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Kyiv will enter red zone on Nov. 1, imposing restrictions on unvaccinated people → Page 37

Daylight saving time ends in Ukraine Oct. 31 at 4 a.m.; set clocks back one hour



# Kyiv Post

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World in Ukraine: Turkey

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# Turkish Delight

## Record 2 million Ukrainians expected to visit Turkey in 2021

### Will Ukraine fight for Saakashvili's freedom?



Opinion

Ivan Lozowy

He is an extraordinary politician by anyone's standards. He has been president of Georgia and a regional governor in Ukraine, and a prisoner in both. Currently, Mikheil Saakashvili sits in a Georgian prison based on sentences handed down in 2018 by Georgian courts in his absence.

Saakashvili's return to Georgia just before the first round of local elections, held on Oct. 2, came as a shock. Saakashvili had been absent from the country for a full eight years. His return was a bold and brave move calculated to mobilize the former president's supporters and the political party he founded in 2001, the United National Movement. And it did mobilize them. Although the ruling party, Georgian Dream, won the first round of elections according to the official results, the UNP took a solid second place with over 30% of the vote, as compared to Georgian Dream's 47%. Almost two weeks later the opposition staged Georgia's largest mass demonstration since the Rose Revolution protests brought Saakashvili to power in 2003.

It is unlikely, however, that Georgia will undergo a repeat of its epic revolution from 19 years ago. Georgian Dream and Georgia's government are tightly controlled by a former Russian oligarch of Georgian descent, Bidzina Ivanishvili, who earned billions of dollars in Russia before moving to Georgia and renouncing his Russian citizenship. Ivanishvili's fortune of \$5 billion equals rough-

→ page 38



A Ukrainian tourist poses near the Hagia Sophia Mosque in Istanbul's Sultanahmet neighborhood on May 9, 2021. After international travel was curtailed in 2020 because of the coronavirus, Ukrainians found their way back to one of their favorite destinations in 2021. Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimates a record 2 million Ukrainians will visit Turkey by the end of 2021. The two countries do not require visas or passports of each other's citizens for entry, only internal identification documents. Burak Pehlivan, chairman of the Turkish-Ukrainian Business Association, calls the arrangement between the two nations "a mini-Schengen zone on the Black Sea."

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4 820131 720013 43

October 29, 2021  
Vol. 26, issue 43  
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by Kyiv Post

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Головний редактор  
Брайан Боннер

Відповідальний за випуск  
Брайан Боннер

Адреса видавця та засновника співпадають: Україна, м. Київ, 01033, вул. Жилианська, 68, 2-й поверх. Реєстраційне свідоцтво Кв № 23191-13031ПР від 29.03.2018. Передплатний індекс ДП Преса 40528 Надруковано ТОВ «Новий друк», 02660, Київ, вулиця Магнітогорська, 1, тел.: 559-9148 З приводу розміщення реклами звертайтесь: +380 44 591-7788 Відповідальність за зміст реклами несе замовник.

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Volodymyr Petrov

A drone picture shows an aerial view of the first Kyiv machine-building plant, Bilshovyk, in the capital, on Oct. 20, 2021. The State Property Fund sold Bilshovyk at an auction on Oct. 27 to Ukrainian businessman Vasyl Khmelnytsky alongside his partner Andriy Ivanov and real estate developer Oleksiy Baranov for a \$53 million. The final price was only \$1.5 million (Hr 40 million) higher than the opening bid. According to industry experts, the plant was sold for at least half the market price.

# 'A corrupt scheme that was once again presented as a great victory'

## Tycoon Vasyl Khmelnytsky buys iconic Bilshovyk plant for fraction of its worth

By Natalia Datskevych  
datskevych@kyivpost.com

It took only six minutes for the State Property Fund of Ukraine to sell its prized asset, the Bilshovyk machinery plant, at an Oct. 27 auction for a trifling \$53 million.

With only three investors participating in the auction, the hammer price was raised by a modest \$1.5 million from the opening bid.

The winner — an obscure compa-

ny called General Commerce — is linked to UDP, a company belonging to Ukrainian tycoon Vasyl Khmelnytsky, who confirmed he bought the highly-coveted plant with his partner Andriy Ivanov and real estate developer Oleksiy Baranov.

"As a UDP shareholder, I congratulate the partners on winning the open auction," reads the statement obtained by the news outlet Ekonomichna Pravda.

The Bilshovyk plant is the lar-

est state asset sold in the last 16 years. The auction is part of President Volodymyr Zelensky's Big Privatization program aimed at selling the state's properties to fill the government's coffers.

However, experts believe that if the sale was fair, the real market price could have reached \$150 million.

Located just a few kilometers from the city center, the 35-hectare plant stands at the crossroads of busy transport arteries leading to Kyiv's main street, Kreshchatyk.

The winning company — based in Cyprus and registered in Kyiv with a capital of \$150 (Hr 4,000) —

will also get a one-hectare plot on Trukhaniv Island in the heart of Kyiv and several smaller plots in the city.

Previously, General Commerce was involved in legal action over the development of a popular recreational area at Arsenalna Square in central Kyiv by Khmelnytsky's company UFuture, according to the Unified State Electronic System, a construction database.

### Buying strategy

Khmelnytsky, 55, whose net worth reached over \$310 million in 2020,

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Dmytro Sennychenko, head of the State Property Fund of Ukraine, holds a symbolic paycheck with a representative of the winning company, General Commerce, linked to businessman Vasyl Khmelnytsky, who bought the Bilshovyk machine-building plant in Kyiv for \$53 million at an auction on Oct. 27, 2021.

Dmytro Sennychenko/facebook



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Burak Pehlivan

TUID Chairman of the Board



Our membership includes:



EDITORIALS

# Kindly vaccinate

It's early in the morning. The rickety hospital bed digs into your aching back as you lie in the hallway of this understaffed little clinic on the edge of nowhere. All of the rooms are already overflowing with other patients.

The plastic mask pumps oxygen into your sallow face, shielding you from the smell of body odor, sanitizer and putrefaction wafting on the stale hospital air. The sound of compressors, moans of pain and dying gasps for breath are by now gruesomely familiar to your ears.

As a harried nurse with bags under her eyes sweeps past your bed, you try to get her attention to ask how your partner is doing in the neighboring ward. But no sound passes your lips except a labored wheeze. In spite of the compressor thrumming away, you cannot fill your lungs with air. Despite your best effort, each breath feels shallower and shallower.

Animal panic slowly overtakes you. The realization dawns with the merciless insistence of fact: This is how you're going to die, here and now. Your body jerks and rattles as you try to do something, anything to escape the slow asphyxiation pressing down on you. A doctor hurries over but you can no longer understand her words.

Your last coherent thought is something about skipping vaccination and the black body bag that will be your final resting place.

Now, picture yourself watching your beloved wife, husband, mother, father, child, grandparent or friend going through that in front of your eyes, knowing that you're powerless to stop it.

That's where your vaccine skepticism has led you. In Ukraine, less than 20 percent of the population is vaccinated, one of the lowest rates in Europe.

Ukraine is going through its deadliest wave of COVID-19 to date. Daily deaths are expected to pass 1,000 soon. Daily hospitalizations have already passed 5,000.

And 95 percent of those hospitalized with the disease have not been vaccinated. Maybe they thought that a personal hunch trumps hundreds of thousands of man-hours of the world's top medical minds. Maybe they succumbed to a misinformation campaign run by complete sociopaths, some of whom live in the Kremlin.

The reason matters little. Every refusal to vaccinate contributes to someone somewhere slowly choking to death and placing an unbearable burden on the country's medical system, costing other lives in the process.

And then there are people who forge their vaccine certificates and the doctors who help them for a quick buck. Not only are they signing their own death warrant in case they do get sick with complications (you can't get vaccinated if you're already in the system), they're unraveling the whole system and condemning an unknown number of people to a slow, tortured demise.

So pretty please, with sugar on top. Get the goddamn shot.

# Western naivete

If the West is so eager to lend or give Ukraine money, maybe they should just do it — and dispense with the charade that they are conditioning the assistance on meaningful and lasting reforms.

Let's start with the International Monetary Fund, the global lender whose credibility will remain tarnished as long as Kristalina Georgieva remains its managing director. There's plenty of convincing evidence to show that she boosted China's rating in the World Bank's Doing Business index when she worked for that financial institution.

This year, the IMF gave Ukraine \$2.7 billion in "special drawing rights" for which Kyiv had to do nothing. It was part of a global gift to help nations recover from the damaging economic effects of the coronavirus.

Now the IMF is poised to lend Ukraine more money, a \$700 million installment, on a \$5 billion credit line that was frozen in June 2020 because of non-compliance with reform requirements. So far, Ukraine has received only \$2.1 billion under the program. But on top of restarting the loan, the IMF is set to extend the deadline to June 2022 for a program that was to expire by year's end.

What did Ukraine do to deserve the renewed lending? Almost nothing. It passed legislation reinforcing the independence of the National Bank of Ukraine and the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, which it shouldn't have had to do anyway. Both were supposed to be independent.

The failure to fight corruption, reform the courts, establish rule of law, punish bank fraud, fill the vacancy of the special anti-corruption prosecutor, set market prices for energy or respect corporate governance principles? None of this is needed to get IMF credit.

