Khmelnytsky's newly established Cossack Hetmanate de facto independence.

Much of the new Hetmanate was on lands which were labelled "Ukraine" on French and Polish maps, and the name stuck.

Khmelnytsky lost most of his territories after being abandoned by the Tatars in the heat of the 1651 Battle of Berestechko, the largest battle in 17th century Europe. His Crimean and Ottoman allies were more interested in balancing regional powers than helping to create an independent Ukrainian state.

This led him to look for new friends and sign the infamous 1654 Treaty of Pereyaslav, which made the Hetmanate a Muscovite protectorate and placed Ukraine in Russia's orbit until 1991.

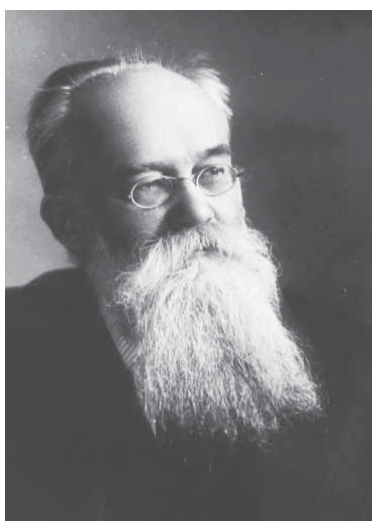
However, contemporary Russian claims of "brotherly nations" reuniting at Pereyaslav should be dismissed, as the two sides had to use interpreters to negotiate.

1708: Mazepa Revolt

The Treaty of Pereyaslav was followed by a half-century of chaos and division of Ukrainian land between Polish and Russian control,



A re-enactment of the Battle of Kruty takes place in Kyiv on Jan. 25, 2020. The battle occurred on Jan. 29, 1918, and saw 500 Ukrainian soldiers, mostly student volunteers, unsuccessfully attempt to hold off 3,000 advancing Bolshevik Russian troops.



Mykhailo Hrushevsky



Bohdan Khmelnytsky

being split largely down the Dnipro River.

The last Cossack attempt to unify both sides of Ukraine into an independent polity came in 1708, when Hetman Ivan Mazepa bowed to the continued pressure of his colonels to turn against Tsar Peter the Great of Russia and join the Swedish side in the Great Northern War.

Peter, who had mercilessly exploited thousands of Cossacks to build his new capital, St. Petersburg, was furious when he found out and demanded that Mazepa be awarded the "order of St. Judas."

The Hetman suffered a disastrous start to the rebellion, as his undefended capital of Baturyn was taken by Russian forces, who massacred 10,000 men, women and children.

The uprising fell apart on the fateful day of July 8, 1709, when the Swedish army, backed by several thousand Cossacks under Mazepa, faced a much larger Russian force.

Mazepa and his advisors had to flee to Ottoman Moldavia (present-day Moldova), where he died

in exile months after the battle. It was there that Mazepa's elected successor, Pylyp Orlyk, signed the first Ukrainian constitution in 1710.

1917: Ukrainian People's Republic

In the 19th century, Ukrainian nationalism simmered without boiling over. Tensions were present, but these did not cause any large outbreaks of violence aimed at gaining independence.

Things changed in the early 20th century, thanks in large part to the efforts of Mykhailo Hrushevsky, a professor of Ukrainian history at Lviv University, as well as the turmoil of the World War I.

The February Revolution in 1917 caused the implosion of the Russian Empire, thus giving Hrushevsky and his supporters the opportunity to establish a parliament: The Central Rada of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR) was born on March 17, 1917.

Despite having the support of the vast majority of the 300,000

Ukrainians serving in the Russian army, the Central Rada failed to consolidate its power or form a proper army.

The UPR initially existed as a part of the Russian Republic and only declared independence on Jan. 25, 1918, several months after the Bolshevik Revolution.

The independence declaration led to an immediate Bolshevik invasion of Ukraine, and the rag-tag Ukrainian forces were unable to stop the Russian advance into Kyiv despite valiant resistance at Kruty.

The Bolsheviks left Kyiv a month later, after their surrender to the Central Powers. This allowed German troops to enter Ukraine and install Pavlo Skoropadsky as a puppet dictator of a nominally independent Ukrainian state.

Skoropadsky was able to govern somewhat effectively, but his reactionary tsarist politics remained unpopular with the more left-leaning leaders of the overthrown UPR.

After Germany surrendered on Nov. 11, the old Ukrainian People's Republic's leadership led a successful revolt against Skoropadsky.

The reinstated UPR quickly united with the nascentest Ukrainian People's Republic, comprised of Ukrainians in Galicia taking advantage of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

However, despite being under attack from The Red (Bolshevik) and White (tsarist) Russian armies as well as the Poles, the various factions of the new Ukrainian state failed to unite.

Symon Petliura, who became leader of the UPR in February 1919, was enraged by Galician troops letting the White army into Kyiv, and the Galicians in turn broke off relations with Petliura for making a deal with Poland.

This rupture, as well as a severe typhus outbreak, caused the

Ukrainian armies to be wiped out by the end of 1919.

Petliura raised more armies and fought alongside the Poles until 1921, but the UPR was already effectively dead.

1942: Ukrainian Insurgent Army

The inter-war period ravaged Ukraine, and while the Soviet-controlled part suffered far worse, Ukrainians in Polish-controlled parts of the land also experienced oppression.

This drove the founding of Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) in 1929: a network of far-right Ukrainians in Polish-controlled Galicia who believed that the Ukrainian People's Republic had failed because it was too liberal.

When Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, radical members of the OUN formed two Nazi battalions in the hope that this would build relations with Adolf Hitler and precipitate the creation of a Nazi-aligned but nominally independent Ukrainian state.

They were immediately disappointed when the Nazi authorities repudiated OUN's proclamation of a Ukrainian state and began executing OUN members, putting the nationalists in conflict with both the Nazis and the Soviets.

In October 1942, as it became clear that both powers would have to be fought to establish an independent Ukrainian state, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA) was formed by OUN leaders.

The UIA is by far the most divisive organisation ever to be formed in Ukraine: On the one hand, it fought for Ukrainian independence with a fearsome 13-year guerrilla campaign against the two biggest armies in Europe. On the other, it massacred tens of thousands of Polish civilians and many of its commanders were former Nazi collaborators.

In 2015, the UIA were designated as "fighters for the independence of Ukraine" by the Ukrainian government. A 2017 poll showed that 41% of Ukrainians supported this, while 27% opposed it.

The UIA killed several thousand Nazi soldiers in 1943-1944, although as the Soviet counteroffensive approached, the Nazis stopped hunting UIA men and supplied them with weapons instead.

As the Soviet Union took hold of western Ukraine, the UIA engaged in a vicious, drawn-out guerrilla conflict, operating out of underground lairs called "kryivky."

The Soviet army was unable to destroy the UIA until 1956. Reliable statistics are hard to come by, but the Soviet numbers say that 15,000 of their troops and officials, 15,000 civilians and over 100,000 guerrillas were killed in 11 years.

The year 1956 closed the book on the last significant attempt to create an independent Ukrainian state before the Granite Revolution in 1991. 🇺🇦

Technology improves Ukraine's spotty image

By Daryna Antoniuk
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Ukraine's past lingers in the current image of Ukraine as a corrupt, bureaucratic and Soviet place. For years, the country has struggled to attract talent and investors from abroad.

But the booming tech industry, which employs more than 212,000 specialists in thousands of companies, has started to improve Ukraine's reputation.

Now the Ministry of Digital Transformation plans to make Ukraine even more of a tech-driven country.

First, it seeks to replace paperwork with a single app. The next step is to encourage online payments to shrink a shadow economy amounts to a third of Ukraine's economic output, according to the economy ministry.

"To be innovative, we need not only to follow global trends but also to set them," Minister of Digital Transformation Mykhailo Fedorov told the Kyiv Post.

Paperless

To start a business in Ukraine, local entrepreneurs have to go through bureaucratic hell: bring dozens of documents to the government office, wait for their approval, and repeat it all over again if documents are rejected, often without explanation.

"Everything that requires interaction with state agencies is unpredictable and takes a lot of time," said CEO of McDonald's Ukraine Yuliya Badritdinova in an interview with the Kyiv Post in July. Because it's hard to get papers to launch a business or start construction in Ukraine, McDonald's has delayed many of its projects, Badritdinova said.

To make Ukraine less bureaucratic, parliament adopted a bill on July 16 that forbids government agencies from requiring paper documents if they contain information that is available electronically. The so-called "paperless regime" will make Ukraine more transparent and less corrupt, Fedorov said.

As of today, Ukrainians can use nearly 70 state services online. For example, they can register a business, sign electronic documents or get unemployment benefits with a state mobile app or through the Diia website. Fedorov wants to digitize all government services by 2024.

Ukraine has already become the world's first country that legalized digital passports. Starting on Aug. 23, all Ukrainian institutions are obliged to accept personal IDs shown through the Diia app. In a few weeks, Fedorov wants to add digital COVID-19 vaccine certificates to the app so that Ukrainians could use them to travel abroad.

"Digital documents have a big future. It is still an innovation now, but it will soon become a new reality," Fedorov said.

Cashless

Ukrainians love cash – it allows many businesses to pay "envelope salaries" and avoid the 41.5% tax on wages. As a result, the country loses out over \$18 billion of taxes every



Minister of Digital Transformation Mykhailo Fedorov speaks during the Tiger Conference's first panel, "Digital Future and Electronic Democracy" on Dec. 10, 2019.

year, according to Economy Minister and First Deputy Prime Minister Oleksiy Lyubchenko.

Online payments are easier to trace than cash. Experts claim that digital payments save money for the government and make financial services like insurance and credit more accessible to citizens.

In Ukraine, online payments are booming. Ukraine is among the world leaders in contactless payments, according to the financial services corporation Mastercard. Half of Ukrainians are ready to completely abandon cash payments in the next five years, Inga Andreeva, the general director of Mastercard in Ukraine and Moldova, said.

Aside from cash, Ukrainians pay with credit cards, mobile phones, smartwatches and fitness bracelets, according to Andreeva.

There are many reasons why Ukrainians turn to contactless payments, according to financial technology expert Rostyslav Dyuk. First, over 60% of the population uses smartphones and has access to mobile internet. Second, e-commerce in the country is gaining momentum, offering lower prices and more choice.

According to Dyuk, Ukraine has seven online banks, including Monobank, which leads the market with over 4 million users. Monobank has become the first bank in Europe that first issues digital cards, with physical ones as an option, Andreeva said.

Dyuk predicts that more fintech companies will enter the market. "Launching an online bank in Europe costs nearly \$50 million, while in Ukraine it is 10–11 times cheaper." In addition, over 30% of Ukrainians do not use traditional banks, meaning they are potential customers of fintech, Dyuk said.

Tech-minded

The Ukrainian tech industry accounts for \$5 billion in exports and generates \$588 million in taxes. More than 212,000 tech specialists work in Ukraine and the demand for them grows by 30% every year, according to Vitaly Sedler, the head of the Ukrainian IT Association.

Despite the weak economy and lack of rule of law, Ukraine's tech industry has thrived due to what Andreeva calls "a digital leap," a phenomenon when a country skips

several development stages and embraced innovations at an early stage.

Fedorov agrees, saying that Ukraine is a young country, and flexibility and quick decision making are its strengths.

"At a time when conservative states are slowly transforming, Ukraine is doing it with incredible speed," he said.

Even amid the lack of regulative legislation, Ukraine leads the world in cryptocurrency use, according to a report by a cryptocurrency analyst Chainalysis. Last year Ukrainians earned about \$400 million of investment in bitcoin, making local investors the tenth richest in the world.

Although the cryptocurrency market emerged in 2013, Ukraine still recognizes cryptocurrency neither as asset nor property nor a valid payment tool. This year the government introduced several laws aiming to de-shadow the market and encourage foreign investment, according to Fedorov.

Another milestone is the development of artificial intelligence, or AI. The global market value was \$30 billion in 2020 and is expected to reach \$299 billion by 2026. Many local businesses already use AI. Ukraine's new "unicorn" People.ai, valued at over \$1 billion, has developed an AI-based algorithm that helps businesses forecast sales, close deals and find new clients.

The proofreading service Grammarly, another "unicorn," uses AI to help people become better writers. Schools and universities still fail to provide decent AI education, but Ukraine's specialists can learn from big tech giants like Samsung, Ubisoft, Rakuten and Google, which run research and development centers in the country.

Last year, the government decided to push the development of AI by improving tech education and training in the defense industry, health care and justice. "We have great potential in the development of AI and we are moving confidently in this direction," Fedorov said.

As Ukraine uses technology to make state services simpler, Fedorov believes that the sector is key to Ukraine's brighter future.

"I am confident that Ukraine will become a powerful IT hub in Eastern and Central Europe." ❁

Oleg Petrasjuk

BUSINESS ADVISER

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Royalties to non-resident: risks and opportunities



Iryna Kalnytska,
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Royalty payment is among the most complex topics in Ukraine's taxes, especially when it applies to a non-resident. With the recent changes to the Tax Code of Ukraine, businesses need to evaluate if their taxes fall under the definition of royalties and what they actually should pay.

What are royalties?

Ukraine's tax code defines royalties as payments received as compensations for intellectual, industrial, and property rights.

However, some payments don't qualify as such. For example, software fees are not considered royalties if the company uses software for its own business needs.

It is important to qualify whether the payment is, in essence, a royalty payment or payment for supply of software products, as it will be definitive for withholding

tax and VAT tax consequences.

In particular, royalty payment is not subject to VAT but is subject to withholding tax, as will be described in detail below. On the contrary, payments for the use of software products are temporary exempt from VAT, but there are also specific rules for application of this exemption.

This issue becomes even more relevant in present days with the popularity of SAP usage in business operation.

Does withholding tax apply to royalties?

The Tax Code directly provides that royalties paid by a resident of Ukraine to non-resident is subject to 15% withholding tax, which may be reduced under the relevant Double Tax Treaty ("Tax treaty").

In order to apply for the benefits under the Tax treaty, the following conditions shall be met:

- royalties is paid to a beneficial owner;
- the principle purpose test is met;
- the business purpose test is fulfilled (applicable starting from 1 January, 2022).

A non-resident shall also provide a special certificate confirming his residency status in a country with which Ukraine has a tax treaty.

We will review each of these criteria for application of a reduced tax rate more closely below.

Beneficial owner status

The Tax Code defines the beneficial owner of income as a person authorized to receive and to dispose of income received. There is no single document which confirms the beneficial owner status of royalties. However, under the established court practice it is evident that the following facts may be analyzed by the court to define whether the income recipient is the beneficial owner of income:

- full rights to receive, use, and dispose of income;
- absence of obligations before the third parties to transmit the received income;
- sufficient assets to perform an operation and to bear the risks connected with the received income;
- ability to perform functions necessary to receive, maintain and use the assets received.

All of these criteria shall be satisfied cumulatively. Hence, the non-resident recipient to be qualified a beneficial owner of income (in particular, royalties) with the source in Ukraine shall have sufficient substance in the country of residence, as well as properly formalized rights to receive and to dispose of such income.

Principle purpose test

The Principle Purpose Test means that the benefits under the tax treaty shall not be granted if the transaction was put in place mainly to avoid paying taxes. This test applies only if it is foreseen under the relevant Tax treaty.

We recommend the business to prepare in advance a special report on the Principal Purpose Test, which may contain the following information:

- contract provisions on which such operation shall be performed and economic/business reasoning behind such process;
- description of the nature of business of a non-resident;
- comparison between the business and tax benefits that the transaction/operation will bring to the Ukrainian company, which pays an income to a non-resident.