Combined with another recently released 600 million euros in European Union assistance, Kyiv's leaders will unjustifiably brag that the resumed lending is a vote of confidence in them. Nonsense.

All signs are that corruption is flourishing unabated, and why shouldn't it? There's nobody to stop it or punish it. Ukraine, for the record, still hasn't convicted anybody of serious corruption. It's not an accident. It's by design. But with Western ambassadors and international institution heads rotating in and out every three years or so, and Western leadership in general in decay, nobody can break their bubbles of delusional thinking.

And then, in the same category of complicity or apathy, there's the deafening silence by business associations, embassies and many others in not calling out the State Property Fund for the sham Oct. 27 privatization of the 35-hectare Bilshovyk property in Kyiv. Five workshops were illegally privatized on the plot several years ago. Investors said this made development highly litigious and unlikely, so they pulled out. Experts said the shady circumstances favored tycoon Vasyl Khmelnytsky. And, indeed, he and his partners bid barely above the \$51 million minimum to win. They won the uncompetitive auction for less than half of the market price, according to some valuations. It was not a victory for open and competitive privatization, as touted, and should have been condemned by the West.

But this is the same West that lends Ukraine money for little in return.



NEWS ITEM:

U.S. tech giant Microsoft said it had documented a flurry of Russia's cyberattacks on U.S.-based computer systems between July 1 and Oct. 19. Earlier in summer, following similar reports, U.S. President Joe Biden said his administration would take "any necessary action" to stop cyberattacks from Russia.



Well that was easy

NEWS ITEM:

President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Oct. 18 that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will give Ukraine the next \$700 million installment in a \$5 billion lending program. The IMF halted lending for more than a year because of the country's insufficient reform progress. After the Ukrainian parliament passed two key laws required by the IMF agreement to strengthen the independence of the National Bank of Ukraine and National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, the organization has changed its mind in a staff-level agreement likely to be ratified by the lender's board of directors by the end of November.



NEWS ITEM:

Russian President Vladimir Putin ridiculed the European Union for dropping long-term gas contracts with Russia during a speech on Oct. 21. Putin compared the bloc to a wolf with its tail frozen, tricked by a canny fox, citing an old Russian fairy tale. Putin said Russia could help by sending the EU the extra natural gas, if the bloc approves Kremlin's Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which bypasses Ukraine. Earlier in October, natural gas prices surged to record levels, which many see as proof of Russia's manipulation and the EU's foolish low levels of gas storage.



NEWS ITEM:

Tycoon Vasyl Khmelnytsky and business partners bought Kyiv's Bilshovyk machinery plant on Oct. 27 in an auction that involved three bidders and lasted only six minutes. The final price was a mere \$53 million, a fraction of the plant's estimated worth, and only \$1.5 million higher than the minimum required bid.

See these features online at [Kyivpost.com](http://Kyivpost.com)

### Ukraine's Friend & Foe Of The Week



Friend

**Burak Pehlivan**

The chairman of the Turkish-Ukrainian Business Association has dedicated his professional life to bolstering the economies of both nations. He also understands the importance of a free press, encouraging his members to advertise in the Kyiv Post for its annual edition celebrating Turkish Republic Day, Oct. 29



Foe

**Joseph Biden**

The U.S. president is way better than Donald Trump. But still Joe Biden is disappointing. He lets the Kremlin wield its energy weapon and he refuses to get tough with Vladimir Putin on hacking. He also inspires little confidence when it comes to defending Ukraine.

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

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

# World in Ukraine: Turkey



In partnership with

**Editor's Note:** World in Ukraine takes a look at Ukraine's bilateral relations with different nations. All articles are written independently from advertisers.

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## A free trade pact will boost prospects for Ukraine & Turkey to reach their goal of \$10 billion annually

By Max Hunder  
[hunder@kyivpost.com](mailto:hunder@kyivpost.com)

Ukraine's trade volume with Turkey could double to \$10 billion per year if the details on a long-awaited free trade deal are ironed out after years of negotiations.

This is the prediction of Burak Pehlivan, the chairman of the Turkish-Ukrainian Business Association.

Turkey is Ukraine's fifth-largest trade partner and business ties between the two countries are growing every year. Even though 2021 is not over yet, it has already

seen a trade volume of \$5 billion, which has exceeded the total for the last pre-pandemic year of 2019. President Volodymyr Zelensky wants it to hit \$6 billion.

Both countries are seeking European Union membership, but their attempts to join the bloc have been sidelined for years. This has encouraged them to explore opportunities for deeper cooperation with each other.

Ukraine is one of only five countries in the world that have reciprocal passport-free travel arrangements with Turkey. According to Pehlivan, this is Turkey's "mini-Schengen zone."



Onur Group

A bridge on the M12 highway over the Dniester River in Lviv Oblast, built by Turkish construction firm Onur Group. Turkish construction companies have already built more than 200 projects in Ukraine with a total estimated worth of \$8 billion.

However, commercial exchanges between the two countries are still hampered by the lack of a free trade agreement. Talks have been ongoing since 2007, although Ukraine's trade volumes with Turkey are much higher than some nations with

which it has a free trade agreement, such as Canada.

After Turkey sold 12 Bayraktar TB2 military drones to Ukraine, which plans to buy even more, diplomatic relations between the two countries are now closer than ever,

creating a golden opportunity to get the trade deal finalized.

### Optimistic visit

Ukraine consistently runs a large

→ page 9



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### UDK LLC Autoclaved Aerated Concrete

"UDK" LLC is one of the leading producers of autoclaved aerated concrete in Ukraine. The company was established in Dnipro in 2007. First lot of products appeared on the Ukrainian market at the end of 2009. Production capacity amounts to 500 thousand cubic meters per year. Production specializes in AAC blocks with high construction and heat-insulation properties, with marking by density D400 and D500 and classes of strength C 2,0 and C 2,5.

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# Vasyl Bodnar: 'It's essential to have Turkey on our side'

By Brian Bonner  
bonner@kyivpost.com

Vasyl Bodnar's 23-year career in Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken him to Ukraine's neighbors on all sides: north & east, serving in Moscow; west, serving in Warsaw; and now south, serving as Ukraine's ambassador to Turkey after an earlier posting there.

Considering Ukraine's geopolitical priorities, it's a plum assignment for Bodnar, who served as a deputy foreign minister since 2017 before two weeks ago moving to Ankara, the capital of Turkey.

After the United States and European Union, Turkey is arguably Ukraine's most important strategic partner in the world. In some ways, the Black Sea neighbor surpasses both the U.S. and EU in importance because it is so vital to helping Ukraine reach its economic and security goals.

Turkey has been active and uncompromising in vowing to never recognize Russia's illegal seizure in 2014 of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula after a brief military invasion.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has condemned the Kremlin's ongoing repression of Crimean Tatars on the peninsula.

And, unlike some in the nervous West, Erdogan has been willing to supply Ukraine with weapons to defend itself against Russia's war — now in its eighth year, with 7% of Ukrainian territory under the Kremlin's control, more than 14,000 killed and 1.5 million people displaced. Ukraine carried out its first missile strike earlier this month using Turkey's Bayraktar TB2 drone.

Moreover, the support of Turkey — a NATO member — is key to deterring further Russian military assaults through the Black Sea and keeping the sea open.



Vasyl Bodnar, a former deputy foreign minister in Ukraine, is shown in a Dec. 28, 2020, photo. In August, Bodnar was named Ukraine's ambassador to Turkey and he took up his post in Ankara earlier this month.

Aside from the security component, Turkey is also Ukraine's 5th largest trading partner, trailing only China, Poland, Russia and Germany. The goal is to hit \$6 billion in bilateral trade this year on the way to the ultimate goal of at least \$10 billion annually. And, Ukraine and Turkey both share an unsatisfying situation for both: Excluded from

the European Union, but trying to get in.

## 'Inspiring' challenge

Nobody has to explain Turkey's strategic importance to Bodnar.

"It's attractive, challenging and very inspiring," Bodnar said. "There are a number of huge and important tasks to complete, not only for the

bilateral relationship but also for regional stability."

To underscore the importance, Erdogan and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky have met at least a half-dozen times since Zelensky's election in 2019. They last met on Sept. 21, 2021, in New York at the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly. They are expected to meet again in Kyiv in early 2022 to kick off celebrations for the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

## Tricky ties

Turkey, however, can be a tricky strategic partner whose behavior is not everything that Ukraine would hope.

For starters, Erdogan and Ukraine's No. 1 enemy, Russian President Vladimir Putin, have been making nice — over arms sales, including Ankara's purchase of Russian S400 missile defense systems, and mutual hostility toward the West.

For another, Turkey refuses to join the West in economic sanctions against Russia — or any other country else, for that matter, as a matter of longstanding policy.

But Ukraine is willing to overlook those drawbacks for the sake of stronger bilateral ties.

"It's better not to demand something that is impossible to achieve. It's better to focus on what is realistic and profitable for both countries. I have more optimism than pessimism," Bodnar said. Turkey's longstanding antipathy to economic sanctions "is well known since 2014.

Turkey is not going to join sanctions against their economic interests."