Recently the Ukrainian court adopted one of the first decisions on the application of Principle Purpose Test. The court analyzed in detail economic substance of the operation, and closely considered the report provided by the Ukrainian company. The court supported the position of the claimant and confirmed that an operation meets the Principle Purpose Test, taking into account all the business and economic benefits presented by the claimant (the ruling of Kyiv District Administrative court dated 01.03.2021, case no. 640/3584/19).

Business purpose test

The Business purpose test will apply to all operations of royalty payment to non-residents of Ukraine, starting from 2022. The Ukrainian company will not have the right for deductible expenses for royalty payment if the transaction does not have a business purpose.

Under the Tax Code, absence of "business purpose" means that a taxpayer has no intention to make profit as a result of the business operation or to create the conditions for the profit receipt in the future.

We recommend the business to prepare in advance a special report on the Business Purpose Test, which may contain the following information:

- the general overview of the business operation, the contracting parties, description of the essential terms of the transaction;
- economic effect of the operation, including both direct and indirect economic impact, including income increase, reduction of costs or expenses, value growth of the end product, etc.

Analyses of the alternative options. In this section of the report all the alternative options to perform an operation shall be analyzed, and it shall provide substantiation for the choice of a particular product, service, or counterparty, and explanation why the chosen option will, supposedly, be the most efficient for business of a taxpayer. Therefore, taking into account all above-mentioned, we can undoubtedly say that the attention of tax authorities to the operations with non-residents will only increase. That is why we recommend the business to prepare to this in advance and to develop the protection methodology and all necessary documents that shall be in place for the risky operations.

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Once mighty, Ukraine's military is trying to rise from the ashes

By Illia Ponomarenko
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The dawn of Ukraine's independence in 1991 seemed like a promising start for its newly-created Armed Forces.

The downfall of the Soviet Union left Ukraine with vast ground forces, air fleet, navy and even a large nuclear stockpile at its disposal. The young nation found itself among the world's strongest militaries. The path to regional leadership in Eastern Europe was very real.

But it never came about.

Economic and political troubles threw the Ukrainian military downhill at breakneck speed. Within a decade, the rampage of plundering and underfunding turned the Armed Forces into a gnawed skeleton, with a miserable officer corps looking for subsistence in civilian life.

The country's darkest hour came in 2014, when the disorganized nation found itself almost defenseless against Russia's sudden invasion in Crimea and Donbas.

The war also gave birth to a new drive to resurrect the neglected Armed Forces. The new military managed to rise again, rearm and embark on a future goal of joining NATO.

But the patriotic surge turned out short-lived. Recently, the military again allowed itself to start sliding into senseless, Soviet-style bureaucracy, causing it to hemorrhage its most dedicated and experienced veterans.

Soviet arsenal wasted

Independent Ukraine inherited staggering firepower from the dying Soviet Union.

This included nearly 980,000 personnel, 6,500 tanks, 7,000 personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles, over 1,500 aircraft, 350 warships and an extensive missile defense grid. That's not to mention the 176 intercontinental ballistic missiles deployed across the country, carrying a total of 1,272 nuclear warheads, and also a stockpile of 2,500 tactical nuclear weapons.

This monster officially became the Armed Forces of Ukraine in late 1991. The Soviet heritage also made



Ukrainian BTR-4 vehicles drive through the Khreschatyk street during a dress rehearsal to the Independence Day parade in downtown Kyiv on Aug. 18, 2021.

Volodymyr Petrov

Ukraine the world's 3rd most powerful nuclear nation, trailing behind only the United States and Russia.

The burden turned out much too heavy.

As early as in June 1992, Ukraine signed the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which forced it to get rid of over 5,300 tanks, 2,400 vehicles and 477 aircraft.

According to a Verkhovna Rada investigation into military embezzlement in 2004–2017, this opened the way to massive fire sales of Ukrainian hardware abroad, often at dirt cheap prices, for a total of nearly Hr 3.2 billion (\$120 million).

Between 1992 and 2012 alone, over 1,100 tanks, 1,200 vehicles, 500 artillery pieces, 130 airplanes and 100 helicopters were sold off, mostly to African and Middle Eastern militaries. Nearly 80% of Ukraine's arms production was also marked for export, often at the expense of Ukraine's own military needs.

The same was happening to the

Armed Forces' assets and real estate across the country.

But the military budget never saw the revenue from all these sales. In 1992, the Ukrainian military budget constituted 2.1% of the country's gross domestic product. By the eve of Russia's war in 2013, it fell to just 1%.

Severe budget cuts left hundreds of thousands of service members tossed aside. The military that started with over 900,000 personnel in 1991, had only 400,000 in 1992. By the time of the Russian invasion in 2014, it had only 120,900 active-duty service members – and, by some estimates, less than 5,000 combat-ready soldiers.

Those who decided to stay in the ranks had to cope with diminished training programs at all levels, as well as extremely poor maintenance and salaries. It was very common for military officers to find part-time jobs in civilian life or run small businesses to be able to provide for their families.

Some luckier Ukrainian soldiers had a chance to join peacekeeping missions that Ukraine used to run around the world – the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan or Africa – fighting along with Western militaries.

Ukraine was also weakened by making deals with the Kremlin. According to the 1997 partition agreement, Kyiv accepted just 17% of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet, although it officially shared the naval base of Sevastopol with Russia in Crimea.

Then, under its international commitments, Ukraine had to give up its strongest asset, its nuclear stockpile. By 1996, all of its nuclear weapons were eliminated or transferred to Russia, while its valuable Tupolev Tu-95 and Tu-160 strategic bombers were destroyed.

What Ukraine got in return was the ill-fated Budapest Memorandum of 1994 – under which the United

States, the United Kingdom and Russia offered their "security assurances" to Ukraine for it giving up on its nuclear status.

Disorientation

The 2010s were the worst years for the Ukrainian military.

Under President Viktor Yanukovich, the country's leadership went from selling off military equipment to destroying the military chain of command.

According to the parliamentary investigation commission, in the early 2010s, the Armed Forces' Joint Operative Command and Supporting Command were disbanded.

Experts said this completely derailed the military's command, control and maintenance system, as well as the country's air defense grid.

By 2013, amid numerous structural transformations, all Ukrainian military formations deployed to the Crimean Peninsula were subjected to Naval Command – which turned out almost overwhelmingly loyal to Russia.

The outcome of that decision is now carved in history.

When unmarked Russian troops invaded Crimea in February 2014, the trapped and disoriented Ukrainian formations in the peninsula begged for orders. But no one was there to command them to defend against the invaders.

According to then-Defense Minister Ihor Teniukh, in the heat of Russian annexation, Ukraine was capable of sending no more than 5,000 combat-capable and loyal troops. Of the nearly 18,000 Ukrainian troops stationed in Crimea, only 4,000 refused to defect to Russia and fled to the mainland without a fight.

Ukraine effectively lost its Sevastopol base and nearly 85% of its naval power to Russia.

Rise again

Russia's war in Donbas unfolded when the Armed Forces were only starting to come to their senses.

Few capable airborne and marine units – poorly equipped, relying heavily on civilian maintenance aid – joined the battle in the east along with scores of volunteering paramilitaries.

Pressed by the urgency to protect the country, the government launched extensive defense reforms. The Ukrainian military started to rise from ashes.

In spite of devastating defeats in the battles of Ilovaisk and Debaltsevo in 2014 and 2015, the Ukrainian forces managed to deter the enemy inside Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and stabilize the 420-kilometer front line it holds to this day.

Nearly 4,000 Ukrainian warfighters have perished in the battlefields of Donbas since 2014.

The Armed Forces, along with other security institutions, embraced a new grand policy of reaching full compatibility with NATO standards and shedding all Soviet-era practices. Thousands of new regulations and instructions have been introduced to drastically change the military functionality and turn it into a quality-driven, westernized force.

Under the new national security regulations, Ukraine has to spend at least 5% of its GDP on security, including 3% on the military. Thus, annual military budgets skyrocketed from Hr 26.9 billion (\$1 billion) in 2014 to Hr 117.5 billion (\$4.4 billion) in 2021.

The number of personnel in active service also increased, jumping from 165,000 in 2014 to 250,000 in 2020. President Volodymyr Zelensky's initiative to create a nationwide territorial defense grid raised the manpower cap by 261,000.

The NATO rapprochement was a success as well. Apart from numerous joint drills, in June 2019, Ukraine's 140th Special Operations Center was certified by the NATO Response Force. This was the first instance of a non-NATO formation being fully cleared for deployment with Alliance operations.

The Ukrainian military has considerably improved its maintenance, weaponry, its operational capability and its organization thanks to extensive foreign aid. Since 2014, the U.S. alone has spent close to \$2 billion to help Ukraine build up a new military, including modern lethal weapons.

However, according to multiple records, military media's optimistic reports cover a darker picture.

Starting in 2016, scores of Donbas soldiers and officers have been leaving the ranks in resentment. The patriotic surge of the early months of war has gone – what is now in the foreground is corruption, heaps of useless paperwork and Soviet-style leadership.

While Ukraine has achieved immense military progress since 2014, as a country at war, it can't afford to regress. ☹️



Ukrainian soldiers stand in a line to a polling station to cast their votes at the Desna military training range on Nov. 21, 2004.

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3 revolutions helped ensure Ukraine's true independence

By Anastasiia Lapatina
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In the last 30 years, Ukraine has witnessed one revolution every decade.

Time and again, Ukrainian people had risen against the government — first to demand independence, and then to protect it from corrupt politicians and Russian influence.

“This is all one revolution — a long one, with breaks, the goal of which is the creation of an independent and democratic Ukraine,” Volodymyr Viatrovych, a historian and former head of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, told the Kyiv Post.

The Kyiv Post revisited the events of the Revolution on Granite, the Orange Revolution, and the EuroMaidan Revolution to recollect Ukraine's continuing journey to political and cultural independence.

1990: Granite

“It is better to die than to live in the Soviet Union,” said a poster, attached to a tent, located on Kyiv's modern-day Independence Square, or Maidan Nezalezhnosti, in October 1990.

At the time, Ukraine was witnessing its first Maidan, which became a synonym for revolution. Hundreds of university students launched a nonviolent protest campaign to fight for Ukraine's independence. Having set up dozens of tents, students referred to their tent camp as “the territory free from communism.”

Five demands were made clear: the Ukrainian government must refuse to sign a new Union treaty with Moscow; call for a snap re-election of the parliament on a multiparty basis; nationalize the Communist Party property and ensure that Ukrainian conscripts could be sent for military service abroad only



Protesters advance towards new positions on Independence Square in Kyiv during the Revolution of Dignity on February 20, 2014. The uprising toppled Ukraine's pro-Russian dictator Viktor Yanukovich and solidified the country's European political course, but also left over a hundred Ukrainians dead from the rubber batons and bullets of riot police and government snipers, who tried to suppress the uprising.

with their consent. The protesters also called for the resignation of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers Vitaliy Masol.

Students held a hunger strike on the square's granite blocks for 16 days, and swayed history. The government voted to accept the strikers' demands on Oct. 17.

It took dozens of tents, thousands of people and meticulous planning and discipline to pull it off. The movement was highly organized. Each participant was registered and had a special pass to the tent camp. There were groups performing different tasks, such as providing medical aid and ensuring that everyone

adhered to the rules of the camp.

“We had a clear hierarchy, discipline, and an understanding that only joint efforts can achieve success,” said Oleksandr Donyi, the former head of the Ukrainian Student Association, who was one of the revolution's masterminds along with the head of the Student Brotherhood in Lviv Markiiian Ivashchysyn.

Donyi and Ivashchysyn spent six months planning the strike.

Over the course of 16 days, the two led negotiations with the government, spoke to the press and made TV appearances. Organized picketing groups overtook some of Kyiv's university buildings. Hundreds of students fled to Kyiv from all over the country. Some joined the hunger strike for days, some for weeks.

“Yet we were just students, not heroes,” Natalia Klymovska, who was 19 while participating in the revolution, told the Kyiv Post.

Klymovska remembers that while growing up in the Soviet Union, parents were scared to openly discuss their values with children.

“Every family was afraid,” she said. “But we grew up with different values. We knew that we wanted

to see Ukraine independent, and that many generations before us fought for this, and that we have to continue.”

Historian Viatrovych told the Kyiv Post that the main task of the Revolution on Granite was to actualize the issue of Ukraine's independence. It was crucial that the youth took the lead, he said.

“When the youth stood up in 1990, it meant that independence had a future. This was probably the main achievement of the Revolution on Granite — independence now mattered to the young generation.”

Ukraine declared independence 10 months later, on Aug. 24, 1991.

2004: Orange

“Together we are strong, and we won't be defeated,” was the popular chant of the Orange Revolution in 2004, when millions of Ukrainians took to the streets in late November to protect their right to free and fair elections.

On the night of the run-off presidential vote on Nov. 21, pro-Western candidate Viktor Yushchenko,



Presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko's supporters rejoice on Independence Square in Kyiv during the Orange Revolution after the Supreme Court of Ukraine ordered a re-vote of the Nov. 21, 2004, presidential election runoff on Friday, Dec. 3, 2004. The Orange Revolution started because the election was rigged in favor of Russian-backed candidate Viktor Yanukovich and ended with Yushchenko's triumph after the revote on Dec. 26, 2004.



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Revolutionary spirit propelled Ukraine forward in 1990, 2004 & again in 2013-14

page 14 →

believing that the election was rigged against him, called on his supporters to protest against electoral fraud.

Yushchenko's supporters flooded Independence Square just hours after the official exit-polls showed that the Kremlin-backed sitting Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich was leading by three percentage points.

Reports by local and international observers alleged that the vote was falsified.

Over the next few months, large-scale protests sparked all over the country. On some days, up to a million people gathered at the Independence Square in Kyiv, which again proved to be the heart of political resistance in Ukraine.

On Dec. 3, the Supreme Court declared that election results couldn't be finalized because of the scale of falsifications and ordered a revote of the run-off.

As expected, Yuschenko secured the presidential seat, leading by over 2 million votes.

"I did not expect our people to rise up in this way," Yushchenko's wife Kateryna Yushchenko told the Kyiv Post.

The generosity of people from all walks of life stunned her the most during the revolution.

She recalled talking to a young

man who was quietly sitting in his expensive Mercedes near the Independence Square.

"I'm just here in case somebody is cold, so they can come and sit here for a bit," he told her.

Kateryna Yushchenko, born in a Ukrainian diaspora family in the U.S., said that "Ukrainian people have always been freedom-loving and strong."

"But for too many years we weren't allowed to express that strength," she added.

Given the history, it was all the more powerful to see the nation rise up at times like the Orange Revolution.

"What we saw on the square in 2004 was extremely inspiring," Kateryna Yushchenko said.

The success of the Orange Revolution made Ukraine stand out among other Soviet republics, some of which descended into autocracies.

"The best examples of that are Belarus and Russia, which now just imitate elections," Viatrovych said. "Ukrainians fought for their right to choose in 2004, and this turned out to be extremely important."

2013–2014: EuroMaidan

Overthrowing Kremlin-backed dictator Yanukovich and solidifying Ukraine's Western geopolitical course, the EuroMaidan Revolution, also known as the Revolution of



Students lay in folding beds in a tent camp, with one poster saying "It is better to die than live in the Soviet Union," at Independence Square in Kyiv during the Granite Revolution in October 1990. To prevent the signing of the new union treaty with Russia, students organized mass hunger strikes and protests until Oct. 17, 1990, when the government agreed to satisfy all of the students' demands.

Dignity, was a profound transformation of Ukrainian society. One of its main slogans, "Ukraine is Europe," reflected Ukraine's fundamental goal — real independence from Russia.