Besides, with the threat of a deeper Russian military invasion from the Black Sea still very much real, "it's essential to have Turkey on our side," Bodnar said.

"It's one of the dangers we still witness — Russia's Navy forces in the Black Sea region. We should be prepared to defend the coastline and land entrances from the peninsula and the Azov Sea. In defense, we are counting first of all on ourselves. It is only we who can defend ourselves."

Keeping on Turkey's good side is also why Ukraine did not object to Ankara's purchase of Russian S400 missile defense systems. "We are not trying to link it to our bilateral relationship," he said of the purchase that angered Turkey's NATO allies. "That was their decision."

## Trade barriers

And, despite many years of tough negotiations, Ukraine and Turkey still have not reached a free trade agreement. To achieve such a pact, Bodnar said that Turkey must become less protectionist in its trade policies.

"Turkey's market is closed, protected by high tariffs, preventing more products from Ukraine to have the possibility to enter the Turkish market," Bodnar said. "It's mostly liberalized on our side. It's the only sticking point that doesn't allow us to finalize the agreement."

The current hope is to finalize

coming in the November 5  
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# Burak Pehlivan: 'In 2020, Turkey became the largest foreign investor in Ukraine' with more than \$4.1 billion

*Editor's Note: The following is a Q&A interview with Burak Pehlivan, the chairman of the International Turkish Ukrainian Business Association.*

## Kyiv Post: How long have you been at TUID?

Burak Pehlivan: I became a member of TUID in 2010 and since 2016 I have been the chairman of the association.

## KP: Why did you devote your life to Ukraine-Turkish trade?

BP: I believe if Turkey has prosperous, economically strong, peaceful neighbor countries, it means Turkish citizens would be more

prosperous too. We have a very big untapped economic potential with Ukraine. Unfortunately, we couldn't use this potential for many decades. However, over the recent years, we have been realizing part of it. It means Turkish and Ukrainian businesses and of course our nations are benefiting from this tendency. As the chairman of the Turkish-Ukrainian Business Association, my main task is to work for increasing the trade and investment volume between Turkey and Ukraine as much as I can. And Turkish-Ukrainian relations are in a such great level, let's call it the Golden Age and both economies are completing each other so well, with what we do for



Burak Pehlivan, chairman of the Turkish-Ukrainian Business Association (TUID), speaks with the Kyiv Post in his office on Oct. 23, 2019 in Kyiv.

improving the relations more, we get splendid positive results.

## KP: Why do so many Turkish businesses advertise in the Kyiv Post (we're happy, of course)?

BP: In 2020, Turkey became the largest foreign investor in Ukraine. The Turkish investment in Ukraine has already exceeded \$4.1 billion. More than 700 Turkish companies operate in Ukraine. Unlike in many countries Turkish businesses are not only active in Ukraine in such

conventional sectors as construction, food processing and textile, at least in 10 different sectors, from shoe care products to shaving gels, cosmetics to machinery they are market leaders. Our mutual trade volume will grow this year probably around 50%. Almost every day a new Turkish and Ukrainian company start cooperation. We have also many members from other countries and we believe cooperation between Turkish and Ukrainian businesses in other coun-

tries makes sense too. The Kyiv Post is one of most-read English-language newspapers in Eastern Europe and popular for foreign expats, foreign investors, English-speaking Ukrainians. Considering Kyiv Post's popularity, and the big number of diversified Turkish businesses and international companies who makes business or investment via Turkey to Ukraine, it is a logical result to see in the Kyiv Post so many Turkish advertisements in the Kyiv Post. 🇹🇷

## DOĞUŞ GÜLPINAR OF NAZALI TAX & LEGAL ON BUSINESS RELATIONS BETWEEN UKRAINE AND TURKEY

Advertisement



Mr. Doğuş Gülpinar, head of the Ukrainian office of Nazali Tax & Legal, has been advising Ukrainian and Turkish clients for the past ten years, primarily focusing on construction and energy markets. He previously advised foreign investors in the Odesa region and oversaw the Turkish desk at a top-tier Ukrainian law firm in Kyiv.

He guides and supports Turkish businesses on the complex issues of the Ukrainian legal environment and arranges business communication between Ukrainian and Turkish companies.

### Could you please elaborate on your company's experience and its business activity in Ukraine?

Nazali Tax & Legal is Turkey's most prominent law firm, counting around 250 lawyers in five offices countrywide and in international offices in Ukraine, the U.K., Russia, Morocco, and the Netherlands. This multicultural and cross-country approach allows us to offer tailored advice to our clients and bring the best international practices combined with local expertise.

That is why our mission is not only to advise clients in Ukraine but also to provide an opportunity for local companies to start doing business in Turkey and other countries with a Nazali Tax & Legal international presence.

Nazali Tax & Legal International provides a wide range of consultancy services to its national and international clients about legal, tax, and accounting matters. Our philosophy is quality in delivery, timely response, and a business-minded approach. With its principle "growth along with knowledge," the firm has become a well-known brand in Turkey with its increasingly esteemed clients since its establishment in November 2014.

Nazali's Kyiv office provides quality consultancy services to all types of clients, who require the provision of target-oriented solutions considering the client's business strategies and work requirements in Ukraine. The Kyiv team features experienced lawyers and consultants who have worked for major Ukrainian law firms and Big Four accounting firms.

We have already built trusting business relationships with the top Turkish companies operating in Ukraine and with our Ukrainian clients who seek expansion to the Turkish market.

### What about Turkish business in Ukraine? What are the critical business interests of Turkish companies, and how do Turkish and Ukrainian companies cooperate in the Ukrainian market?

In the past couple of years, Turkey has become one of the biggest trade partners of Ukraine.

Turkish companies actively invest in the Ukrainian market, especially in the energy, infrastructure, construction, transport, and agriculture sectors. The amount of trade between Turkey and Ukraine increases each year to reach around \$5 billion in 2020.

Turkish construction companies have become very active players in the Ukrainian public procurement sector since the announcement of the "Big Construction" state program focusing on construction and repair of roads throughout Ukraine in 2019. Turkish companies have the relevant experience and necessary engineering capacity to obtain contracts for the most complex and costly infrastructure projects of state importance.

Turkish energy companies are also interested in the Ukrainian renewable energy market.

They are actively engaged in negotiations with local authorities regarding the lease of land required to implement potential projects. In case of a successful agreement, Turkish investors are ready to construct the plant from scratch. Turkish investors are keen to provide specific financial or technological resources for the modernization or expansion of existing plants. Many Turkish contractors are involved in providing a wide range of installation works, starting from mounting positions and ranging to the performance of full-scope engineering, procurement and construction contracts, as well as the day-to-day operation and maintenance of renewable energy projects.

Agribusiness is one of the most profitable sectors in Ukraine and the country's largest export sector due to, among other things, incredibly fertile soil and competitive labor costs.

Agriculture is also one of the vital Ukrainian markets for Turkish players. As Turkey has a strong demand for certain agricultural goods, Turkish companies cooperate with Ukrainian agricultural holdings to trade commodities like corn, sunflower, wheat, rapeseed, soybeans, and other crops. On the other hand, the Turkish producers of fertilizers are eager to expand their business into Ukraine as the local market of crop protection products appears to be undeveloped in terms of production, but the demand coming from the local farmers is high.

Considering such versatile interests of Turkish companies in Ukraine, they require constant legal and tax support and updates in conditions of ever-changing legislation in the respective industries.

### How Ukrainian business participates in the Turkish market, and what are the perspectives?

The main areas of Ukrainian export to Turkey are ferrous metals, crops, oilseeds cultures, and food products. The amount of annual Ukrainian export to Turkey is approximately \$2.5-2.7 billion.

Although Ukrainian companies are actively

engaged in the Turkish market, there is still much room for expansion. Representatives of different Turkish business associations and representatives of the Turkish Foreign Economic Relations Board constantly urge Ukrainian companies to expand their presence in Turkey.

Alternatively, the Ukrainian companies conducting business in Turkey are working on establishing the Ukrainian business association, which will help the Ukrainian investors expand their operation to the Turkish market. The Ukrainian ambassador in Turkey highly supported this initiative.

Currently, Ukraine and Turkey are in the final stage of negotiations on the conclusion of the Treaty on Free Trade Zone. President Volodymyr Zelensky and Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan conducted several meetings to finalize it. During one of the meetings, President Erdoğan noted that the execution of the treaty might increase the amount of trade between the countries to around \$10 billion.

Therefore, it is high time for Ukrainian companies to analyze the Turkish market and consider doing business in Turkey. Nazali Tax & Legal's headquarters in Turkey can support the Ukrainian companies intending to enter the Turkish market or expand their existing business in the Turkish Republic. The Turkish industry highly regards its dedicated team of local professionals.



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# Vasyl Bodnar takes up duty in Ankara, hoping to accelerate bilateral relationship

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a free trade agreement in early January, when the two nations celebrate 30 years of diplomatic relations with another visit to Ukraine by Erdogan.

Nonetheless, even without such a deal, greater defense industry cooperation, especially in the aviation industry, could add billions of dollars yearly to the bilateral trade total.

And the two nations continue to deepen tourism and other cultural ties, with a record two million Ukrainian visits to Turkey this year, with 300,000 Turks making the trip to Ukraine. No passports or visas are required on either side — internal ID documents are enough.