Ukrainians first took to the streets en masse in November 2013 when Yanukovich refused to sign the long-awaited association agreement with the European Union.

The protest was relatively small until, on Nov. 30, riot police violently attacked several hundreds demonstrators that camped on Maidan, most of whom were university students. The next day, hundreds of thousands of people flooded central Kyiv with Ukrainian and European Union flags in defiance of the government's tyranny.

Corruption, economic hardship and the government's flirtation with imperialist Russia led to a massive political upheaval. For the next three months, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians wouldn't leave Maidan. They stood for freedom, defying the riot police, paid mercenaries and government snipers.

Ninety-three days, at least 104 killed and over a thousand injured later, Yanukovich fled to Russia, where he still resides.

"I was afraid we were going to lose our independence," said Tetyana Chornovol, a former journalist, lawmaker and active participant of the EuroMaidan Revolution.

One of the top investigative journalists at the time, she was attacked and severely beaten on the outskirts of Kyiv during the revolution. It was one of the first targeted attacks on key activists.

Viatrovych said that the EuroMaidan Revolution showed Ukrainians' willingness to break away from Russia, geopolitically, culturally, and mentally.

"Clearly, it made some people concerned to the point of using military aggression to try and prevent this process," he said.

Ukraine entered a new era marked by war, after Russia illegally annexed Crimea and invaded Donbas in 2014. But it also set out on a journey of long-awaited reforms.

The succeeding government swift-

ly reversed the course of its predecessors and signed the EU association agreement. This allowed for freer trade and deeper political cooperation, on condition that Ukraine will carry out political and economic reforms. In 2017, the EU granted Ukraine a visa-free regime.

The EuroMaidan also sparked a national awakening in all spheres of society — more people began speaking Ukrainian and supporting Ukrainian artists and businesses.

"For the first time in Ukraine's modern history, patriotism became fashionable. Since then, the level of national identity has remained high regardless of trends or political events," Chornovol said. "Ukrainians now have the strength to overcome anything."

Viatrovych believes that the three revolutions were stages of the same process, of Ukraine evolving into a democratic and truly independent country.

And while all three were profound events in Ukrainian history, that process "is still not finished," the historian said. ☪

Doing business in Ukraine: 30 years of independence

Advertisement



Let me start with a provocative statement: it is really easy and safe to do business in Ukraine today. As discussed in the article below, this is not a naive view of a Ukrainian lawyer but pure facts and statistics. Moreover, if you compare Ukraine with its neighbors, the contrast is startling: information transparency of companies coupled with super-fast registration procedures and special regime for IT companies are astonishing.

Soviet past

When Ukraine appeared from the collapse of the Soviet Union, it barely had any commercial businesses and little private property. As a result, Ukraine spent the first decade of its independence privatizing the vast majority of large and small Soviet enterprises, transferring land and apartments into private ownership, and allowing commercial businesses to appear and flourish. By 2000, Ukraine had an established (albeit developing) market economy that suffered from corrup-

tion, raiding, and enormous bureaucracy. It had the Soviet legacy mixed with the Wild West style of doing business. To see how things changed, it is better to compare Ukraine in 2000 with its current state in 2021.

Public registers

In 2000 Ukraine only had 4 publicly accessible registers that focused primarily on company registration. In contrast, in 2021, Ukraine has nearly 70 public registers accessible online that provide helpful information to companies in most business areas. Services such as Opendatabot enable comprehensive searches on any company and instant notification on any changes in the registers to its shareholders and management. You can even see financials that companies regularly submit to the state authorities.

Starting a business

When I started my career in February 2000, it took me 30–40 days to register a new business in Kyiv and involved 14 different procedures. Today, if you are really in a hurry, you could register a company (usually an LLC) in just 2 hours and complete most procedures (up to 6) online. Numerous notaries around the country will be happy to help you if you want to do it in person.

Minority shareholder protection

Doing Business Report by World Bank in 2007 ranked Ukraine 142 out of 175 countries in protection of minority shareholders. Today, Ukraine ranks 45, and further improvement is expected soon with the adoption of the new law on joint stock companies. Ukrainian corporate law now

provides enormous flexibility for private companies' corporate governance, shareholders' agreements are gaining popularity, and court practices have filled in most ambiguous gaps in corporate disputes. At the same time, the latter are significantly less prone to corruption since procedural laws were substantially improved in the last 5 years.

Licensed activities

As a post-Soviet bureaucratic state, Ukraine required licenses for 65 types of activities in 2000. Many more permits and authorizations were required at that time, too. This number of licenses dropped to 34 today, with many licenses now issued online and searchable. Ukraine abolished numerous redundant permits altogether.

Work permits

Work permits for foreign nationals used to be notorious, with long waiting lines, review periods of at least 30 days, and the often absurd discretion of state officials. It now takes up to 7 days to get a work permit. In some cases, waiting is not required at all.

Property registration

Real estate registration was no less notorious, often requiring up to 90 days to register a building or apartment and cost 4.3% of the total value of the property.

Registration with the Bureau of Technical Inventory (BTI) was a top-3 source of corruption in Ukraine for many years. Today it takes one day to register your new apartment in the public register without any need to deal with the BTI, and the

cost dropped to 1.7% of the value. In most cases, a private notary will act as a one-stop-shop, with whom you can buy or sell land, buildings, or apartments.

International treaties

Ukraine nearly doubled the number of international treaties (including bilateral investment treaties) from 2,405 in 2000 to 4,647 in 2021. It gives confidence to investors that in case of a dispute with the government, an investor may seek protection in investment arbitration.

Diya City

As I prepared this piece, the Law on Stimulation of Data Economy in Ukraine came into force. It created a special regime for qualified IT companies at least for the next 25 years. Among other things, it envisages flexible employment of IT specialists and even more flexibility in contracts and corporate governance. If this regime proves popular in the future, it is likely to be expanded to other industries throughout Ukraine.

This is not to say that Ukraine has nothing to improve. On the contrary, the Ukrainian legal community works hard to implement further improvements in Ukrainian law and fully harmonize it with the EU legislation. However, the progress is remarkable and deserves praise and attention both from foreign and local investors.

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Ukraine's linguistic & cultural revival overcomes repression

By Dylan Carter
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The EuroMaidan Revolution that drove out President Viktor Yanukovich in 2014 ushered in a new era for Ukraine.

The country began to embrace a new European identity, a Euro-Atlantic vision, and above all, the cultural revival of its ancestral language, Ukrainian.

While it may now seem obvious that Ukrainian should be the national language of Ukraine, the language has endured centuries of repression. The Soviet Union heavily discouraged its use in public settings and imperial Russia in the late 19th century outright banned its use in literature.

Now, 30 years since Ukraine's independence from the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian language is getting more use at home and in the workplace. Ukrainian literature now receives international recognition. Use of the language has renewed an appreciation for Ukrainian culture and history.

According to a 2017 Razumkov Center poll, more than two thirds (68%) of Ukrainians now consider Ukrainian to be their native language, compared with just 50% of those interviewed by Rating Group in 2012. Other polls have shown that around half of Ukrainians actually speak Ukrainian at home.

This linguistic awakening has reshaped Ukraine and given new meaning to Ukrainian identity. It distanced Ukraine from its history of Russian influence and framed Ukrainian history within a larger European heritage.

Language laws & lives

Inna Sovsun, a lawmaker with the 20-member Voice faction in the Ukrainian parliament, is a passionate advocate for the Ukrainian language. Having grown up as a Ukrainian speaker in the heavily Russophone Kharkiv, Sovsun experienced first-hand discrimination towards her native language.

"Nobody directly told me we had to speak Russian, but it was just a matter of fact, that was the way it is," Sovsun remembered. "I would get bullied at kindergarten because I spoke Ukrainian."

Once labeled *khokhlushka*, a pejorative term for Ukrainian women, by Russian-speaking children, she later came to Kyiv and found comfort in the increasing use of the Ukrainian language in everyday life.

Despite statistical evidence to suggest that Ukrainian is on the rise, Sovsun agreed that while many people professed to be primary Ukrainian speakers, there remains a great deal of pressure to use Russian in a social context.

"People still see Russian as the language of power...the language of richer people. And that's why people want to pretend that they belong in that stratus, and so people are secretly very ashamed of speaking Ukrainian on the streets,"



Visitors of Book Arsenal flip through books in Kyiv on June 23, 2021. Ukrainian literature has seen a resurgence since independence. Ukrainian authors such as Serhiy Zhadan, Yuriy Andrukhovych, and Taras Prohasko have received international recognition for their Ukrainian-language literature. Award-winning writer Oksana Zabuzhko's "Field Work in Ukrainian Sex" has been translated into 15 different languages.

Sovsun said.

Having shaped educational policy in Ukraine between 2014 and 2016, Sovsun had a clear vision on how Ukraine's law on education and 2017 language laws have had a positive impact on Ukraine.

"Based on my own experience, when I used to go on the street in Kharkiv and speak Ukrainian, I would see aggression... but now when I go to a café and there are some waiters and they hear me speak in Ukrainian, they can now respond, and they are very happy to use it... they see it as a kind of bonding," Sovsun said. "People now speak Ukrainian because they now know how to speak the language, they have the capacity."

According to a 2017 Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research report, a majority of Ukrainians now support Ukrainian being the state language. Respondents from cities where many people speak Russian, such as Kharkiv, are also showing signs of softening their attitudes to the Ukrainian language. Most of them don't feel like they're part of any language war and are eager to learn Ukrainian as long as minority languages are also preserved.

Even though the language's prestige is rising, Sovsun has had concerns about how Ukrainian had been taught in schools. She lamented that students studied decidedly "Soviet" literature and complex grammar rules, making learning Ukrainian a chore rather than fostering a love for the language.

Literary development

From Ukraine's oral tradition of

dumy to literary prose, the Ukrainian literature has a long history.

The first recorded written Ukrainian text, written in 1798, is Kotliarevsky's *Eneida*; a burlesque heroic-epic poem.

Now, more than 200 years later, Ukrainian literature has been revived, with authors such as Serhiy Zhadan, Yuriy Andrukhovych, and Taras Prohasko receiving international recognition for their Ukrainian-language works.

The impact of Ukrainian literature need not be limited to the academic and literary fields, according to literary scholar and author Tetyana Ogarkova. The post-independence revival has had a profound impact of the social and cultural development of Ukraine, and all its citizens.

"Modern Ukrainian literature (that of after 1991) is one of the major factors for today's Ukrainian identity... The 'Founder of the Nation' is neither Prince nor Tsar, nor philosopher, but rather a poet, Taras Shevchenko," Ogarkova wrote.

Taras is such a symbol that multiple universities, parks, metro stations and districts are named in his honor. Monuments to the legendary Ukrainian writer can be found across former Soviet states and even in North America.

The Ukrainian literature, undoubtedly a cornerstone of Ukrainian culture and language, has helped forge Ukraine's identity on the contemporary world stage.

Ukrainian civil society has recognised the soft power potential of renewed literary development. The Drahoman Prize, which awards Ukrainian translators for exporting

Ukrainian literature to international audiences, founded in 2020 by the Ukrainian Institute, PEN Ukraine, and the Ukrainian Book Institute, has helped promote Ukraine on the world stage.

"Our independence since 1991 has spurred a greater momentum in Ukrainian literature... These leading authors have created a distinct anti-imperial identity, which is profoundly Ukrainian, but at the same time, dynamic, rebellious, and lyrical," Ogarkova notes.

The scholar noted that through education and exposure, little by little, Ukrainian youth had begun to appreciate the value of the Ukrainian language, especially in the face of Russia, which "does not accept the existence of an independent, free, and authentic Ukraine."

The Russian switch

Russian remains widely spoken in Ukraine, despite policies promoting Ukrainian. Some speak Russian because they had a Russian education, some for its perceived prestige and others are ethnic Russians speaking their mother tongue.

The use of the Russian language in Ukraine remains hotly contested, with some perceiving it as a hangover of Russian Imperialism, and others regarding it as a lingua-franca for inter-ethnic communication.

Some Ukrainians are now making a conscious effort to ditch the language in favour of Ukrainian, either for political, social, or economic motivations.

Of those most actively ditching the Russian language are Ukraine's Crimean community. Following Russia's illegal occupation of the

Crimean Peninsula in 2014, both Ukrainian and Tatar communities have faced discrimination, deportation and detention by Russian occupying forces.

Russian is the main language of communication in Crimea for both Ukrainian and Tatar communities. Now, with many Crimeans fleeing Russian occupation, the language is being viewed increasingly critically. Many former and current Crimean residents are switching from the language of their invaders and adopting the more inclusive Ukrainian cultural identity.

There are many public figures who have already made the switch, many of whom come from Crimea. Tatar figures include pop star and former Eurovision competitor Jamala, actor and director Akhtem Seitablaiev, and film director Nariman Aliev, who all made the switch from Russian to Ukrainian after the Russian occupation of their homeland.

Even non-native Crimeans are dropping their native tongue. Former adviser to the head of the Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine, Sergey Kostynskyi, was born in Simferopol into a Russian-speaking Ukrainian family. In outrage after the annexation of Crimea, he abandoned the Russian language and became a passionate advocate for Ukrainian.

"I was born in the early 80s in Crimea," Kostynskyi writes. "And was brought up in a Russian-speaking environment... there were no Ukrainian-language kindergartens or schools."

"In Crimea, me and my parents spoke Russian... Everything changed in 2014, after the Russian occupation of Crimea. This event became, for me, a symbolic rape, a form of humiliation. One day my hometown, Simferopol, became a stranger to me."

Kostynskyi initially remained in Crimea but left after persecution of Ukrainians and Tatars became unbearable and soon decided to ditch the Russian language, including music and books in Russian.

"Immediately, from the first days of the occupation, I agreed with my mother exclusively in Ukrainian... I refused to listen to and watch Russian music and movies... Since 2014, I have been studying my native Ukrainian language, the language of my parents, our native culture and history," Kostynskyi stated.

As noted by Kostynskyi, it appears the Russian language, as a cultural product, is declining in Ukraine because of Russian aggression and imperialism.

For Sovsun, Ogarkova, and Kostynskyi the Ukrainian language, above all, is illustrative of their distinct identity. For these advocates leading the charge for Ukrainization, Ukrainian has become a cultural cornerstone for their vision for an independent, modern, and European Ukraine, which is linguistically and culturally distinct from Russia. ☪

The failed coup that led up to declaration of independence



Bohdan Nahaylo

It was 30 years ago, on Aug. 19, 1991, when a group of Soviet hardliners sought to turn back the wheel of history. They attempted a putsch in Moscow and for several days the fate of the Soviet Union, and understandably also of the then still Soviet Ukrainian republic, hung in the balance.

As we approach the 30th anniversary of Ukraine's independence it is worth recalling what this attempted putsch was all about, what its implications and consequences were, and what role it played in precipitating the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emergence of an independent Ukraine.

The aim of the Communist conservatives was to put the brakes on the process of democratization that had been triggered by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev with his policies of perestroika and glasnost. But, in particular, they wanted to preserve the centrally controlled Soviet empire masquerading as a federation of republics and block his scheme to preserve this unitary state through a new treaty with the increasingly nationally self-assertive non-Russians.

Tough Soviet rule

By this time, Ukraine, where Soviet rule had remained tougher than in

other non-Russian republics, had stirred. Following the example being set in the Baltic republics, an alliance of democratic patriotic forces had coalesced in 1989 in the Rukh movement and was promoting an agenda leading to independence.

Moreover, not only had the Soviet Ukrainian parliament affirmed state sovereignty of the republic on July 16, 2020, but also some of its communist leaders, the so-called "sovereignty communists" led by Leonid Kravchuk, were standing up to Gorbachev and seeking maximum freedom from Moscow.

But it was far from easy sailing. The Communists were still in power and dominated the Soviet Ukrainian parliament.

Yeltsin as catalyst

In Moscow, the liberal Communist, Boris Yeltsin, broke ranks, adopted a democratic position and in challenging Gorbachev promoted the state sovereignty of the Russian Federation. Unexpectedly, and unwittingly, Yeltsin turned out to be both the Russian ally and catalyst that Ukraine's pro-independence forces, and its increasingly nationally minded Communists like Kravchuk, needed at that time.

Let's recall for the record what had been happening in the previous



Leonid Kravchuk, as the first newly elected president of independent Ukraine, puts the presidential jewels around his neck on Dec. 5, 1991 in Kyiv.

months as "Soviet Ukraine" was seeking to implement its newly proclaimed sovereignty.

Asserting sovereignty

During the final months of 1990, Ukraine managed to assert its sovereignty by bypassing Moscow and signing several important agreements and declarations directly with other Soviet republics and neighboring states. In September, October and November, Hungary Poland and the Russian Federation respectively formally recognized Ukrainian sovereignty. Ukraine also adopted a higher profile at the United Nations and applied for direct representation in the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe process.

Another indication of its new independent course came in January 1991 when the presidium of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet publicly condemned the Soviet military crackdown time in defiant Lithuania.

Referendum

When Gorbachev stepped up pressure on their republics to sign a new union treaty, by announcing

an all-union referendum on the future of the USSR, Kravchuk came up with an ingenious compromise: the Ukrainian parliament decided that Ukraine would conduct its own opinion poll on the same day as the referendum, a poll that would qualify the terms in which Ukraine would agree to remain part of the Soviet Union.

The three regions of western Ukraine also decided to add a third question, polling voters on their attitude towards Ukrainian independence.

In the voting on the March 17, 1991, 70.5% of the voters (58% of those eligible to vote) still supported the preservation of the Union. But this result was offset by the more enthusiastic endorsement (80.2% of those who voted) of the supplementary proposal which specified that Ukraine would only join a new "union of sovereigns."

Rejecting Gorbachev

For the record, in Kyiv, a city which had which until recently had seemed thoroughly Russified, the majority rejected Gorbachev's proposal; and

in western Ukraine over 90% of the voters supported independence.

Kravchuk interpreted the Ukrainian referendum results as a vote "for the kind of union in which Ukraine would be a sovereign state with full rights, a state that would be a master in its own house."

At the end of June 1991, the Soviet Ukrainian parliament upset the Soviet leader's plans by voting to postpone further discussion of the proposed new union treaty until mid-September.

Meanwhile under Kravchuk's guidance and continuing pressure from Rukh, the work of parliament entered a more constructive phase. Measures were taken to reorganize and rationalize the state administration, and a concept of a new Ukrainian constitution was agreed upon. Although conservative communist deputies still held a majority in the parliament, it formally endorsed the following fundamental democratic principles brackets: a multiparty system, the rule of law, respect for human rights, religious

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Just like independent Ukraine itself, Ukrainian company DEPS is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.

The company's creation is similar to the stories of many legendary American businesses that started in a garage: a group of student innovators developed one of the first Ukrainian satellite receivers in a laboratory at Kyiv Polytechnic Institute. The persistent innovators took a chance and launched serial production of the receiver under the brand DEPS right away.

This started the success story of DEPS. Over the next three decades, the company continued to expand its presence in the telecommunications market of Ukraine, driving the industry's growth.

Through the telecom solution supplied by the company, Ukrai-

nian providers were able to increase the Internet speed from the laughable 2.5 kbit/s to the now standard 1 Gbit/s. Every Ukrainian received not only access to the Internet, but also to IP telephony, interactive TV, as well as an opportunity to connect security and automation systems at households and companies.

"Today, we hold leading positions among the equipment suppliers in the Ukrainian telecommunications market and we are proud that 99% of the country's networks are built on our solutions," stated Hennadiy Lebedev, Distribution Director at DEPS. "DEPS is the No.1 importer of cabling and wiring products for telecommunications networks in Ukraine."

DEPS is also a system integrator of the largest projects in our country. "We have the required competences for designing, implementing and maintaining corporate telecommunications systems. Our portfolio features dozens of implemented projects on development of IT infrastructure of major geographically dispersed companies all across Ukraine," shared Oleksandr Linets, Corporate Sales and System Integration Director at DEPS.

Thanks to the powerful technical department with R&D, DEPS knows everything about cutting edge technologies of the future and can influence the determination and implementation of the Ukrainian telecommunications market development strategies.

For example, two years ago, DEPS was the first company in Ukraine to deliver solutions based on the IoT technology to industrial companies. "IoT technologies offered by DEPS are efficient; they are created for the achievement of the best result at minimum costs for

their introduction and servicing," said Yevheniy Yevtushenko, Business Development Director at DEPS. "The Internet of Things and Industry 4.0 are not ideas from the books written by futurists; it is now a reality. Technological solutions that were considered surreal ten years ago are now available in the Ukrainian market!"

The company's core is its team – over 250 professionals united by one common goal: to improve the quality of every person's life with the help of high technologies.

DEPS is continuously looking for bright minds, working with specialized learning institutions. The company also has its own educational center with regular skills improvement courses in the area of telecommunications and IT systems, providing training to qualified, client-oriented professionals of the telecom industry of Ukraine.

DEPS is also spreading its values around the world. Telecommunications infrastructures in over 10 countries are being built on DEPS solutions, including Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, Moldova, Georgia and others.

"The 30th anniversary is an important milestone for us. We have traveled a long path, developing the telecommunications industry and growing together with Independent Ukraine," says Nataliia Sharova, Executive Director at DEPS. "Development of a business and a country requires the use of modern information technologies; and we continue to search for better products, looking at the opening horizons with confidence."

The optimistic view of the future is also reflected in the slogan of the 30th anniversary of DEPS – Moving Forward Together!

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No, Ukraine is not dangerous: 10 misconceptions debunked

By Asami Terajima
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It's irritating when people call it "the Ukraine." The nation is simply Ukraine.

The common use of "the" article is a hard habit to shake for Westerners, who got used to "the Ukraine" as a way to describe the territory when it was part of the Soviet Union. That's just one example of the world's ignorance about Ukraine. Here are 10 common misconceptions:

Ukraine is dangerous

Russia launched its ongoing war against Ukraine in the eastern Donbas, 700 kilometers southeast of Kyiv, in 2014. More than 13,000 people have been killed. Casualties have become fewer since 2015, with the advent of periodic cease-fires and unfulfilled agreements to end the war. While the front line is dangerous, the rest of the country is safe. Outside of Kremlin-occupied parts of the Donbas and Crimea, the war has not touched Ukraine's cities and villages, where life is calm and vibrant.

Ukraine is in a civil war

Russian propaganda tries to disguise its military aggression in eastern Ukraine and make it seem like Ukraine is fighting a civil war. This is completely false. The presence of Russian soldiers has been irrefutably documented. Ukraine has detained Russian soldiers on its territory many times. Russians have acknowledged receiving corpses of slain soldiers. A Russian missile launcher brought down Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 in 2014, killing 298 passengers. The militants fighting against Ukrainian troops in Donbas are all dependent on leadership and funding from Russia. International organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) consider Russia to be a party involved in the war. Russia's use of propaganda is another facet of the war, sowing misinformation and trying to turn Ukrainians and their allies against one another.

Ukraine is part of Russia

On July 13, Russian President Vladimir Putin published an article



A drone picture shows an aerial view of the Saint Sophia's Cathedral, Kyiv's oldest standing church, a famous historical and architectural monument built in the first half of the 11th century.

portraying Ukraine and Russia as one nation, implying that the two countries together make up "one Russian world." Unfortunately, this false belief has found purchase in some parts of the world.

In fact, Ukraine and Russia are two different countries and people. Ukraine's history dates back to the times of the Kyivan Rus, a 9th century state that predated the Grand Duchy of Moscow. Though Ukraine has often been torn between its neighbors, it has had periods of independence — most prominently during the Cossack Era. The Ukrainian language and cultural heritage are distinct.

It's true that Ukraine and Russia share a common past under the Russian Empire and later, the Soviet Union, which gave them some common cultural ground. Even so, Ukraine persistently tried to break free. In 1991, it finally declared independence, supported by 92% of votes in a nationwide referendum. In 2014, Ukraine ousted a pro-Kremlin president, once again

proving its desire to stand apart from Russia.

Crimea always Russian?

The Russian leadership portrayed its illegal annexation of Crimea in March 2014 as the long-awaited "return" of the peninsula to its proper home. The Kremlin's argument that Crimeans have always wanted to be a part of Russia is based on an illegal sham referendum and the systematic oppression of dissent that still continues to this day. Both the United Nations and the OSCE declared the referendum illegitimate. More than 135,000 of the nearly two million residents have fled Crimea since the peninsula was seized by Russia during a military invasion.

While Russia argues that Crimea has always been a part of Russia, less than 6% of Crimea's written history from the 9th century to today is tied to Russia. By 2014, the peninsula belonged to Russia for only a total of 168 years. Crimea was controlled by Soviet Ukraine longer than by Soviet Russia. And contrary to the popular belief that Crimea was a gift to Ukraine in 1954, the transfer was made to improve the peninsula's poor economy resulting from water scarcity and a dearth of farming.

Radiation from Chernobyl

In the early hours of April 26, 1986, the Pripjat became the site of the worst nuclear power accident in history. The explosion of reactor 4 at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant claimed 31 lives and exposed thousands of people to harmful or fatal radiation. To this day, Chernobyl is the first thing many people think of when Ukraine is brought up. Now, 35 years later, people living outside the Chernobyl exclusion zone have nothing to worry about. The major-

ity of radioactive material has been removed or buried and the government regularly monitors radiation levels. Kyiv, 104 kilometers south of Chernobyl, is safe. The exclusion zone has been opened for public tours in 2011, when authorities deemed it safe to visit. Today, most tours are day trips but there's also the possibility to stay overnight in a small hotel nearby.

'Third-world' country

Despite being one of the poorest countries in Europe, Ukraine has never been considered a third-world country. The term was used during the Cold War to distinguish countries in Asia and Africa that weren't aligned with the United States or the Soviet Union. And since Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union at the time, it would be historically incorrect to call it a "third world country."

Today, the outdated and offensive term is used to describe the poorest and underdeveloped countries. While Ukraine's GDP per capita of \$3,653 in 2020 is low compared to the rest of Europe, it's higher than in the poorest parts of the world. Ukraine ranked 74th out of 189 countries in the United Nations' Human Development Index that measures the locals' ability to live a long healthy life. The country is also highly educated and technologically advanced.

Agricultural nation

Long known as the "breadbasket of Europe" for having black fertile soil, agriculture undoubtedly plays a major role in the Ukrainian economy. But Ukraine is also home to one of the world's largest iron ore deposits, making the country the 7th biggest producer and 5th biggest exporter of iron ore in the world. The two main industries, agriculture

and metallurgy, were mostly unaffected by the pandemic and helped the country perform better than expected last year.

In 2020, exports of Ukrainian goods amounted to \$49.3 billion — \$18.6 billion (38%) came from trade in agro-food products and \$4.42 billion (9%) from selling heavy industries abroad. While agriculture still dominates Ukraine's economy, other industries such as its booming IT sector are pulling the country forward as well.

Ukrainian = Russian

Foreigners often make the mistake that Ukrainian and Russian are very similar to each other. While Russian is widely spoken in most parts of Ukraine, the two languages are as different as German and English with a lexical similarity of approximately 60%. Both Ukrainian and Russian are colloquial languages with an origin that can be traced back to the Kyivan Rus.

The two languages developed apart from each other and underwent different influences. Tribes to the east came under the rule of the Grand Duchy of Moscow and formed various dialects, including Russian. During the reign of Peter the Great, the Russian language also adopted many words from French and other European languages. Meanwhile, tribes to the west were governed by Polish-Lithuanian nobility prior to the 18th century, with Ukrainian being among the dialects created. The vocabulary used in Ukrainian is more similar to Polish (70%), Slovak (66%) and Belarusian (84%) than to Russian (62%).

Women & rich foreigners

It's undeniable that foreign men sometimes fall victims to romance scams orchestrated by Ukrainian women. Women in Ukraine have a reputation for being beautiful but it's important not to forget the fact that they are also known to be intelligent and hard-working. An increasing number of them have become financially independent over the past few years and there is nothing stopping them from taking up management positions. While some continue to chase rich foreigners, as do people in many countries, it would be wrong to assume that it's the case for all Ukrainian women.

It's very cold

It's a common mistake foreigners make when they come to Ukraine — packing a lot of winter clothes thinking that it will be very cold. Ukraine mostly has a temperate climate with cold winters and hot summers. The country has been experiencing a change in weather patterns over the last few decades. Winters have become milder while summers are now far warmer and drier. There have been more cases of drought and the temperature may reach 40 degrees Celsius on hot summer days. The warmest days are in July and the cold season typically starts in November. ☺



A visitor takes a picture in what was a kindergarten in the Chernobyl Exclusion zone during a tour on July 9, 2017.

Bohdan Nahaylo: Kravchuk seizes moment in August 1991

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freedom, and guarantees of the rights of national minorities.

Direct elections

In July 1990, parliament also approved the creation of the presidential system with a directly elected president. The Ukrainian government headed at that time by Vitold Fokin embarked on a gradual and cautious transition to a market economy.

This then was the situation in August, with the non-Russian republics pressing hard to maximize their sovereignty, or even, as in the case of the Baltic republics to break free, when the hardliners decided they had to act and restore control. They did, very clumsily on the very eve of day that Gorbachev's declared a new Union Treaty would be signed.

The attempted putsch suddenly placed in jeopardy everything that had been achieved. Kravchuk and his team were confronted with hardline security officials demanding they support the putschists and temporized. This drew a barrage of criticism from the democratic camp. They were even reminded that Gorbachev was being held under house arrest in Crimea, that is, on the territory of sovereign Ukraine.

Rejecting putsch

For a few tense days of uncertainty, the building of the Ukrainian Writers' Union became the center of national opposition to the putsch. Thousands of protesters gathered in the center of Kyiv to say no to the putschists.

At one of them, the Ukrainian poet Dmytro Pavlychko called on the



A picture taken on Aug. 23, 1991, shows Russian President Boris Yeltsin (R) orders Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow to read a statement during a session of the Russian parliament.

Soviet Ukrainian parliament to assert control over military units stationed in Ukraine and to appeal to the outside world to recognize Ukraine's independence.

By Aug. 22 Yeltsin, who had mobilized and led public resis-

tance to the putsch in Moscow, had emerged victorious and Gorbachev had returned and to the capital. It was only then that Kravchuk finally agreed to convene an extraordinary session of the Ukrainian parliament two days later — on a Saturday.

It was against this background of outrage and relief that the Ukrainian parliament met and, with a shaken Kravchuk presiding, went on to proclaim Ukraine's independence. But that deserves a separate treatment.

Bohdan Nahaylo is a British-Ukrainian journalist and veteran Ukraine watcher based in Kyiv, Ukraine. He was formerly a senior United Nations official and policy adviser, and director of Radio Liberty's Ukrainian Service. 🇺🇦



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When government fails, people power takes over

By Yana Mokhonchuk
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When Ukraine's government fails its citizens, the people take matters into their own hands.

They have raised revolutions, helped impoverished retirees meet their needs and advanced social progress on issues such as LGBTQ rights.