## Russian experience

Bodnar worked in Ukraine's Embassy in Moscow from 2000–2004, the early years of Vladimir Putin's rule, when the Russian leader was attempting to get along with the West and not engaging in such a mil-



Oleg Petrasliuk

Turkey's Ambassador to Ukraine Yagmur Ahmet Guldere is Vasyl Bodnar's counterpart in Kyiv. Guldere, in photo, speaks with the Kyiv Post during an Oct. 21, 2020, interview in his office at the Turkish Embassy in Kyiv.

itaristic and aggressive foreign policy. "The beginning of 2000 looked more democratic," he recalled. It was a time when "no one could believe that we'd have Russia as an enemy."

But all the signs were there if only

they had been read properly.

Even then, the Kremlin was suppressing democracy, dissent and the rights of minorities, and turning into the autocracy it is today.

While his Russian counterparts

were "declaring Ukraine independent" and hailing the three "brotherhood nations" of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, Bodnar said "when you talked with them more honestly, there were a number of signals showing that neither the Ukrainian language nor the Ukrainian nation nor Ukraine's independent status is satisfactory for the Russians. Internally, they didn't agree with that."

And so the world has what it has now: Putin defending his kleptocracy at home, invading neighboring countries and occupying their territory, and attacking the West's democratic institutions at every opportunity.

"The great Russian policy is the reconstruction of the Soviet Union, 2.0," Bodnar said. But he predicted that the Kremlin will fail because the

Russian leaders are applying "previous methods to a new reality. They are losing from this. It's a problem for their economy because sanctions actually work."

He said Putin's obsession with subjugating Ukraine is "the main topic of Russian neurosis" and the reason why he is "creating enemies" — Ukraine and the West — for internal political purposes.

Ultimately, "all depends on our ability to defend ourselves and be strong enough to protect ourselves from a further invasion," Bodnar said. The Kremlin's "continuation of its aggressive policy will lead to losses for Russia and losses for the region. In the mod-

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## MIROPLAST: path to leadership, current challenges, and plans of Ukraine's most powerful PVC profile manufacturer



MIROPLAST is the largest Ukrainian PVC window and door profile manufacturer\*. The company's head office and production facilities are located in Dnipro. Every year, it develops and expands its plant's infrastructure, launches new high-performance equipment, and modernizes production processes to enhance efficiency and maintain high product quality. We talked to the CEO of MIROPLAST, Mr. Emre Hadi Erverdi, and learned how the company achieved such outstanding results in the Ukrainian market.

**Mr. Erverdi, your company has been the leading Ukrainian manufacturer of PVC profiles for many years. How do you achieve such outstanding results?**

When we started in 2006, about 90% of PVC profiles in the Ukrainian market were imported. All our European friends discouraged us from investing in Ukraine. They said that there would be no sales because no one would buy windows from a non-German brand. Fortunately, it happened otherwise.

We have built a modern, powerful plant with the latest equipment and significant production potential, investing over \$38 million in total. I attribute our accomplishments to three crucial factors. First, it is our formidable production and the ability to attract investment

on time. Second, it is the continuous enhancement of our product line and expansion of the laminated profile range. And, finally, it is our strong brand — WDS — that has won the trust of both window manufacturers and consumers.

Another cornerstone of our achievements is our result-focused powerful team. All these together have made us Ukraine's top manufacturer of PVC profiles and a reliable exporter.

**Do you export to neighboring countries only or overseas too?**

We have extensive export geography. Currently, there are active sales in 15 countries, and it is not the CIS market alone. Our range is diverse: we have both energy-efficient profiles for countries with a cold climate and profiles with a special formula, which have increased UV radiation resistance. This year, we have launched a new sliding system designed with export in mind. Our profiles enjoy demand in warm Portugal and Israel as well as in colder Russia and Germany. Moreover, we have partners overseas: in South Korea, Peru, and the USA. Seeing how competitive our products are globally is a huge inspiration that drives our development in terms of variety and speed.

Besides, we keep exploring new business models and avenues for development. We have already joined the top Ukrainian exporters of ready-made windows with the Spanish market as our key destination.

**If you compare the share of sales in the domestic market and exports, which of them prevails?**

Export accounts for about 30% of our total sales now, and we plan to keep moving in this direction. Of course, most of our sales are still in Ukraine, although local profile manufacturers have been under increasing strain lately.

All industry players have noted how much PVC suspension, the base component of PVC compound, has grown in price worldwide and how costly other components have become. Making things even worse, the government introduced a special import duty on PVC raw materials last year.

Although our production cost increased by 100% year-on-year, we have raised prices only by 60%! Meanwhile, European manufacturers have increased prices for finished products by a mere 30%. Therefore, a Special Investigation into the imports of PVC profiles to Ukraine regardless of the country of origin or export was initiated with our support. We are convinced that the government must look into this situation and protect domestic businesses.

**How important is the government's role in your business's success? Do you feel any support from authorities now?**

On closer inspection, European manufacturers have mostly unfettered access to the Ukrainian market. Business support programs in the EU are exceptionally effective: government programs, concessional loans — everything is geared toward developing businesses and boosting export. Meanwhile, Ukrainian companies have a hard time entering the European market. Stringent legislation and costly certifications pose an insurmountable obstacle for many Ukrainian companies trying to export their products to Europe. We would certainly welcome any support from the government to develop export, the way it is done in civilized countries. Export is an essential part of strong economies. Regrettably, we are left on our own with these problems, at least for now.

**Sorry to hear that; hopefully, positive changes are on the way. Now, what are your plans, your vector for company development?**

Export is definitely a direction we plan to develop. A number of changes in the product line are also in the plans to increase our competitiveness in the domestic and foreign markets. In Europe, energy-efficient windows and large panoramic structures have long become standard. And European norms are being implemented in Ukraine right now. We are ready for this change. Moreover, we are planning to roll out new products that better fit consumers' needs and meet the requirements of new legislation.

In addition, we see great potential in the lamination segment. Customers are willing to invest not only in heat conservation but also in the beauty of their homes. So, demand for laminated windows has grown significantly. A timely lamination shop modernization has enabled us to increase laminated profile sales confidently. Another promising segment is door systems — we are planning to introduce new, more innovative and technological solutions there next year. The year 2022 promises to be quite challenging in the face of the continuing pandemic and other issues. Still, we believe that our experience, capabilities, and professional team will keep us in the lead and help us fulfil all our plans.

\* by the volume of products produced in 2019, according to a Pro Consulting study



**MIROPLAST**  
WHEN QUALITY MATCHES DESIGN



AFP



Turkish Foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu (L) and his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba pose with folders containing signed documents during their talks in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv on Oct. 7, 2021.

# Delaying free trade agreement between Ukraine and Turkey costs both economies billions

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trade surplus with Turkey. According to Pehlivan, since independence, Ukraine has exported \$40 billion more to Turkey than it imported.

As a result, some Turkish businesses are reluctant to give Ukrainian goods unfettered market access.

Ukraine has a poor negotiating position because it joined the World Trade Organization in 2008 on unfavorable terms. On average, tariffs permitted by the WTO's conditions for Ukraine are much lower than those for Turkey, meaning Ukraine can offer fewer concessions.

Agriculture is a sensitive negotiation topic. It represented nearly 45% of Ukraine's exports to Turkey in 2019. Soybeans and corn alone made up over 70% of agricultural exports.

"Ukraine wants a full liberalization in agriculture. This is impossible for Turkey," Pehlivan said.

In fact, agriculture sank a previous attempt to negotiate a free trade agreement in 2013, Ukraine's former ambassador to Turkey, Sergiy Korsunsky, told the Kyiv Post in 2019.

Traditionally, Ukraine's largest exports to Turkey have been iron and steel. Some Turkish steel producers are uneasy about giving their Ukrainian competitors even more access to their market, but Pehlivan insists that a wide-ranging trade deal will be good for everyone.

"The investment cake will be bigger and better, and for Turkish businesses it's not a problem that our Ukrainian friends will eat the biggest part of that cake."

At the beginning of October, Pehlivan met with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba and his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu. The business association head said that both sides are optimistic about tying up a deal soon.

"I think and hope it will be signed in the first quarter of 2022."

## Key partner

There is a reason for optimism: Despite the global pandemic, the Turkish-Ukrainian Business Association gained 30 new members last year.

In 2020, Turkish companies invested \$400 million into Ukraine, making Turkey the largest investor into the country that year.

According to Pehlivan, there are now over 700 Turkish businesses operating in Ukraine, with \$4.1 billion invested so far.

Lifecell, the third-largest phone network operator in Ukraine, which is wholly owned by telecom giant Turkcell, is also the largest Turkish business in Ukraine.

Turkish companies also do well in construction: Turkish firms have already built over 200 projects in the country, with a total value of over \$8 billion. The assets include highways, tram lines, luxury hotels, and shopping centers.

Road builder Onur is the most prominent Turkish construction firm in Ukraine. Onur has the second-highest turnover of all road construction companies in the country and worked on large sections of the rebuilt Kyiv-Odesa highway.

Pehlivan thinks that Turkish businesses could build their own production lines in Ukraine.

"We don't see enough Turkish greenfield manufacturing investments," he said, adding that he hopes to see investment in food processing, textiles and car manufacturing.

Pehlivan also pointed out that Ukraine's trade with Turkey has not recovered to its 2008 peak of \$8 billion, but insisted that a comprehensive free trade deal will push trade far above the current level.

## Building transport links

Transport links also need to be bolstered to boost trade between the two countries.

"I don't think the Black Sea's potential is utilized enough," said Pehlivan.

While Ukraine's large seaports are reasonably well-run, there are many small seaports on the Black Sea coast which are inefficient and could provide many more opportunities for cargo transit, if they were properly run.

A solution is on the horizon: Ukraine's State Property Fund intends to privatize most of the country's small ports.

For the first time in Ukraine's history, three state-owned ports will be put up for auction in 2021: Ust-Dunaysk, Bilhorod-Dnistrovsky and Skadovsk. If these sales are successful, nine of the other ten ports will also be privatized.

Turkey also holds great potential as a transit country for Ukrainian goods to enter Asian markets.

The Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railroad completed in 2017 gives Ukrainian stocks a direct access to Central Asia and China.

Before 2017, Ukraine's only rail connection to China was through Russia, which placed heavy restrictions on Ukrainian freight.

"Now, the government of Azerbaijan is investing heavily to connect ports in the Caspian Sea to facilitate more trade," said Pehlivan.

The business association head also stressed the importance of Ukraine's recent attempts to increase trade with Asia, stating that Asian investors were more interested in Ukraine than Western ones.

"The world is bigger than just (Ukraine's) neighbors, or the West, or the EU," he said. ☞

BUSINESS ADVISER

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## Tax residency: determining and changing residency status



**Iryna Kalnytska,**  
Partner at GOLAW, Head of Tax practice, Restructuring, Claims and Recoveries practice, Attorney at law

With the introduction of the rules on controlled foreign companies, tax residency status becomes an important issue for Ukrainian individuals. For foreigners living in Ukraine for a long period of time, tax residency is also an issue to consider because the state will treat them as Ukrainian tax residents by default. Not everyone is aware that one's Ukrainian residence status affects the need to pay taxes on worldwide income in Ukraine, subject to the requirements established by any applicable double tax treaty (DTT). In this article we will analyse the key issues to consider to properly determine tax residency status.

It is important to distinguish tax residency and citizenship, as these are two different concepts. It does not necessarily mean that being a citizen of Ukraine protects you from taxation in other countries and vice versa. Any country's residency-based taxation system defines the individuals' place of leaving, the center of the vital interest to tax the individual's income.

In order to define a person as a Ukrainian tax resident, a number of criteria are used. The first is **the place of actual leaving**. If the person simultaneously resides in another country, then the **permanent place of leaving (home) shall be considered**.



**Tetiana Fedorenko,**  
Associate, attorney at law at GOLAW

If individuals have a permanent place of leaving in different countries, they are deemed to be residents of Ukraine if they have close personal and economic relations (**centre of vital interests**) in Ukraine. A sufficient, but not exclusive, condition for determining the individual's centre of vital interest is the place of permanent leaving of the individual's family members or the individual's registration as a private entrepreneur.

If the centre of vital interests cannot be determined, or if the individual has no permanent place of leaving in any country, then such an individual shall be recognized as a resident of Ukraine if he or she **stays in Ukraine for at least 183 days during the tax year**.

If the residency status cannot be determined based on the above-mentioned rules, the individual shall be recognized as a resident of Ukraine on a **citizenship criterion**.

It should be noted that the mentioned above criteria apply to both Ukrainian citizens and foreigners who are temporarily or permanently leaving in Ukraine.

When it comes to cross-border tax questions, including double residence, one should pay attention to DTT rules. In other words, to correctly determine the person's tax residence one shall also be guided by the provisions of DTT.

DTT is used in situations when one person can be recognized as a resident in several countries under their domestic tax law and there is a need to remove double taxation. DTT provides a similar mechanism of tax residency determination as was described above. To determine the residential status of an individual, one needs to determine the permanent home, centre of vital interests, habitual abode and nationality. When an individual is a national of both states or neither of them, the question shall be solved by mutual agreement between the states according to the procedure laid down in the DTT.

It is necessary to mention that there is no legal procedure in Ukraine that allows an individual to change, acquire or abandon the residency status. Usually, Ukrainian tax authorities consider all citizens to be tax residents. However, if there are grounds (e.g. permanent place of leaving, centre of vital interests, 183 days rule) that prove that an individual has no relation to Ukraine except citizenship the following action can be taken:

- **Request for individual tax ruling.** It is possible to ask the tax authorities about their position regarding the tax resident status of the person. Note that if the person acts in accordance with the individual tax ruling and violates tax legislation no fines may be imposed on such a person.
- **Challenge an individual tax ruling in court.** If the tax authorities come to the wrong conclusion in the tax ruling, a person has a right to challenge it in court. During the court proceedings, the person's proper tax residency status can be determined. After this, if there are no significant changes in the initial data the person may rely on such a court decision while determining the tax residency status.

For foreigners, it also may be beneficial to become a tax resident of Ukraine, because there is no progressive tax rate and the personal income tax is only 18% plus military duty 1.5%. This is relatively low in comparison with other European countries.

If such a foreigner submits a tax declaration in Ukraine showing his or her Ukrainian and global income, Ukraine's tax authorities will take him or her as a tax resident.

Even after fulfilling all the requirements of the legislation on recognition as a resident of Ukraine there may be some discrepancies in the tax legislation of a foreigner's nationality state and Ukraine.

Therefore, each case should be considered separately considering the actual circumstances of a person's life and business activity.

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# Experts: Energy partnership is elusive between neighbors

By Dylan Carter  
carter@kyivpost.com

Ukraine needs new energy partners and Turkey appears to be an ideal one. Turkish investors invested \$400 million in Ukraine in 2020, making Turkey the country's top foreign investor last year.

Ukrainian officials and Turkish diplomats even set out a blueprint in late July to develop a bilateral partnership in the energy sector between Ukraine and Turkey. The plans outlined cooperation in the fields of oil, gas, nuclear, electricity and renewable energy.

And Ukraine is in critical need of new energy investment. Russia completed its controversial Nord Stream 2 pipeline in September, which will allow the Kremlin to send gas to Europe through the Baltic Sea and Germany instead of Ukraine, causing at least \$1.5 billion in lost transit fees per year.

However, Ilya Kusa, an international relations expert at the think tank Ukrainian Institute for Future, told the Kyiv Post he doubts that this energy partnership will ever materialize.

Deep-rooted corruption in Ukraine, strategic differences and unsolved queries hamper closer cooperation that Ukraine needs to ensure its energy independence from Russia.

"Our partnership is limited, it is confined to really small investments," Kusa said.

## Unlikely gas investment



Courtesy of Ovid Wind

The Ovid Wind Power Plant, near Ovidiopol, Odesa Oblast. This wind farm, owned by Turkish investment company GURIS, produces up to 30 megawatts of power. Turkey is one of Ukraine's largest investors in the renewable energy sector, but Ukraine is currently struggling to attract further energy investment.

On paper, Ukraine has strategic interest for Turkey.

Sharing access with Turkey to the Black Sea, Ukraine could be the

perfect location for a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal, connecting Turkish gas supplies with European infrastructure and Ukrainian underground storage.

These terminals could receive LNG, return it to its gas form, and send it through Ukraine's pipelines.

The July meeting envisaged connecting Ukraine to a liquid gas highway, shipping and transporting gas through the Black Sea terminals in Ukraine to destinations across the world.

Ukraine almost built an LNG terminal. In 2012, investors drew up plans to construct a terminal near Odesa, a city located 475 kilometers south of Kyiv on the Black Sea coast, with construction projected to cost over \$1.1 billion.

It did not end well. According to Reuters, the project was a fraud attempt by a former ski instructor posing as a Spanish energy executive, embarrassing Ukraine and pushing the project off the agenda.

Nine years later, Ukraine has no LNG terminal, and Kusa is still doubtful that Turkey is willing to invest in such a project.

"It's not that bad of an idea, but the problem is that it is political," Kusa said. "Politically, Turkey is not ready to invest in LNG in Ukraine."

According to Kusa, the prospects of Turkish investment are too reliant on the country's internal politics.

Ukraine would have to get the approval of the Turkish government to use Ukrainian ports as a significant part of Turkey's LNG infrastructure, which Kusa also believes to be unlikely.

The Istanbul Canal project could open up the Bosphorus to more cargo traffic, including LNG tankers to Ukraine.

The new waterway would stretch for 45 kilometers, turn the city's European side into an island, and cost at least \$15 billion.

But the project is encountering fierce public resistance due to its environmental risks and its costs. It's also reliant on Erdogan's own tenure in power. Turkey will vote for a new president in 2023, which might lead to a new strategy for the country, according to Kusa.

"There are elections in 2023 that could affect the project and, as a result, prospects of Ukraine building LNG infrastructure," Kusa said.

## Minimal gas transit

Ukraine is also discussing further utilization of the Trans-Balkan pipeline, which stretches from the Ukrainian border to Greece and connects to the Balkans.