"Social transformation in Ukraine is on the rise," Yevhen Hlibovytskyi, the expert on long-term strategies, told the Kyiv Post. "We are in the mode of accelerated development."

The EuroMaidan Revolution that deposed Kremlin-backed President Viktor Yanukovich in 2014 was a turning point.

"Ukraine was conceived in 1991, and obtained independence in 2014," Hlibovytskyi said. "We've done what was almost impossible to imagine — we actually broke a very long trend of imprisonment."

Social responsibility

Besides making money, some businesses also want to do the right thing.

"I was always looking for deeper meanings," entrepreneur Yuriy Fylyuk told the Kyiv Post. "There is always a moment when you realize that just making money is not interesting."

Fylyuk is the co-founder of three socially-oriented projects based in Ivano-Frankivsk, a city of 237,000 located 600 kilometers west of Kyiv. They include development platform Teple Misto, community restaurant Urban Space 100 and impact investment center Promprylad. Renovation.

Since its launch in 2015, Teple Misto has successfully financed 43 projects and spent almost \$371,190 in 2020 on various city initiatives. The organization attracts funding from businesses and grants.

During its six years of existence, Urban Space 100 spent \$126,539 on 127 projects like planting trees, creating courses for children with disabilities, restoring historical buildings, developing Ivano-Frankivsk's cultural life, launching Urban Space Radio and many others.

Fylyuk says that such restaurants usually peak in their second year. But Urban Space 100 is still going strong in its seventh.

Promprylad.Renovation focuses on four development areas: socially conscious business, urban planning, contemporary art and education. The project is meant to raise up the region from its post-Soviet hangover into an era of modern sustainable development.

Equal rights

The invisibility and vulnerability of LGBTQ people is gradually giving way to mass events that engage a wide audience.

Human rights marches are now held in Kyiv, Odesa, Kryvyi Rih, Kharkiv, Kherson, Zaporizhia and Chernivtsi.

Oleg Petrasjuk



A woman dances at a pride event in the rave format on Bankova Street near the President's Office on July 30, 2021. The participants of Rave Pride wanted to draw attention to the government's inaction on violence against the LGBTQ community and police arbitrariness.

The latest march in the capital on June 23, 2019 gathered a record 8,000 attendees.

However, it wasn't always like that.

The first attempts to organize an Equality March in Kyiv in 2012 were in the shadow of physical assault threats from ultra-nationalist activists.

A major shift took place in 2016, when, for the first time in Ukrainian history, police took over the protection of Equality March.

"The fact that they are protected by the police is a very good indicator because 10 years ago we couldn't dream of such a thing," Anna Dovgopol, the gender democ-

cracy program coordinator of the Kyiv office of the Heinrich Boell Foundation, told the Kyiv Post.

The mass media is also gradually moving away from the use of outdated terms for the LGBTQ community.

"The tone of the Ukrainian press has changed a lot, Ukrainian journalists became the first allies of the LGBTQ movement in Ukraine," Andrii Kravchuk, the advocacy expert of LGBTQ Human Rights Center Our World, told the Kyiv Post. The organization, functioning for 21 years, documents crimes based on homophobia and publishes reports on the situation of the LGBTQ.

The community can also take refuge in the countless raves, which are gaining in popularity. However, every action seems to provoke a reaction. Some Ukrainian churches that stand for so-called "traditional values" have opposed LGBTQ rallies.

"If it weren't for the propaganda of the churches, I think that Ukraine would be a much more advanced state," Kravchuk says.

Environmentalism

The public is more environmentally aware with each passing year.

People increasingly use more bicycles, give up using plastic bags, dispose of batteries and sort gar-

bage. Many coffee shops offer a discount for customers who bring their own cups.

The Ukrainian organization Ekoltava, which operates throughout Ukraine, has been educating people on how to sort garbage and recycle waste since 2013.

Over six years, nonprofit Let's do It, Ukraine — part of the Let's Do It World movement — has united more than 2.5 million Ukrainian citizens who are active in social projects.

"You can volunteer based on what you can do," Iuliia Markhel, the founder of Let's Do It Ukraine, told the Kyiv Post. She says that people can help the environment by volunteering in marketing, management or even social research.

During the 2020 World Cleaning Day in Ukraine, held annually on the third Saturday of September, the organization teamed up with 138,920 participants in 24 oblasts of Ukraine who cleaned more than 763.7 tons of garbage out of 2,138 locations. They also recycled around 180 tons material.

"Our mission is to build a culture of cleanliness, caring for the environment and conscious consumption," she says.

Volunteer movement

Since the EuroMaidan Revolution the percentage of Ukrainians who give money to charity has shot up to 47% from 26% by some estimates.

"Our history pushes us to be empathetic," Hlibovytskyi says. "Empathy is a component of modern Ukrainian identity."

Participants of the volunteer movement Building Ukraine are literally trying to rebuild the country.

It first emerged as a volunteer initiative in 2014, restoring houses destroyed by Russia's war in the east. Now it operates all around Ukraine, helping families to rebuild homes, creating open spaces in abandoned areas and offering educational programs for volunteers.

"Our idea is to take small practical steps to convey to society the idea of mutual assistance and responsibility," Yurko Didula, the Building Ukraine's manager, told the Kyiv Post.

During seven years, the movement has volunteered in 79 settlements, renovating about 300 apartments with the help of about 4,500 volunteers.

There are many other initiatives which promote charity in Ukraine.

The country now even has its own Giving Tuesday. The global generosity day originated in the U.S. to promote charity on Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

In Ukraine, the initiative has united 176 nonprofits helping those in need. Every year on Giving Tuesday in late November, hundreds of businesses and millions of volunteers join charitable activities in Ukraine.

"The main message is not to expect that society will start to change. What happens around us depends on each of us," Didula said. ☺

Buduiemo Ukrainu Razom



Participants of the volunteer program "Building Ukraine Together" ("Buduiemo Ukrainu Razom" – BUR) rebuild a house. Having started as an initiative to rebuild homes destroyed by Russia's war in the east, the volunteer organization now renovates abandoned areas and rebuild homes all across Ukraine.

Quirks that give Ukraine its character

By Liza Semko
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Ukraine's oddities are part of its charm. Here's some that stand out and give the country a character all its own:

Makeshift balconies

For Ukrainians, balconies strategically extend their often-cramped living spaces, allowing them to store pickles, sleds, clothing and all manner of odds and ends. Since most cities don't have a single design code, balconies of all shapes and sizes jut from buildings, some uncovered, others covered with glass, and still others covered with plastic. Some Ukrainian artists have even devoted their art to this phenomenon: Roman Blazhan shot a documentary "Enter Through The Balcony" and Oleksandr Burlaka published a photo book "Balcony Chic."

Grand celebrations

Although many Ukrainians live simply, they party extravagantly. For birthday parties, it's not unusual for Ukrainians to rent a restaurant and invite all their friends and relatives.

Weddings are more important, with some even going into debt for

the occasion. Preparations can be meticulous and take a year. No detail is too small. And, after the bride and groom, the key person at a wedding is the toastmaster, or a tamada, who is in charge of entertaining guests. The celebration begins in the morning — when the groom goes to the bride's family home and pays a ransom for his bride. Then the groom and the bride ask their parents for their blessing. After that comes the wedding ceremony in a church, then the registration ceremony, and finally a raucous celebration.

Showing off

Many Ukrainians like to show off wealth that they don't actually have, buying the latest iPhones or expensive cars, often on credit. Others purchase fake branded clothes and massive fur coats. Local markets are filled with replicas of well-known brands such as Off-White, Dolce & Gabbana, and Louis Vuitton.

Compulsive hoarding

The older generation of Ukrainians lived with scarcity, triggering the instinct to hoard and not throw away anything, from tea sets to old clothing to shopping bags.



Kyiv buildings are covered with bizarre glazed balconies. Here Ukrainians store a lot of stuff, both necessary and unnecessary.

Handmade decorations

The propensity to save also means repurposing items, such as old tires for planting flowers in or using old toys outside to decorate a yard.

Street vendors

The growth of huge supermarkets hasn't ended the ancient culture of street vending. People set up street stands to sell everything from food to clothing. Illegal or not, many customers prefer to buy on the street, for reasons of price, convenience or quality. The agrarian culture leads many people to grow their own food, rather than buy it, in rural gardens or dachas.

Innovative cuisine

Ukrainians are culinary innovators. While many foreigners already

know about salo, the bacon-like animal fat with enduring popularity, lesser famous Ukrainian dishes as holodets and krovyanika are other dietary staples.

As for holodets, in a few words, it's a savory aspic-like dish with meat in it. Krovyanika's recipe isn't so straightforward. For krovyanika, or blood sausage, a pig's intestine is filled with blood, lard and buckwheat.

At the same time, many Ukrainians liberally apply smetana, or sour cream, and mayonnaise to everything, including pizza. Ukrainians also often customize international recipes, for instance, by adding chicken to Asian sushi.

Formal dates

Dating can be more formalized

with the expectation of a restaurant dinner and bouquet of flowers, all arranged by the man. Keep in mind that yellow flowers symbolize breakup and the number of flowers must be odd, because even numbers of flowers are presented only at funerals.

Superstitions

Superstitions abound. For instance, it's believed that after St. Illia Day on Aug. 2, it's prohibited to swim because the water's evil creatures can drag a person down to the bottom. Other practices stem from religious beliefs: Some Ukrainians don't do physical labor on Sundays and religious holidays because these days should be devoted to the church and God. ☩

Advertisement

Nestle acts on climate change

Climate change is one of the greatest risks to the food industry, that also impacts food availability for people. Addressing the ecological challenges of today requires bold leadership and radical ideas. It is clear that government alone cannot provide the solution and that companies will need to step up. Nestlé the world's biggest food and beverage manufacturer understands that cooperation is the cornerstone of climate action, and so has stepped into a leadership role. Nestlé sets bold commitments to reduce climate impact -- to halve its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050 while business will continue to grow.

Reducing packaging waste

One of the biggest shifts is taking place in the food industry, where companies are tackling the issue of packaging (especially plastic waste), with the latter aiming high and pledging an astounding 100% of recyclable and renewable packaging by 2025.

On the way to achieve Net Zero emissions, Nestlé is in the process of evolving our packaging materials. Investments in packaging innovations and new business models help keep waste out of the landfill. By 2025, we aim to ensure that 100% of our packaging will be recyclable or reusable. At the same time, we understand that 100% recyclable packaging is not enough to solve the problem of waste management in Ukraine.

In autumn 2020, Nestlé, in partnership with the waste management company Veolia, launched the Lighthouse project. The main goal is to develop waste sorting, collection and recycling infrastructure in a certain residential area to test the Extended Producer Responsibility system in Ukraine. EPR is a concept where producers are responsible for the whole life cycle of packaging materials from production to recycling.

The Lighthouse project has been successfully operating in three towns of Kyiv region -- Makariv, Novy and Stry Petrivtsi. It covers 28,000 citizens. In project towns 222 special containers for collecting paper, glass, metal and plastic packaging waste have been located. Every month we collect about 20 tons of glass and 25 tons of packaging waste.



"Nestlé has taken the commitment to make all the packaging reusable and recyclable by 2025. To address the issue of waste management effectively it is not enough merely to create cutting-edge packaging ready for recycling, it crucial to have the system and route established in the country for this packaging to be collected and recycled too. Today in Ukraine we are at the very early stages to study and implement a well-functioning circular economy. This is a crucial transformation and in order to accelerate industry, governments authorities, civil society and consumers all have to work effectively and provide its own contribution. As part of this approach, Nestlé takes an active role in the development of well-functioning collection, sorting and recycling systems together with partners," – said Alessandro Zanelli, CEO Nestlé in Ukraine and Moldova.

Every week waste is collected and transported to the sorting station for further waste sorting and separation and distribution by fractions that on a later stage is transferred to the recycling plants in Kyiv, Lviv and Kharkiv regions.

To improve the project results and encourage citizens to be responsible and conscious of their waste behavior we launched educational program in project towns to engage adults and kids. We organized train-the-trainer seminars for teachers and provided them with educational and methodological materials for organizing

lessons for school children. School program engaged all schools in the area and school children of all ages.

To build the waste sorting culture and raise the awareness among adults and elderly people, we created educational materials with waste sorting tips. An important component of the project is cooperation with local authorities. All those actions help to bring the knowledge of sorting to adults and kids and help raising the sorting quality in the area. The Lighthouse project is an example for others to prove that collection, sorting and recycling of packaging waste in Ukraine is possible today.

Net zero calls for bold actions

For the purpose of achieving the goal of Net zero by 2050, Nestlé implements changes across the value chain and operations including: working with farmers to shift to regenerative ways of growing ingredients for food, including for the products we produce and increasing the number of 'carbon neutral' brands to give consumers the opportunity to contribute to the fight against climate change. The remaining emissions Nestlé will offset through soil and forest restoration projects.

Nestlé in Ukraine together with farmers is working on sustainable practices and regenerative agriculture to source ways that protect ecosystems and reduce emissions. In the scope of the Hospodar we involved 8 farms who are participants of a full cycle of foodstuffs production on Kharkiv and Volyn factories. Also, Nestlé in Ukraine joined the EU Green Deal Call – Farm to Fork which is aimed to achieve the climate neutrality of farms.

We continue our work towards greener logistics and use of renewable energy to manufacture our products. By 2025, all 800 Nestlé facilities worldwide will switch to renewable energy.

Nestlé in Ukraine and Moldova has a range of ambitious sustainability projects for the upcoming several years such as installation of solar panels and biomass boilers to grow the share of alternative energy source, and replacement of the car fleet with internal combustion engines for hybrid cars.

How Canada became first in West to recognize Ukraine's independence

By Olena Goncharova
goncharova@kyivpost.com

In late November 1991, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney received a phone call from U.S. Secretary of State James Baker III. He wanted to talk about Ukraine.

"As leaders of democratic nations, we should support Ukraine," Baker said to Canada's leader on the eve of the historic December referendum.

Mulroney knew that the U.S. was hesitant about Ukraine. Earlier that summer, President George H.W. Bush decried "suicidal nationalism" in his famous "Chicken Kyiv" speech, a phrase apparently provided by Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet Union's last leader.

At the same time, thousands of spectators took to the streets in Kyiv clutching blue and yellow flags and banners with slogans such as "Ukraine without Moscow," "52 million Ukrainians demand independence" and "Ukraine has sacrificed 15 million lives for the Soviet Union."

Baker suggested "not rushing into formal recognition" of Ukraine without some assurances from Ukrainian leaders on a few key issues, including nuclear weapons, human rights and minorities. But Mulroney said Canada would recognize the independence of Ukraine and then negotiate the establishment of diplomatic relations.

"We all sense it's a lost cause regarding holding the (Soviet) Union together," reads a now declassified U.S. memo dated Nov. 30, 1991.

On the day after the call, 92% of Ukrainians who voted in the national referendum backed the country's Declaration of Independence, proclaimed earlier that year.

And a day later, on Dec. 2, 1991, Canada became the second country after Poland — owing to Canada's day beginning six hours later — to officially recognize independent Ukraine.

Early promise

A few months before that phone call, Mulroney attended festivities in Edmonton, a western Canadian provincial capital, on the 100th



Ukrainians march in vyshyvankas in downtown Montreal celebrating Ukraine's Independence Day on August 27, 2017.

canada.mfa.gov.ua

anniversary of the 1891 Ukrainian immigration to Canada.

It was mere days after Aug. 24, when Ukraine's leadership declared independence. The Ukrainian community in Edmonton and throughout Canada was spreading the joyous news like wildfire, recalls Ihor Broda, a first generation Canadian of Ukrainian descent.