This route is underutilized by Russian state-owned company Gazprom. The Trans-Balkan pipeline has been almost entirely abandoned in favor of the newer TurkStream and Bluestream pipelines, both carrying gas from Russia to Turkey.

The Trans-Balkan currently carries as little as 1 billion cubic meters of gas a year.

In August 2020, the Gas Transmission System Operator of Ukraine (GTSOU) requested that Turkey and the Baltic countries begin to reverse gas flow North to

provide Ukraine with gas originating from Turkey.

Andrian Prokip, an energy expert for the Ukrainian Institute for the Future, told the Kyiv Post that these plans are possible, but unlikely to amount to any significant volumes.

"This route is not competitive," Prokip said.

Instead, Ukraine could present itself as a gas storage partner for Turkey, using its large underground facilities to store Turkish gas.

Prokip said that this proposal was more feasible and would be of strategic importance to Turkey, because Ukraine can store 30 billion cubic meters. It's a massive amount compared to Turkey's 4 billion cubic meters.

"So this may work," Prokip said, but it won't help alleviate Ukraine's lost transit fees from Russia over Nord Stream 2.

## Renewable energy

Turkish investors are mostly interested in Ukraine's renewable energy potential, according to Burak Pehlivan, chairman of the Turkish-Ukrainian Business Association.

Pehlivan said the recent Turkish investment boom in Ukraine was driven by investment in renewable energy.

According to Kusa, Turkey's investment in the Ukrainian renewable energy sector comes from a desire to be a part of Europe's green transition.

"In the last few years, green

## Turkey at a glance

**Government type:** Presidential parliamentary republic

President:  
Recep Tayyip  
Erdogan

GDP, PPP:  
\$719 billion (2020)

GDP per capita, PPP:  
\$8,610 (2020)

Total area:  
783,562 square kilometers

Population:  
82.3 million

World Bank's Doing Business  
Ranking: 33

Credit ratings:  
S&P — B+ (stable), Fitch — BB- (stable),  
Moody's — B2 (negative)

**Main economic sectors:**  
Tourism, textile, construction, shipbuilding, automotive, iron and steel production, food processing, defense, petroleum

Trade: \$5.43 billion (2020)

**Exports from Ukraine to Turkey:**  
Exports ferrous metals, grain, seeds, wood and wooden products, plastics, ores, ashes  
\$ 2.44 billion.

**Imports to Ukraine from Turkey:**  
Petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, fruits and nuts, textile, pharmaceuticals, electric vehicles, plastics  
\$2.42 billion.

Turkish foreign direct investment in Ukraine: **\$400 million in 2020**

Sources: World Bank, International Monetary Fund, State Customs Service, Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of Turkey

# 98! Turkey celebrates Republic Day on Oct. 29

By Alexander Query  
[query@kyivpost.com](mailto:query@kyivpost.com)

The Kyiv Post's special coverage of the bilateral relationship comes ahead of Turkey's 98th Republic Day, also known as Cumhuriyet Bayrami, celebrated by Turks around the world.

The Oct. 29 holiday honors the founding of the modern republic in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881–1938), its first president, when the Turkish Parliament amended the constitution to change the country's system of government to a republic.

On Oct. 29, 1923, the newly recognized Turkish parliament proclaimed the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, formally marking the end of the Ottoman Empire.

On the same day, Mustafa Kemal, later named Ataturk (father of Turks), who led the Turkish war

of independence, was unanimously elected as the first president of the newly born Republic of Turkey.

Setting up an alternative government in Ankara, Ataturk sought to create a more democratic regime.

"Gentlemen, we will proclaim the republic tomorrow!" Ataturk is famously quoted as telling his close circle one day before the proclamation on Oct. 29, 1923.

This unanimous vote concluded a four-year independence war against several countries, including World War I allies Great Britain, France, Italy and Greece, an event which officially marked the end of the Ottoman Empire.

The new republic also meant the end of more than a decade of violence for the country exhausted by the war. Ataturk was the de facto leader of what was left of the defeated Ottoman Empire, after he led Turkey's war of independence.



Ataturk enthusiasts pose with a giant flag depicting him in front of Anitkabir, the mausoleum of Turkish Republic founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, to mark the 97th Anniversary of the Republic Day in Ankara on Oct. 29, 2020.

Ataturk served against the Italians in Libya and then in the Balkan Wars in 1911–1913. He made his military reputation repelling the Allied invasion at the Dardanelles in 1915.

In 1919, when the dust of World War I settled, Ataturk began a nationalist revolution in the country, organizing resistance to the peace settlement imposed on Turkey by the victorious Allies after the war.

He resisted Greek attempts to seize Smyrna, a Greek city located at a strategic point on the Aegean coast of Anatolia, now called Izmir.

Victory over the Greeks enabled

him to secure revision of the peace settlement in the Treaty of Lausanne, an international treaty recognizing the boundaries of the newly established modern state of Turkey.

Turkey became a secular republic with Ataturk at its head. He established a single-party regime that lasted almost without interruption until 1945.

Building upon the legacy of a semi-parliamentarian system in the last years of the Ottoman Empire, the new republic introduced wider democracy to the country.

Ataturk launched a program of

revolutionary social and political reform to modernize Turkey.

These reforms included the emancipation of women, the abolition of all Islamic institutions and the introduction of Western legal codes, dress, calendar and alphabet, replacing the Arabic script with a Latin one.

Abroad, Ataturk pursued a policy of neutrality, establishing friendly relations with Turkey's neighbors. Ataturk died in 1938, but he is still hailed today in Turkey as an ambitious statesman who shaped a new country from the ruins of the devastated Ottoman Empire. 🇹🇷

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# Ukrainian tourists rediscover Turkey after tough pandemic

By Dylan Carter  
carter@kyivpost.com

When the Russian government announced in April that it was suspending all charter flights to Turkey, officially citing concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic, the country feared a disastrous tourist season.

It was bad news for Turkey's hospitality industry, which counted on at least 7 million Russian tourists this year to make up for 2020's weak pandemic season.

However, in a change of fates, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky propped up the Turkish tourism industry for the holiday season by urging Ukrainians to vacation there.

As a result, Ukrainian tourism boomed in Turkey, and the trend continues. According to Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, 2 million Ukrainian tourists are expected to visit Turkey by the end of the year.

The largest tour operator in Ukraine, Join Up!, which also owns the cheap and popular Ukrainian

AFP



This aerial view taken on June 17, 2021 shows the city of Bodrum, on the Aegean Sea, southwestern Turkey. According to Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba, Ukraine expects 2 million Ukrainian tourists to visit Turkey by the end of the year.

low cost airline SkyUp, recorded one of its best years on record.

Turkish tourism took just 18% of the Ukrainian market in 2015. By comparison, in 2021, Turkey attracted around 44% of Ukrainian tourists, according to Join Up! statistics.

Katerina Artyukh, the head of development at Join UP!, told the Kyiv Post that the tour operator was eager to maintain the surge in tourism after the successful season.

"Even for the current unfavorable conditions, this summer, we managed to achieve good results," Artyukh said.

## Tour operator success

Ukrainians visited the touristic city of Antalya, located on Turkey's Mediterranean coast, in droves over the past year. More than 1.1 million Ukrainians visited the tourism hotspot in 2021, the highest level on records, even before the start of the pandemic.

Antalya saw a staggering 147% increase in the number of Ukrainian visitors in 2020–2021.

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## "We maintain our market leadership in Ukraine" – Sinan Şen, Founder of Unice Multibrand Company.

Sinan Şen is one of the most successful Turkish businesspeople who created his own cosmetics brand in Ukraine. Şen managed to create a success story in a challenging sector such as cosmetics in a highly short time in Ukraine, where he came to live 10 years ago. Proceeding his rapid progress in the cosmetics industry, Şen brought the "multi-brand" approach to the multi-level marketing world in 2017 and established successfully Unice Multibrand Company in Ukraine, resulting in becoming the industry leader in the country in a short time.

### Can you talk about yourself briefly? How long have you been living in Ukraine?

I am 55 years old. I studied at Istanbul University Press and Broadcasting School. I have been in Ukraine since the early 2000s. Firstly, I entered this sector as a half partner of Farmasi Company in Ukraine then I founded my own company, UNICE. I have two children, a son and a daughter.

### In which position is UNICE Company in the Ukrainian cosmetic industry today?

UNICE is the market leader in Ukraine today. We sell with the multi-level marketing technique. Our company is the most profitable, active, and dynamic company. We establish a sensation in every catalog period, especially with our Turkish-made wonderful cosmetic products.

### Can you explain the multi-level marketing technique briefly?

We issue product catalogs and renew these catalogs periodically. We find sales consultants through these catalogs and produce leaders and sponsors among sales consultants. In this way, we could pierce to the deepest and most secluded parts of the market.

In this type of marketing, people's personal environment is mostly considered while selling. These people are



also motivated by abundant earnings and careers. We have a lot of career opportunities. Careers that start with consulting go as "business partner", "top partner", "manufacturer partner". Then the directorship begins, and it continues as "silver director", "gold director", "platinum director", "emerald director", "diamond director". Then there come the crowned ones. We are planning a career with about 20 steps. We provide great earning opportunities in accordance with their careers.