At the time, Broda was a national vice president at the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. He said he attended the congress's private meeting with Mulroney in Edmonton in 1991. According to Broda, Mulroney was already aware that there was a national referendum planned in Ukraine for Dec. 1, 1991. He remembers Mulroney indicating that if Ukrainians approved the Declaration of Independence at the referendum, Canada would immedi-

ately grant official recognition and move to establish diplomatic relations with Ukraine.

"We all dreamed about it but never expected the events would unfold that fast," Broda told the Kyiv Post.

In September 1991, then Acting President Leonid Kravchuk and Foreign Minister Anatoliy Zlenko came to Ottawa. Mulroney and other Canadian officials met with them and conveyed the promise of recognition that had been made in August 1991 in Edmonton. They then met with a delegation from the National Ukrainian Canadian Congress and confirmed what Mulroney had told them.

"We learned later that President Kravchuk used this promise of recognition to buttress the case for the approval of the referendum," Broda said.

After Canada became the first Western country to recognize independent Ukraine, the U.S. followed on Dec. 25, 1991. By the end of next year, Ukraine was recognized by 85 countries.

Diplomatic ties

After the referendum, the news about Ukraine was all over national and community papers in Canada.

Rev. Andriy Chirovsky of the Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies at Ottawa's St. Paul University was quoted in *The Ukrainian Weekly* on Dec. 8, 1991, as saying: "Canada is not going to be bullied by George Bush on this. We share some striking similarities with Ukraine. Both of us are next door to a large and aggressive neighbor...and we have

to find ways to co-exist with that neighbor."

Canada became one of the first countries to open a Ukrainian embassy. But it took a village to raise this child: Ukrainian diaspora members in Canada — spanning from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean — were instrumental in achieving the step.

In spring 1992, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress National Executive established the Ukraine Embassy Fund. The motto of the fundraising campaign was "The Ukrainian nation is being built today, stand up and be her builder." The call for help was disseminated through all the organizations' channels, in newspapers and on the radio.

Broda chaired the Embassy Committee and took an active part in the fundraising campaign. "We had a year to collect the money so we had to act fast," Broda said.

Securing the building of the embassy was one of the original goals of the fund. Soon Toronto businessman of Ukrainian descent Erast Huculak presented the building at 331 Metcalfe Street in Ottawa (which now provides consular services) to Levko Lukianenko, Ukraine's first ambassador to Canada. The building was first leased for a symbolic sum of one Canadian dollar and later purchased by Ukraine's diplomatic mission.

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress didn't stop there. It wanted to make sure Ukraine's diplomatic mission in Canada will be viable. They set to lease and then purchase an Ambassador's residence close to downtown Ottawa where Lukianenko moved in with his

family in November 1992. Broda said they paid \$678,000 Canadian dollars (almost \$900,000 in U.S. dollars today) for the 1,127 square meters building with an attached double garage, two fireplaces, hardwood and marble flooring, alarm system and heated driveway and walkway.

"You wouldn't be able to get anything for that money today," Broda said. Apart from the residence, the fundraised money was used to rent housing for the rest of the diplomatic staff, to purchase office furniture and supplies, a car and an insurance.

All of that wouldn't be possible without donations from the Ukrainian community who responded eagerly to the needs of their ancestral land collecting over \$1.5 million by the end of the campaign in December 1992.

The single largest donation came from Poltava native George Tuchaczewsky, who lived in Oshawa, Ontario. He died in July 1992, but before his death, Tuchaczewsky, who never married and had no children, left \$450,000 for the Embassy of Ukraine in Canada. A deeply religious man, he was dedicated to giving everything he possessed for the good of the Ukrainian nation.

Broda says that many in the diaspora shared that dedication to the homeland, rooted for Ukraine's independence and its connection to the rest of the world. So when the embassy finally opened its doors, for many Ukrainian Canadians the moment was as significant as for the whole of Ukraine.

"For most of the donors it was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream," Broda said. ☺



Ukraine's first Ambassador to Canada Levko Lukianenko (second from left) takes part in the blessing of Ukraine's Embassy in Ottawa in 1992.

Courtesy Canada-Ukraine Monitor magazine

New-generation entrepreneurs are rethinking old ways of doing business

By **Daryna Antoniuk**
antoniuk@kyivpost.com

Ukraine's tycoons acquired fortunes in energy, real estate, agriculture and retail.

In 2021, the combined net worth of the top 100 richest Ukrainians, including oligarchs Rinat Akhmetov, Victor Pinchuk and Ihor Kolomoisky, was over \$44 billion — almost \$13 billion higher than the year before and a sum that represents more than a quarter of the nation's annual output.

But most of Ukraine's wealthiest do business in an old-school way, working in traditional industries and often wielding political and media influence to protect their business interests.

A new generation of entrepreneurs is trying to do business differently. With less money and fewer connections, they transform existing industries and create new ones.

Transforming retail with virtual trading

Ukrainian tech entrepreneur Vlad Panchenko launched a marketplace to trade goods from video games. Called DMarket, it allows gamers to sell, buy and exchange skins — virtual add-ons like clothes and make-up that modify the look of game characters.

Gamers spend thousands of dollars to customize their avatars. A pair of colorful virtual gloves for the computer game Counter-Strike costs nearly \$1,300 on DMarket. Panchenko estimates the market into the billions of dollars yearly. Experts predict that more people will buy skins as the number of gamers goes up every year, expecting to surpass 3 billion people by 2024.

On DMarket, players can buy virtual items for cryptocurrency. Gamers who use cryptocurrency are riskier and spend more on skins, according to Panchenko.

Founded in 2017, DMarket is not profitable. To fund his team of over 80 people, Panchenko attracted \$7.2 million of investment from Ukrainian fund Almaz Capital and raised \$25 million in initial coin offering, or ICO, the process of crowdfunding via cryptocurrency.

A year ago, it was hard to convince investors that DMarket was worth their money, Panchenko said. Now, many big tech firms show interest in funding the so-called metaverse, a virtual world that exists in games.

Panchenko believes that his idea has a big future.

"I am a dreamer. A virtual world for me is a place with unlimited

possibilities: you can build a castle there, defeat a dragon or create a planet. Besides, you can do it with your friends," he said.

Transforming energy with portable chargers

Entrepreneur Hanna Osypenko has turned a traditionally cumbersome energy business into a handy device — a shared power bank that people can rent to recharge their electronic devices.

Called Power Now, her company has already installed over 800 charging stations in Kyiv and big cities across Ukraine such as Dnipro, Lviv, Chernihiv and Vinnytsia. The goal is to install 1,500 stations by the end of 2021.

Power Now works like electric scooter-sharing services. First, users find the closest Power Now charging station via the app; then they scan a QR code on the portable charger and use it until the device is fully charged. Half an hour of rent costs 40 cents, the whole day — \$2.

Power Now is a win-win for both users and businesses that have charging stations placed on their premises. Portable chargers help restaurants and shopping malls to attract new visitors and get rid of crowds sitting next to plug sockets.

In Ukraine, nearly 55% of its 42 million population use smartphones today compared to 7% in 2011. Most of the users are people under 30 — they are usually the ones who move around the city with their gadgets and need them recharged.

Launching a power bank sharing service in Ukraine was risky because people are reluctant to accept innovations quickly, Osypenko said.

To test the business model, she invested \$200,000 of her own money, then attracted \$700,000 from local investors.

The number of Ukrainians using Power Now increases by 10,000 people every month and is expected to go up because even the newest devices still need at least one full charge a day.

"Sharing economy is becoming more popular," Osypenko said. "Young people love to have everything and own nothing."

Transforming real estate with futuristic hotels

Compared to ordinary hotels furnished with queen-sized beds, minibars and extravagant chandeliers, Ukrainian hotel Monotel offers its guests a contrasting experience of staying in a capsule the size of a single bed.

The capsule contains everything necessary to satisfy a traveler's



Ukrainian hotel Monotel, founded by Hanna Osypenko and Ksenia Chigarkina, offers its guests to stay in a capsule, instead of a regular room. The capsule contains everything necessary to satisfy a traveler's needs — fast Wi-Fi, lights, sockets, fresh sleepwear and even a TV.

needs — fast Wi-Fi, lights, sockets, fresh sleepwear and even a TV.

The idea of the project is to take maximum comfort from the minimum space, according to Monotel founders Osypenko and Ksenia Chigarkina.

Monotel is the golden middle between expensive luxury hotels and cheap jam-packed hostels. One night in Monotel in Kyiv's downtown costs nearly \$15, compared to nearly \$60 in a four-star hotel.

Capsule hotels are booming across Asia, especially in Japan, China, Taiwan and Singapore. The global capsule hotels market is expected to reach \$226 million by the end of 2022 as youth prefers to stay in minimalistic high-tech spaces rather than luxurious hotels.

Monotel allows its guests to open the locker with a fingerprint and pay for the stay with cryptocurrency. Osypenko returned the investment in the first hotel in a year and now sells its franchise for \$15,000 in popular tourist destinations — Lviv and Odesa.

According to Osypenko, Monotel was 100% full even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some people,

she said, stayed there for over three months: Having a comfortable bed at night and a clean shower in the morning seemed to be enough for them.

Transforming food industry with greens

To make plant-based sausages and pate that are tasty and juicy, Ukrainian brand Zelena Korova (Green Cow) uses tofu, a cheese-like product made of soybeans. For 300 grams of vegetarian sausages, customers pay nearly \$10 — almost as much as for meat products.

Zelena Korova is among the few businesses in Ukraine that sell plant-based meat, as well as hummus, falafel and different varieties of tofu, in big supermarket chains such as Auchan, Silpo and Varus.

Plant-based food is becoming more popular in Ukraine and even those who eat meat are willing to try it, according to Daria Yaremchuk, the founder of Zelena Korova and the owner of vegetarian cafes "Green" and "Little Green" in Lviv, a city of 720,000 people, 540 kilometers west of Kyiv.

Nearly 90% of Ukrainians who

buy plant-based meat are not vegetarians, according to the surveys. Ukrainians usually eat plant-based food for ethical, environmental or medical reasons.

The global plant-based food industry is now worth over \$7 billion and is expected to reach \$74 billion by 2027. In Ukraine, this market is still small, but brands like Zelena Korova continue to emerge, aimed to change the game.

For Yaremchuk, plant-based food is more than a business — it's her lifestyle. She became a vegetarian and started to meditate when she went through hard times in her life.

"I really wanted to share the knowledge I acquired and the positive energy with other people, so I opened a cafe," she said.

When Yaremchuk opened her first vegetarian cafe in Lviv in 2014, she didn't have much money, but the business survived due to the big demand and no competition.

"People were waiting for us for so long that on our first day we couldn't find an empty chair!" she said. ☺

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For better or worse, these 30 people shaped today's Ukraine

By Alex Query and Max Hunder
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During 30 years of independence, Ukraine has been shaped by flamboyant characters, some of whom are still holding the reins of the country's destiny today. For Ukraine's 30th birthday, the Kyiv Post chose 30 of the most prominent figures who shaped the young nation's turbulent history for good and for ill.

Business:



Ukraine's richest man: Rinat Akhmetov, 54
 Raised in a working-class family near Donetsk, Akhmetov

used this industrial region to build his empire and become Ukraine's wealthiest man. His fortune was valued at \$7.6 billion in May 2021.

His holding company, System Capital Management, includes more than 100 businesses in metals, mining, banking, telecommunications, media and real estate. Akhmetov's company DTEK is the largest electricity producer in Ukraine, while Metinvest is the biggest producer of coal and steel. Akhmetov owns Ukraine's most-watched television station, Ukraina, and most successful football team, Shakhtar Donetsk.

But this success is due to more than his business acumen. Akhmetov has been a major stakeholder in regional and Ukrainian politics for decades.

He backed the Party of Regions and helped bring to power Viktor Yanukovich, whose presidency ended in the bloody EuroMaidan Revolution in 2014.

Akhmetov maintains his influence today. The oligarch reportedly has several dozen lawmakers in his pocket, an allegation he denies.



Hidden oligarch: Dmytro Firtash, 56

Despite the fact that Firtash hasn't been in Ukraine for over seven years, he dominates the regional gas distribution network, fertilizer production and more. He has been under house arrest in Austria since 2014, fighting to avoid extradition to the U.S. to stand trial on bribery charges, which he denies.

Firtash built his fortune as a middleman. He made billions of dollars from selling Russian gas to Ukraine's state company Naftogaz during three presidencies – those of Leonid Kuchma, Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovich, from 1994 to 2014.

Titanium production is the core business of Firtash's Group DF. The National Security and Defense Council imposed sanctions on the



Former presidents of Ukraine, second row from left, Petro Poroshenko, Viktor Yushchenko, Leonid Kuchma and Leonid Kravchuk attend Volodymyr Zelensky's presidential inauguration in the Verkhovna Rada in Kyiv on May 20, 2019.

oligarch on July 18, saying his plants supplied titanium to Russia's defense industry, which Firtash's lawyers denied.

He has backed Ukrainian parties, including Yanukovich's Party of Regions and its successor Opposition Bloc.

But Firtash likely influenced the future of Ukraine the most in May 2014, when he met with politicians Petro Poroshenko and Vitali Klitschko in Vienna. At that meeting, it was reportedly decided that Poroshenko would run for president and Klitschko for mayor of Kyiv.



Former banking godfather: Ihor Kolomoisky, 58

With his penchant for swear words and disregard for rules, Kolomoisky is the enfant terrible of Ukraine's oligarchs.

Through his diverse network of businesses and involvement in politics, Kolomoisky has wielded a big influence on the lives of Ukrainians.

He lost his biggest leverage when his PrivatBank was nationalized in 2016, found to be on the verge of going bankrupt. The investigation alleged that \$5.5 billion was stolen from the bank over the years, and Ukraine is suing Kolomoisky and his partner Gennadiy Bogolyubov in six countries.

Kolomoisky also served as the governor of Dnipro Oblast in 2014–2015, helping ensure that the

Russia-backed militants who took over parts of eastern Ukraine didn't move further west.

He helped Volodymyr Zelensky become president: Kolomoisky's main TV channel 1+1 aired Zelensky's comedy shows non-stop in the days before the election in 2019.

Kolomoisky is also widely believed to have several dozen lawmakers at his disposal.



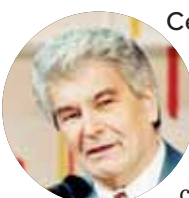
Steel baron: Victor Pinchuk, 60

Pinchuk owns steel pipe and railway wheel producer Interpipe, as well as four popular TV channels – more than any other oligarch.

His fortune and power soared during the presidency of Leonid Kuchma, whose daughter Pinchuk married in 2002.

He still maintains close personal and business ties with the ex-president. When Zelensky recruited Kuchma to represent Ukraine at negotiations with Russia in 2019, Pinchuk was part of the negotiation with his father-in-law.

Pinchuk caused national controversy in 2016 when he penned a Wall Street Journal op-ed which raised the possibility of Ukraine effectively giving Crimea to Russia in exchange for peace in eastern Ukraine.

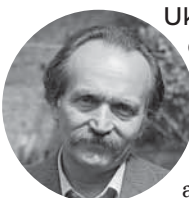


Central bank creator: Vadym Hetman, 1935–1998

Hetman is credited with the creation of the National Bank of Ukraine.

When he joined the bank in 1992, he modernized it and set up the interbank database which is still considered one of the best in Eastern Europe. He was assassinated in Kyiv in 1998.

Politics



Ukrainian dissident: Viacheslav Chornovil, 1937–1999

Chornovil was a Ukrainian politician and prominent Soviet dissident. He was arrested multiple times in the 1960s and 1970s for his pro-Ukrainian views.