### What is the secret behind the Unice's success?

Our main principles are sincerity, honesty and total peace. We also do not compromise on the win-win rule. Our products are highly innovative and high quality. Furthermore, we sell our products at very affordable prices.

We have very high quality and wide selection of products. Our catalog contains 320 pages and approximately 2 thousand items in it. All these products are always available in our stock. Our prices are almost

the same as in stores. This gives us the opportunity for rapid growth and a successful organization. Because we provide both career and earning opportunities. We work with the most distinguished Turkish companies. We also buy the best quality products from other countries and put them in our catalogue.

### What are your future goals?

We established the UNICE Turkey. Germany, Poland, and Romania are our next target countries to expand our horizon of company. We desire to continue to be number one in multi-level marketing in Ukraine and to be permanent by providing stability.

### How is the year of 2021 going for your company? How do you evaluate the effects of the pandemic on the Ukrainian economy?

We maintain our leading position very successfully and dynamically. I think the pandemic did not affect the Ukrainian economy much, at least there was no negative effect regarding to our sector. The cosmetics industry is always dynamic and conducive to growth. I expect an abundance in the world economy soon.

### How do you find the activities of the Turkish Business World in Ukraine?

I find the Turkish Business World activities very successful in Ukraine. I am also proud to be a member of Turkish Business World. Burak, the President of Turkish Business World, demonstrates a highly efficient and successful management in the association.

### As a successful businessperson who has been in this country for many years, what type of advices can you give to foreign businesspeople who want to do business in Ukraine?

Ukraine is a growing economy and might soon become a member of European Union. I invite everyone to do investments in this highly potential country.



**WE BUILD  
THE FUTURE**





# Turkish-supplied drones enter the battlefield against Russia

By Illia Ponomarenko  
ponomarenko@gmail.com

Bayraktar TB2, the increasingly popular Turkish-produced unmanned aerial system, has made Ukrainian history with its combat debut in Donbas.

On Oct. 26, the Ukrainian military delivered its first drone strike against Russian-led forces, in retaliation for an artillery attack that had killed a Ukrainian serviceman and injured two.

The missile strike, which silenced an enemy artillery piece, triggered an ecstatic reaction from the Ukrainian public.

But what's even more exciting is that the Bayraktar drones may soon be manufactured here in Ukraine — Kyiv and Ankara are reportedly close to a final agreement.

According to official reports, the Turkish company Baykar Makina, which makes the Bayraktars, is ready and willing to create an industrial center in Ukraine. This would let it build scores of drones at a significant discount, while taking advantage of Ukrainian brainpower.

If it happens, the enterprise would be a big win for both countries.

The Ukrainian military is counting on acquiring dozens of new attack drones in the next few years. The Turks want to meet the skyrocketing demand for their Bayraktars, whose impressive combat record is attracting increasing amounts of attention in the global arms market.

### A drone alliance

Ukraine's army and navy currently operate a total of 12 Bayraktar TB2 vehicles.



Kostyantyn Chernichkin

A Ukrainian Armed Forces Bayraktar TB2 unmanned aerial vehicle pictured during the Independence Day parade in central Kyiv on Aug. 24, 2021.

Following a \$69 million deal with Baykar Makina in 2018, Ukraine effectively joined the club of nations operating strike drones. This let

Ukraine take advantage of the expanding field of drone warfare while compensating for its aging Air Force fleet.

The Bayraktars have been gaining a foothold in various conflicts around the world, including in Libya and Syria. Swarms of the

drones were reported to have destroyed 73 armored vehicles

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# LOGISTICS SOLUTIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM UKRAINE



**Ayhan AKBABA**

Chairman of the Board of Directors,  
DEIK/DTIK Ukraine

South Ukraine Representative of the Turkish  
Ukrainian Business Association

Agro Drive Logistics Services Founder

Agro Drive Logistics Services has been active in the logistics sector in the CIS region for a decade and has ranked as the fastest growing company in its field in Ukraine for the past two years. Today, the company occupies leading positions in the agriculture and renewable energy logistics sectors.

Agro Drive has three cargo terminals with a total storage capacity of 50,000 tons, including one bounded facility within Odesa city limits. "In 2020, our expert team handled 7,000 containers, 500,000 tons of bulk cargo, 6000 land transportations, 2000 customs operations, 1,500 wagons, and 24 project shipments. This year, we have already surpassed this performance," says Agro Drive Founder Ayhan Akbaba. "We have particular expertise in agriculture, renewable energy, construction projects, mining transportation, pallet storage and distribution services for the retail sector." The company has its own fleet, forwarding department, domestic and international trucking department, custom department, terminal department, railway department, and bulk & project department, port department. "we do serve all over Ukraine with our any services. Agro Drive has direct contracts with ports, customs and Ukrainian Railways. Agro Drive offers logistics solutions for international transportation to and from Ukraine.

## AGRO DRIVE INVITES NEW INVESTORS TO INDUSTRIAL PARK IN ODESSA REGION

Ayhan Akbaba is excited by Agro Drive's Industrial Park project, which is located next to Ukraine's largest bulk terminal and second largest container terminal, Yuzhny Port. The first two stages of the park feature 70,000 sqm. Half of the project is already occupied by foreign and Ukrainian corporate investors. Agro Drive provides water, electricity and road connections, along with the necessary permits and human resources for the factory or warehouse you wish to build from 3000 to 10.000sqm. Construction takes six months following contract signing with its own financing. Akbaba is confident that an anticipated Turkey-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement will boost growing bilateral trade to the USD 10 billion target set by the presidents of both countries. This Industrial Park is going to be one of the biggest base of this trade target. Akbaba says "While Turkey and Ukraine this much close to each other and while commercial environment is welcoming real investors; we as entrepreneurs do our best to reach over settled targets."

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Agro Drive Logistics Services established to provide cost effective forwarding, warehouse, distribution, trucking, railway, custom clearance, certification, bagging, palletizing, logistics and port services with its own assets and experienced team to their valuable partners.

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For more details:  
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 +38 048 737 35 39  
[info@agro-drive.com.ua](mailto:info@agro-drive.com.ua)

Courtesy



A Turkish-produced Bayraktar unmanned aerial vehicle performs its ultimate test flight at the airbase of Starokostantyniv on March 20, 2019.

# Ukraine joins drone warfare over the objections of Russia

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belonging to the Syrian government's army during a week of fighting in the country's Idlib province. Turkey has also used them against Kurdish forces in the region.

The operational history continued during the Nagorno-Karabakh war of 2020, in which the Azeri military successfully employed the Turkish drones against Armenian armor and artillery.

The drones' attractive price tag has also helped attract clients. In May, Poland became the first NATO country to order 24 drones, which are due to be delivered in 2022. The Lithuanian authorities also reportedly considered a contract in June.

As recently as late September, Morocco also received its first delivery of as part of a \$70 million contract to buy 13 drones.

Ukraine is also keeping up—accord-

ing to Lieutenant General Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, the top commander of the country's armed forces, the military wants at least 24 new Bayraktars, and a new contract should be coming in 2021 or 2022.

According to Selcuk Bayraktar, Baykar Makina's chief technology director and son-in-law of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the company occasionally can't keep up with demand.

The company relies heavily on exports, gaining some 70% of its income from foreign sales.

According to Defense Express, a Kyiv-based analytics company, conditions are good for a "drone alliance" with Turkey. This would not only help Ukraine's military deploy its own formidable killer drone swarm but also boost Baykar Makina's expansion in arms markets.

## Coming soon?

The drama surrounding the potential launch of a Bayraktar factory in Ukraine has swirled since 2019.

According to Oleh Uruskiy, Ukraine's minister for strategic industries, the Turkish company wants to ensure 100% investment to launch the manufacturing on Ukrainian soil, which would cut drone production costs by nearly 35%.

According to Natalya Ozden, Baykar's director for investments, the company aims to launch a technological research and development center, a manufacturing plant and also a maintenance and repairs center in Ukraine.

However, many experts said this plan is highly unlikely. Ukrainian law demands that at least 50% plus 1 share of joint ventures must be held by the Ukrainian government, which the Turks are not happy about.

Many in Ukraine's defense community have already kissed the promising deal goodbye. But in early October, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said obstacles had been completely removed. "I consider this project already launched," he said on Oct. 7 after a meeting with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu. "Because it enjoys the

political patronage of both presidents (Volodymyr Zelensky and Recep Tayyip Erdogan). And now we are happy to note that we have a land plot the plant is going to be built on."

Politicians had completed the job, Kuleba added, so now business people can take over.

The deal was likely unblocked by legislation that effectively allowed the sector's enterprises to be restructured, corporatized, and allowed to issue their own shares. Zelensky signed it into law on Oct. 1.

This law also launches reform of UkrOboronProm, the notorious state-run defense production giant. The future plant's location has not been made public yet.

But the most recent developments make it seem that chances are high. On Sept. 29, Ukraine's Defense Ministry signed a memorandum with Bayraktar Savunma, a Baykar Makina affiliate, to launch a joint center to maintain, repair, and modernize the drones, and also mentor new operating crews.

This center is going to be built in Vasylkiv, a Kyiv Oblast city of 35,000 people, some 25 kilometers south of the capital, and one of Ukraine's key military aviation hubs hosting the Air Force's 40th Tactical Aviation Brigade.