As longtime advocate of Ukrainian independence, he led the opposition People's Movement of Ukraine, also known as Rukh, which was a key party in Ukraine's fight for independence from the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Chornovil ran in Ukraine's first independent presidential election, eventually losing to Soviet Ukraine Head Leonid Kravchuk. Yet, Chornovil's pro-Ukrainian drive helped shape the early years of the country's independence with

pro-European, Ukraine centric views becoming unwavering.



First president: Leonid Kravchuk, 87

Prior to becoming Ukraine's first president, Kravchuk was a high-level Communist official.

On Aug. 24, 1991, Kravchuk officially signed into force Ukraine's Declaration of Independence.

Kravchuk oversaw Ukraine's transition to democracy. After winning the 1991 presidential elections, Kravchuk signed the Belovezh Accords effectively ending the Soviet Union.

His short tenure was marked by the preservation of Ukraine's sovereignty, yet vast economic failure caused him to lose his re-election bid in 1994.

Kravchuk scheduled snap parliamentary and presidential elections in 1994, lost and oversaw the first peaceful transition of power in Ukraine's modern history.



Oligopoly architect: Leonid Kuchma, 83

The only Ukrainian president to win a second term, Kuchma is remembered

Out of 40+ million people, these 30 stand out for good & bad reasons

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for his rampant corruption and the creation of oligarch monopolies.

Kuchma's son-in-law, Pinchuk, turned into one of Ukraine's wealthiest oligarchs, while other prominent businessmen were also able to accumulate enormous wealth.

Recordings made by Kuchma's security guard Mykola Melnychenko in 2000 implicated Kuchma in ordering the murder of journalist Georgiy Gongadze as well as sanctioning illegal arms sales to Iraq. Kuchma denied all accusations, yet saw a decline in his international standing. As a result, Kuchma turned to Russia and picked pro-Kremlin politician Yanukovich as his successor.

After leaving office, Kuchma stayed out of frontline politics but returned in 2014 as a mediator between Ukraine and Russian-backed militants in Donbas, achieving little.



Poisoned president: Viktor Yushchenko, 67

Yushchenko was Ukraine's first pro-Western president. He is also among the least popular.

Before taking office, Yushchenko, then head of the National Bank, oversaw the implementation of



Viacheslav Chornovil, Ukrainian politician and Soviet dissident, talking in front of the Verkhovna Rada in 1988, in central Kyiv. As longtime advocate of Ukrainian independence, Chornovil led the opposition People's Movement of Ukraine, also known as Rukh, which was a key party in Ukraine's fight for independence from the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

hryvnia as the country's national currency in 1996. He later served as Ukraine's prime minister building a vast following.

Yushchenko became seriously ill from dioxin poisoning in an apparent assassination attempt during his 2004 presidential campaign.

He lost the sham elections to Kuchma's protégé Viktor Yanukovich. However, mass protests, which became known as the Orange Revolution, forced the Constitutional Court to schedule new elections,

which were won by Yushchenko.

Yet despite vast support, Yushchenko's presidency was marked by constant infighting with ally turned foe Yulia Tymoshenko, lack of promised reforms and eventually paved the way to Yanukovich's comeback in 2010.



Gas princess: Yulia Tymoshenko, 60
Tymoshenko

has been active in Ukrainian politics for more than 20 years. Tymoshenko rose to power after the Orange Revolution where she played an active role as Yushchenko's closest ally.

Tymoshenko has served as Ukraine's prime minister in 2005 and 2007–2010. With her braided hair, she became the global face of Ukraine's pro-Western movement in

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Politicians, oligarchs dominate first 30 years of nationhood

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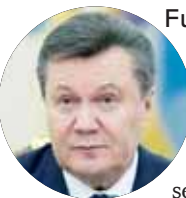
the 2000s.

However, her role in Ukraine's history is marked by controversy.

She became known as the "gas princess" because of her alleged lucrative dealings at the head of a major energy company in the 1990s. She was arrested, but later released without charges pressed.

After Yanukovich came to power, Tymoshenko was sentenced to seven years in prison on abuse of power charges. The case was later recognized as politically motivated by Ukraine and the European Union.

Nearly 25 years after being first elected to parliament, Tymoshenko still leads a 24-member faction and is now actively stalling pro-Western reforms.



Fugitive president: Viktor Yanukovich, 71

Yanukovich served as the fourth president of Ukraine from 2010 until being ousted by the EuroMaidan Revolution in 2014.

Yanukovich is best known for leading a pro-Kremlin kleptocratic regime and for being a politician on the wrong side of two revolutions.

In 2004, then Kuchma's protégé, Yanukovich falsified elections only to see hundreds of thousands of people in downtown Kyiv protesting against his accession. After ending up on the losing side of the Orange Revolution, the incompetent rule of his main opponent, Yushchenko, allowed the pro-Kremlin politician to win the 2010 presidential elections.

In 2013, Yanukovich's turn towards Russia sparked a new protest known as the EuroMaidan Revolution. After the revolution turned deadly, Yanukovich escaped to Russia.

Yanukovich was sentenced to 13.5 years in absentia for high treason.

Yanukovich's escape in February 2014 was followed by a Russian military invasion which continues to this day. Russia currently occu-



Oleg Petrasjuk

Health Minister Ulana Suprun on her last day at the job on Aug. 30, 2019. Suprun was made acting health minister in June 2016 and pushed through key health-care reforms, changing how Ukraine procured drugs and medical supplies.

pies Crimea and eastern Donbas, killing over 13,000 people in the process.



Putin's henchman: Viktor Medvedchuk, 67

Ukrainian politician and media tycoon Medvedchuk is widely considered to have been the lead Kremlin agent in Ukraine for over two decades. Russian President Vladimir Putin is the godfather of Medvedchuk's daughter.

Medvedchuk first emerged on Ukraine's political scene as head of Kuchma's presidential adminis-

tration, shaping his turn towards Russia.

After Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014, Medvedchuk became an intermediary between Ukraine and Russia, allegedly serving Russian interests.

During Russia's war, Medvedchuk successfully consolidated pro-Russian forces and supported several TV channels spreading pro-Kremlin propaganda.

In May, Medvedchuk was charged with treason in Ukraine.



Chocolate king: Petro Poroshenko, 55

Coming to power after the EuroMaidan Revolution in 2014, confectionery tycoon Poroshenko found hopes of swift reforms placed on his shoulders.

An experienced politician and minister under Yanukovich, Poroshenko faced a difficult task. His presidency began months after Russia's invasion of Crimea and the active phase of Russian military intervention in Donbas.

Poroshenko oversaw the rebuilding of a decrepit Ukrainian army and negotiated a ceasefire, known as the Minsk Agreement, in September 2014. However, the ceasefire followed Ukraine's largest military defeat in Ilovaisk, while his presidency was marked by corruption, and abuse of power which led to

his defeat in the 2019 presidential elections.



Sitcom president: Volodymyr Zelensky, 43

A well-known comedian since the early 2000s, Zelensky became

Ukraine's president in 2019, crushing heavyweight politician Poroshenko.

Zelensky, a household name in show business, started gaining political fame in 2015 thanks to his "Servant of the People" TV series where he played a naïve and disgruntled school teacher who accidentally becomes president.

Zelensky rode the anti-establishment card into office. His Servant of the People party won the 2019 snap parliamentary elections in a landslide gaining a single-party majority.

Zelensky's supporters called this an "electoral revolution."

To this day, Zelensky, who ran on a platform of defeating corruption and ending the war, remains the most popular politician in Ukraine.



Health reformer: Ulana Suprun, 58

A Ukrainian-American radiologist from Detroit, Suprun and her husband Marko founded the Patriot Defense NGO in late 2013.

Starting out during the EuroMaidan Revolution, the organization went on to provide invaluable first aid training and supply thousands of medical kits to Ukrainian troops in Donbas.

Suprun was made acting health minister in June 2016 and pushed through key healthcare reforms, changing how Ukraine procured drugs and medical supplies. She was replaced in August 2019. Under Zelensky, some of Suprun's medical reforms were rolled back.



Controversial minister: Arsen Avakov, 57

Ex-Interior Minister Avakov was Ukraine's longest-serving minister.

Appointed in February 2014, days after Yanukovich's ousting, Avakov resigned on July 12, 2021.

In the early stages of his reign, Avakov oversaw the creation of the National Guard, supported volunteer battalions holding off Russian invasion in Donbas and launched the reform of the Soviet-styled police force.

Avakov also built a formidable power base that gave him a reputation as an untouchable gray eminence.

Deeply unpopular, Avakov failed to enact meaningful reforms, protected corrupt officials and stalled crucial investigations. Under his



A strong gust of wind blows a wreath onto President Viktor Yanukovich on May 17, 2010. He and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev were laying wreaths at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Glory Park in Kyiv.

Martyrs, sports heroes, artists & musicians among the 30 most notable

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watch, many journalists were killed, with police investigations leading nowhere.

Sport



Football legend:
Andriy Shevchenko, 44

Unquestionably the best footballer to play for the country after independence, Shevchenko shaped the lives of many young Ukrainian sports fans.

In 1999, Shevchenko, coached by Valery Lobanovsky, led Dynamo Kyiv to the semifinals of the UEFA Champions League tournament. In 2006, Shevchenko, coached by football legend Oleh Blokhin, led Ukraine's national football team to the quarterfinals of the FIFA World Cup.

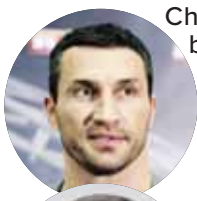
In 2004, Shevchenko was crowned as the best football player in the world, receiving the Ballon D'Or award.

As coach, Shevchenko repeated his national team success, leading Ukraine to the quarterfinals of the UEFA European Championship in July 2021.



Tennis superstar:
Elina Svitolina, 26

Olympic bronze medalist Svitolina is the highest-ranked tennis player of either gender in Ukraine's history: She was third in the world in 2017 and is currently ranked fifth. She is well-known for her ability to produce a giant-killing performance, having previously defeated both Serena and Venus Williams, Ana Ivanović and Naomi Osaka.



Champion brothers:
Wladimir Klitschko, 45 and Vitali Klitschko, 50

The Klitschko brothers were so dominant in heavyweight boxing that the decade between 2005 and 2015 is still referred to as the "Klitschko era."

Both brothers hold PhDs in sport science, leading them to be nicknamed "Dr. Ironfist" and "Dr. Steelhammer" during their

in-ring careers. Wladimir still holds the record for longest cumulative heavyweight title reign, while Vitali is now into his third term as mayor of Kyiv, facing accusations of endemic corruption in his close circle.



Record breaker:
Serhiy Bubka, 57

Bubka was known for continuously breaking the pole vault world record: he did so 35 times in his career. He won Olympic gold in 1988 and six World Championship gold medals: three for the Soviet Union and three for independent Ukraine. Since 2005, he has served as the President of the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine.

Journalists/ Activists



Martyred journalist:
Georgiy Gongadze, 1969–2000

Gongadze was born in Tbilisi to a Georgian father and a Ukrainian mother.

In 2000, he founded Ukrainska Pravda, an online publication that was one of the few to stand up to Leonid Kuchma's attempts to control the press. This made him the top target for the Interior Ministry, four of whose agents kidnapped Gongadze in central Kyiv and murdered him in a forest outside the capital on Sep. 16, 2000.

Audiotapes released in Nov. 2000 and later authenticated by the FBI showed Kuchma discussing "stopping" Gongadze.



Murdered activist:
Kateryna Gandziuk, 1985–2018

A fearless activist and city council official in her hometown of Kherson, Gandziuk had sulfuric acid thrown on her by a hired assailant on July 31, 2018.

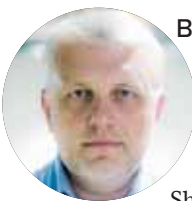
She suffered severe burns to her face and body and died just over a month later, on Nov. 3.

The attack shocked Ukraine, leading many civil society groups to fly banners asking who killed Gandziuk.

It took until July 2020 for the police to arrest the then-head of Kherson's regional administration, Vladyslav Manger, who is widely believed to have ordered the killing.



Lead singer of rock band Okean Elzy and leader of Voice political party performs at a concert in Kharkiv on June 30, 2019 following his party's campaign rally.



Brazenly murdered:
Pavel Sheremet, 1971–2016

Journalist Sheremet left his native Belarus for Moscow after facing beatings and imprisonment. He then moved from Russia to Kyiv in 2014 in protest of his state-run employer's pro-Crimea annexation editorial stance.

On July 20, 2016, he was killed by a car bomb in central Kyiv, leaving the nation in shock.

Three suspects were charged in 2019, but the case has been falling apart. It became a symbol for impunity for crimes against journalists, and the impotence of the police.

Dying for freedom: Heavenly Hundred

The Heavenly Hundred is the name that was given to activists who were killed in Kyiv during clashes with Yanukovich's security forces during the EuroMaidan Revolution in central Kyiv. The protests began in November 2013 when activists gathered at the Independence Square to protest Yanukovich's decision not to sign an association agreement with the European Union and, instead, seek closer economic ties with Russia.

More than 100 people were killed as a result of violent crackdowns by authorities that escalated in February 2014.



Imprisoned filmmaker:
Oleg Sentsov, 45

Ukrainian film director, scriptwriter, author and activist, Sentsov was detained in Crimea in May 2014 and sentenced to 20 years in a Russian prison on trumped-up charges of terrorism in 2015.

In May 2018, Sentsov declared an indefinite hunger strike to help free Ukrainian political prisoners detained by Russia. After 145 days of hunger strike, Sentsov was forced to end it, under the threat of being force-fed by authorities.

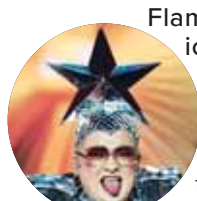
Sentsov was freed from a Russian penal colony in September 2019 after more than five years of detention, as part of a historic prisoner swap between Russia and Ukraine.

Music/artists



Eurovision winner:
Ruslana Lyzhchko, 48

Ruslana Lyzhchko became Ukraine's biggest musical export after storming to victory in the 2004 Eurovision Song Contest. She also supported civic activists during the Orange Revolution in 2004 and was a leading figure in the EuroMaidan Revolution in 2014.



Flamboyant icon:
Verka Serduchka, 47

Verka Serduchka is the drag persona of Ukrainian artist Andriy Danilko and an icon across the post-Soviet world. Verka Serduchka is a flamboyant middle-aged woman from a rural family cluttered in glitter with bright lipstick, fake breasts and shiny crystal-encrusted headpiece. The singer represented Ukraine at the 2007 Eurovision and finished second, becoming one of the all-time favorite acts among the contest's fans in Ukraine and across Europe.

With his music playing at nearly every wedding in Ukraine, Verka Serduchka is a household name and a national symbol.

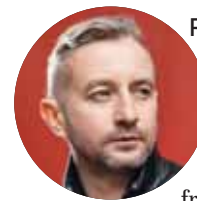


Rockstar lawmaker:
Svyatoslav Vakarchuk, 46

Ukrainian rock star and lawmaker Vakarchuk founded

the Holos (Voice) party in 2019, but he's more famous for being the lead singer of the popular Okean Elzy rock group founded in 1994.

Vakarchuk's songs became anthems for both the Orange Revolution and the EuroMaidan Revolution. Okean Elzy is the only Ukrainian band that sells out stadiums.



Rock'n'roll novelist:
Serhiy Zhadan, 46

Zhadan is a poet, rock band front man and political activist. Considering himself a "peaceful activist," he took part in the EuroMaidan movement in Kharkiv.

His writing includes explorations of the brutal conflict between Russian-backed militants and the Ukrainian army, as well as his native eastern Ukraine. Zhadan's literary works have received numerous national and international awards and have been translated into many languages, making him one of the most renowned Ukrainian writers.



People's poet:
Andriy Kuzmenko, 1968–2015

Singer, poet, writer, TV presenter, producer and actor, Kuzmenko, known as Kuzma Skryabin, was best known as the lead singer of the popular Ukrainian rock band Skryabin, inspired by Depeche Mode and The Cure, founded in 1989.

He was killed in a car crash in February 2015. His songs surged in popularity after his death. 🇺🇦

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Kyiv Post staff on what we love and don't love about Ukraine

Editor's Note: As Ukraine approaches its grand 30th anniversary, Kyiv Post staff – Ukrainians and foreigners – reflect on what they love and don't love about the country.

Brian Bonner

What I love: The dynamism that anything can happen on any given day. (See also what I don't love.) This comes from strength of character. Ukrainians have suffered many injustices, many of which they can't control, but everyone can choose to be happy or unhappy, no matter the circumstances. Enjoy life, no matter what.

What I don't love: That anything can happen on any given day – war, murder, stealing – all with impunity. While Ukrainians are, by and large, patriots who love their country, too many people with power put their selfish personal greed above the national interest and shamelessly devalue human life. It's disgusting.

Olga Rudenko:

What I love: The overwhelming, electrifying sense of potential. The feeling that modern Ukraine is a project in the making, a startup. There is no "make Ukraine great again" nostalgia. Our greatness is in the future and we're yet to find out what it looks like. I find it very exciting.

What I don't love: Endemic corruption and impunity. The fact that major institutes, such as the rule of law, have not been formed yet. Extreme poverty of the senior population. Lack of diversity and tolerance, especially towards LGBTQ people.

Toma Istomina

What I love: Above everything else I adore our freedom-loving nature. It's a shame Ukraine had to lose so many of its very best people in the centuries-long fight for independence, for the right to speak Ukrainian and cultivate its own culture. But it was the only way around under oppression for the brave and dedicated nation that we are. Thanks to those sacrifices, we maintained the Ukrainian identity and are what we are now – a vibrant country with a promising future. I will forever be grateful to our ancestors for the history and heritage that I am proud of.

What I don't love: Though we proved to be able to consolidate at the time of a crisis, we often lack unity in peaceful times. Most of Ukraine's attempts to become independent failed partly because of internal quarrels. In modern Ukraine, competition and envy often get in the way of the country's progress: Civil activists that advocate for the same rights, politicians with similar reformist views disagree and split. We need to learn to keep in mind our common, bigger purpose of making Ukraine a truly democratic prosperous state.

Dylan Carter

What I love: Ukraine is full of little surprises. It is both unbeliev-



The drone picture shows an aerial view of the highest Ukrainian flag in Kyiv next the Second World War Museum on Aug. 18, 2021.

ably modern and deeply traditional. Electronic passports, terminals to pay any utility bill, the best online banking and fast affordable internet are innovations rarely found in other countries. At the same time, Ukraine's historic churches, monuments and institutions still root the country within a shared European cultural heritage.

What I don't love: Despite all Ukraine's beauty and technological development, some basic services remain painfully underfunded. Little is done to combat pollution, local infrastructure is left to crumble, and Soviet architectural heritage is often neglected in favour of run-of-the-mill modern high-rise buildings. In the race to modernize the nation, successive governments have favoured grandiose projects rather than improving the lives of ordinary Ukrainians.

Oleg Sukhov:

What I love: Ukraine has the freedom of speech and the freedom of assembly, which is a major upside compared with nearby dictatorships like Russia and Belarus. It also has the tradition of regularly replacing governments – either through democratic elections or through revolutions, if democratic procedures are spurned by authoritarian leaders. I also love the fact that, compared to Russia and Belarus, the influence of the Western civilization in Ukraine has been stronger historically.

What I don't love: the absence

of the rule of law, corruption and omnipresent poverty. As a result of some elements of pre-Soviet traditionalism and Soviet legacy, there are no properly functioning government institutions and little public understanding of the rule of law and individual rights. Statism, populism and paternalism prevail. The economy is overregulated and hampered by corruption and a lack of independent and fair courts. This entails poverty.

Daria Shulzhenko:

What I love: Although one can not fully rely on the government in Ukraine (also what I don't like), activists and volunteers are always here to help. Every day, thousands of them do their utmost to make Ukraine a better place to live in: They raise money for people's expensive medical treatment, supply the army with the needed equipment and food, support the elderly, homeless and others in need, try to make cities more inclusive for people with disabilities as well as protest against cruelty and injustice. Without their civic and political engagement, Ukraine wouldn't have been the country it is today.

What I don't love: Corruption is among Ukraine's biggest enemies. Not only is it a financial loss for the country, but it also impacts Ukraine's reputation worldwide and prevents it from developing. Racism, gender inequality, attacks on journalists and activists, as well as violence against

the LGBTQ community are still thriving in the country.

Alyona Nevmerzhytska:

What I love: This is my land and of course I love it. These years of pandemic allowed us to explore Ukraine and realize that it is even more beautiful than we thought – the places which used to be hidden gems all across the country have become popular destinations. I like Ukrainians' readiness for innovations and progress, as well as the spirit of freedom and democracy.

What I don't love: Having worked in the media sector for almost 9 years I became frustrated that very often, especially in rural regions, Ukrainians do not analyse the quality of media resources that they consume. They are not aware of the ownership of the media resource and they become vulnerable to manipulations, as the truth is twisted.

Sergii Leshchenko

What I love: Ukraine is a country of opportunities, there is still a huge vacuum in different markets and space for business development and personal growth. The service sector is competitive. It surprises foreigners a lot, as they find it much better than in their own countries: from supermarkets and gas stations to ophthalmology and dentistry. With all nuances, Ukraine is the leader among the countries of the region in terms of democracy. We actually

change the ruling elites, there is a non-stop anti-corruption fight and the voice of civil society sounds loud and can't be ignored.

What I don't love: Ukraine is still a state hijacked by oligarchs. They continue to use politics to create a non-competitive environment. But the demand of society to correct this status-quo is huge. Also, I do not like the habit of Ukrainians to be constantly focused on negativity and complain about life on social media. And also I don't like toilets in all public places: neither in the Verkhovna Rada or the Pechersky Court, nor in the Boryspil airport.

Asami Terajima

What I love: Ukraine is an undiscovered Eastern European gem that will gain popularity in the future. The country has everything, from bustling and vibrant city life to beaches and mountains to appreciate nature. Ukraine's centuries-old history that dates back to Kyivan Rus and the breathtaking historic churches still standing today make the country so special, different from the rest. Easily accessible parks even in the center of the city also make it appealing.

What I don't love: Poor road infrastructure that often disrupts traffic in the city is one of the downsides. Sometimes there is a bridge that is being reconstructed for over three months, and then after a while

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There is a lot to love & not to love about Ukrainian nation

page 29 →

it needs to be done again because it wasn't done well the first time. Electricity and water go out for hours sometimes and this can be very inconvenient. And while certain things like the digital payment method are far more advanced than in developed countries like Japan, I still have to hold on to a big bulk of legal paperwork just to stay here as a foreigner.

Anastasiia Lapatina:

What I love: Having experienced centuries of brutal repressions, Ukrainian people have always had to fight for their independence and freedom, their culture, and the ability to speak their mother tongue. This has made Ukrainians into a freedom-loving nation, who have staged three revolutions in just 30 years. We fought for our independence, for our right to vote, and for our freedom from tyranny and Russia. We overthrew a dictator. Nothing makes me more proud than knowing that in times of crises, Ukraine can unite and fight for their rights. This is also what makes Ukraine so unique compared to its post-Soviet neighbours. We can gather freely near the presi-

Kostyantyn Chernichkin



Ukrainians march from Taras Shevchenko Park to European Square on Nov. 24, 2013, in Kyiv. It was one of the first protests of the EuroMaidan Revolution that toppled Kremlin-backed President Viktor Yanukovich on Feb. 22, 2014.

dent's office to protest for any cause, including better protections for the LGBTQ community. This would be

unimaginable in Russia or Belarus.

What I don't love: Ukrainian society still has a long way to go

to become truly progressive and liberal. People of colour still often feel uncomfortable while in Ukraine, as racism is rampant. Same goes for gender equality – domestic violence is endemic, and deeply rooted stereotypes and gender roles affect all parts of Ukrainian society.

Natalia Datskevych

What I love: The nature in Ukraine is beautiful when you leave the big cities. The Dnipro River alone is breathtaking. And people in villages are often very kind, open and generous. They have really big hearts. There are also many talented artists, singers, engineers, doctors and athletes in Ukraine. They are like a shield for the country, its engine and great hope.

What I don't love: There's a terrible attitude towards waste management, ecology and little desire to change that. The country is mired in corruption scandals and the interests of oligarchs, for whom statehood and national development mean nothing.

Alexander Query

What I love: Ukraine represents a form of freedom and hospitality I rarely perceived anywhere else in the world. Each of its cities has a peculiar charm that makes it stand out, but Kyiv's history, enshrined with magic – it was the only city welcoming witches during the wave of trials that shook Europe in the Dark Ages after all – makes it even more spellbinding. This city has an energy like no other, which puts it on the map competing with the most advanced capitals in Western Europe.

What I don't love: Despite progress on tolerance since the EuroMaidan Revolution, Ukraine still has a long way to go for minorities to feel safe. Lack of progress on

corruption on a daily basis, putting Ukraine's path to reforms and to an open market also makes it hard to believe in a fully functional country in the near future. Oh, and salo. Not a fan of salo.

Olena Goncharova

What I love: Ukraine is my homeland and I love it by default: Having lived 7,000 kilometers away from it for the last three years makes me love and miss it even more. I love it for its vibrancy, true character one can feel in a buzzing city as well as in a remote village in the Carpathian Mountains, for the best looking restaurants and amazing coffee in pretty much any coffee shop.

What I don't love: There are a few things that upset me: unfriendly border officers at Boryspil airport, bad infrastructure that doesn't allow tourists and locals to appreciate Ukraine's beauty, endemic corruption that is very slow to eradicate, nepotism, racism and lack of trust in the government.

Elina Kent

What I love: Ukraine has had this vein of energy that if you tap into you cannot get enough of it. There are people with innovative ideas, creative businesses and movements. Many say that Kyiv is entering its golden era in terms of culture and the underground art scene. There's a reason why expats and foreigners that work here even for a short time either stay for longer or continuously return to this country. Because they fall in love with Ukraine. I love meeting people here, there are so many different types that inspire you, interest you and wow you.

What I don't love: Sometimes you find a lack of belief in their own country, especially in the rural areas. This happens due to corruption, distrust and lack of reform. The police that harass young people and businesses in neighborhoods like Podil in order to make quick cash. The lack of laws protecting minorities such as the very much real queer community that yet thrives underground. I don't love how the government hasn't been on top of their game in terms of the coronavirus pandemic.

Iryna Yavorska

What I love: I love Ukraine for its diversity. There is a place for everything and everyone. One can go west to enjoy cold rainy weather in the mountains or travel south to explore the hot steppe and the seaside. I love our brave people. I love embroidered shirts and woven scarves. I love our incredible library of music – from the 1980s funk to the modern underground electronic music. I love our language, which I consider the most beautiful in the world. All in all, I just love Ukraine for the thousand reasons there are to love it.

What I don't love: I would like Ukrainians to be more proud of heritage. We need to learn our history and culture better and stop doubting how cool we are. ☺

TOP 10 KYIV POST exclusives online this week

Editor's Note: Most of the Kyiv Post's journalism is published online. Subscribe today at the low rate of \$45 annually for access to all articles, photos, videos, the PDF editions of the weekly printed newspaper and our complete archives dating to 1995.



1. Kyiv Post webinar: Legalization of gambling in Ukraine
2. What Afghanistan's fall means for Ukraine, another US ally at war
3. Radical protesters clash with police near President's Office
4. Murder investigation opens into death of Kryvyi Rih mayor
5. Tokyo Olympic champion Zhan Beleniuk says he was insulted in Kyiv for his skin color
6. Oligarch Toys: planes, palaces & other posh possessions
7. Merkel to visit Russia prior to meeting Zelensky
8. Asylum seeker in Ukraine receives threats, risks illegal deportation to China
9. Ukraine improves its defenses against escalating cyber threats
10. Taliban surrounds Ukrainians as 120 await evacuation from Afghanistan

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Kyiv Post says thank you to supporters at Independence Day celebration

1 Anastasiya Rydannykh and Iryna Kalnytska from GOLAW network with Onur Anliatamer, Credit Europe Bank.
2 Alexander McWhorter, Citi country officer, talks with Brian Bonner, chief editor of the Kyiv Post.
3 Dincer Sayici of Turkish Airlines talks with Mykola Siutkin of S&P Investment Risk Management.

4 A vyshyvanka fashion show takes place by Narodniy Dim Ukraina.
5 An MG electric car from the event's exclusive partner, Winner Group Ukraine, is on display. (Photos by Oleg Petrasjuk)





Creative State of Arsenal was the venue of a pre-Independence Day party on Aug. 18.

- 1** Latinium Germany bar at the Kyiv Post Independence Day celebration.
- 2** Vasyl Myroshnychenko wins a tank of gasoline from SOCAR. Brian Bonner and Alyona Nevmerzhytska from the Kyiv Post emceed the event.
- 3** Guests from First Casino Yevhen Parkhomenko and Kateryna Parnell.
- 4** Guests enjoy a celebration of Ukraine's independence.
- 5** Urban gypsy band performs at the celebration.
- 6** A model's stride at a vyshyvanka fashion show put on by Narodniy Dim Ukraine. (Photos by Kostyantyn Chernichkin and Oleg Petrusiuk)



Kyiv Post Digital

Most of the Kyiv Post's content is online. Here are some samples of the great journalism that readers will find daily at kyivpost.com

OPINION

Brian Bonner: Germany and UK, send your own troops to Afghanistan to replace America



Timothy Ash: Biden doesn't understand damage he's done



LIFESTYLE

Ukrainian director adds Lizzo to list of star clientele



UKRAINE

State Grain Corporation head Vlasenko tries to flee amid \$57 million fraud investigation



2 people detained for attacking journalist at National Corps rally



BUSINESS

Ukraine poised to become Eastern European Las Vegas, gaming experts say (WEBINAR)



China, Poland, Russia top list of Ukraine's partners for first six months of 2021



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In October 2019, Alinea International launched a new five-year project in Ukraine: **Support Ukraine's Reforms for Governance (SURGe)**. SURGe is a technical assistance project in Ukraine, funded by Global Affairs Canada and implemented by Alinea International Ltd.

For the SURGe Project we are looking for the following expert:

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NOTICE is hereby given, in accordance with the BVI Business Companies Act, 2004 that the above named company, is in voluntary liquidation. The voluntary liquidation commenced on 05/08/2021 and Eldon Solomon of Palm Grove House, P.O. Box 438, Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands is the voluntary liquidator.

[Відповідно до Закону про комерційні компанії Британських Віргінських островів 2004 року ПОВІДОМЛЯЄМО про те, що вищевказана компанія знаходиться в процесі добровільної ліквідації. Добровільна ліквідація почалася 05/08/2021 та Елдон Солон з Палм Гров Хауз, поштова скринька 438, Род-Таун, Тортولا, Британські Віргінські острови, є добровільним ліквідатором.]

Dated: 05/08/2021
Eldon Solomon
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