According to the Ukrainian military, this will be just one of many drone repair and maintenance centers built across the country.

And Russia is unhappy about the latest developments. The Kremlin warned on Oct. 27 that the use of Turkish-made drones could further worsen Russia's war against Ukraine, after Kyiv released footage of its military.



## Celebrating a special holiday in Istanbul

A woman takes a selfie photograph in front of a portrait of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, displayed on Galata tower, to mark the Democracy and National Unity Day in Istanbul on July 15, 2021.





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## TURKEY'S YOGHURT DRINK

*Ayran is one of the most beautiful accompanying drinks of Turkish foods. It is basically made from yoghurt, water and salt. Ayran is also very refreshing by itself, especially during the summer months. Have you tried it?*

## Turkey's Traditional Drink

Ayran, which is known as Turkey's favorite summer drink, is made by diluting yoghurt with water and adding a touch of salt, producing the most amazing and refreshing flavor.

This Turkish drink serves as an ideal complement to grilled meat dishes. Ayran not only accompanies any meal but is drunk as a refreshing drink by itself especially during summer months. It is one of the simplest and the healthiest of cold drinks.



## ONUR YOGHURT'S SECRET

The great taste of ONUR's yoghurt comes from its high-quality milk, collected from villages with the healthiest cattle. This milk is kept in extremely hygienic conditions, without being exposed to air or hands. It passes through 22 strict controls before arriving at your table.



## ONUR's Lactose-Free Ayran

There are communities worldwide that cannot digest lactose, i.e. milk sugar. Studies conducted show that the Ukrainian people are one of such communities. About 10% of the Ukrainian adult population is lactose-intolerant.

ONUR's lactose-free Ayran ensures that this drink can be easily enjoyed and digested thanks to its special formula.

## ONUR Fresh Kashar Cheese

Onur Fresh Kashar Cheese reigns supreme in the kitchen. It is known as a tasty favourite that can be served sliced at breakfast, grated in cooked dishes and incorporated into all kinds of baked treats for visiting guests. Its unique flavour enhances toast, pizzas and pasta dishes. Onur Fresh Kashar is a semi-firm type of natural cheese, which is made from pasteurized cows' milk.

ONUR products are available at all retail chains in Ukraine.



## History of Ayran

Ayran is one of the fundamental drinks of Turkish culture, dating back to Central Asia. The word comes from the Turkish word yoghurt, which itself derives from the verb yogurtmak, which means to blend, a reference to how yoghurt is made.

## YOGHURT

Five thousand years ago, nature gathered all its beneficial nutrients into yoghurt as a gift to mankind. In the ensuing centuries, the Turks who lived in Central Asia, created milk and yoghurt with their own hands.

The famous Scythian epic called Kutadgu Bilik told the secret of yoghurt. The Ottoman Empire then created a unique flavour with ancestral heritage. Yoghurt became an indispensable part of the famous Ottoman Kitchen, and introduced to the Western World in the beginning of 20th century. This is why the Turkish word "yoghurt" is used around the world.





# Ukrainian policy fumbles deter some Turkish energy investors

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energy became one of Turkey's top priorities because they also want investments from the West," Kusa said.

However, Enis Fakioglu, a partner in Turkish energy investment company Atlas Global, said he was attracted to Ukraine in 2016 because of its feed-in-tariffs for renewable energy power plants.

"Back then, Ukraine was the only country offering such attractive feed-in-tariffs," Fakioglu said.

Atlas Global Energy began the development of 75 megawatts of solar projects in Ukraine, as well as a 60 megawatts wind farm in Lviv Oblast.

But Fakioglu said that he was now focusing on smaller, rooftop solar projects rather than large projects since the government reduced its feed-in-tariffs.

The tariff was originally introduced in 2008 to encourage renewable energy investment.

International investors flocked to Ukraine due to its generous green tariff which allowed electricity pro-

CeeGee



LNG carrier Tessala at Marmara Ereğlisi LNG Storage Facility in Turkey on March 30, 2017. In 2012, there had been plans for Ukraine to build a coastal LNG terminal to receive and export gas to other countries. The project was later canceled.

ducers to sell their green electricity at a premium rate through the Ukrainian guaranteed buyer system.

Ukraine's goal was initially to have 25% of its energy production come from renewable sources by 2035.

However, the amount of new renewable projects introduced in 2019 exceeded the amount for which the government budgeted.

This tariff heavily indebted the Ukrainian government, leading to several reductions in the tariffs.

The state has accrued roughly \$600 million (Hr 16 billion) in debt for 2020, but has paid \$238 million (Hr 6.4 billion) since the beginning of 2021, according to energy expert Yuriy Kubrushko.

The government has struggled to pay the renewable feed-in tariffs for close to two years, attracting criticism from investors and Western partners.

The crisis may cripple further Turkish investment in the renewable energy market – an expected outcome, according to experts.

"We will have much smaller volumes of investments in renewables in the next few years," Prokip said.

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# New international development sector player enters Ukraine, Bosphorus Development



New international player, Bosphorus Development, enters the Ukrainian development market, – Mehmet V. Saçaklıoğlu, founder & chairman of the board, told KyivPost. 'I represent the third generation of the Saçaklıoğlu clan. Starting my career in a family business in Istanbul, I have passed up all the steps of the hierarchical ladder. Here in Ukraine, I launched Bosphorus Development company whose goal is a professional development of the real estate sector both in Ukraine and abroad,' Mehmet V. Saçaklıoğlu, founder & chairman of the board of Bosphorus Development company, commented.

## Company's history

Small family business of the Saçaklıoğlu dynasty had been launched back in the late 1930s. At the very beginning, Vahdettin Saçaklıoğlu (1914-2002) and Ayşe Saçaklıoğlu (1925-2002) were engaged in trade and agriculture, especially large meat slaughterhouses in Şanlıurfa, city in the SouthEastern Turkey.

In 1955, their sons Hüseyin (1945-1996) and İbrahim Halil Saçaklıoğlu joined the company. Ömer (1958-2020), the youngest Saçaklıoğlu son and future head of the dynasty business, also had been involved in commercial life from an early age.

After moving to Istanbul, the company began active expansion to other business activities, starting from grocery chain, restaurants and bakeries, to furniture, textiles, jewelry stores. Later, Saçaklıoğlu entered the liquid gas supply and petroleum products trade sector, becoming the largest dealer in some provinces.

Over time, the company has strived to invest all the money earned into the construction and professional development sector. That has become Saçaklıoğlu family's main locomotive business, including residential apartment buildings, offices, industrial buildings, hotels, multifunctional facilities and shopping malls. The first real estate business object was built more than half a century ago, back in 1970, in Şanlıurfa, the native family city.

And five years ago, the Saçaklıoğlu family business entered the top 10 Turkish real estate leaders with the most housing projects executed.

## Project portfolio

Over the years Turkish development company has implemented more than a hundred real estate objects, and every project is unique and significant, a lot of them are socially important.

### Istanbul Aquarium



Located in the Florya district, İstanbul Akvaryum, with a total area of 40 hectares, is one of the three largest aquariums in the world, along with the ones in Georgia and Baltimore (USA). That is a perfect example of a project based on the principle of public-private partnership.

A two-storey colossal aquarium building has a total area of 22,000 sq.m. That space accommodates 66 tanks with 7,000 cubic m of water volume in total.

A special themed visitor area, of 6,000 sq. m total, includes a 1,2 km long travel route originating in the Black Sea towards the Pacific, as well as a tropical forest area of 1200 sq.m with irrigation, fog simulation and artificial support of the tropical climate. Tourists can meet there approximately 1.500 species, 15.000 land and sea creatures in total.

Visitors can leave their transport at a parking lot area of 32.000 sq. m for 1.200 vehicles. Aquarium complex, with a 5D cinema block, gift shop, cafeteria and restaurant, is included in the must-see attractions list of Istanbul.

### Istanbul Tower 205



Istanbul Tower 205 is a real gem of Levent, the most prestigious business district of Istanbul. The project was designed by SOM, which previously worked on the world-famous Burj Khalifa and One World Trade Center projects.

Istanbul Tower 205, 220 meters high, is the tallest office building in Turkey. The skyscraper is located on a plot of 21,000 sq. m, and the total area of the towers and podiums is 246,000 sq. m.

Thanks to a combination of the latest technologies, panoramic views and bold architectural solutions, Istanbul Tower 205 is the most attractive and unique project for investment in the local market. The building, designed in accordance with international technical requirements, meets the standards of the LEED Platinum quality standard, has a minimal impact on the environment and saves energy as much as possible.

Istanbul Tower 205 won the Best Office in Progress award in the Sign of the City contest organized by Hürriyet newspaper. This award is considered the most prestigious in the real estate sector in Turkey.

### Blue Lake Residence



Located on the Küçükçekmece lake shore, the residence complex offers a magnificent view both to the lagoon and to the Marmara Sea coastline. Interiors, created by Chapman Taylor architects, are designed with premium materials for maximum comfort.

On the 16th floor, a 6,500 square meters Sky Terrace recreation area is located. Infinity pools, stunning resting areas, jogging and walking paths and Sky Terrace are just a few of the key benefits of Blue Lake Residence. The project provides a world-class infrastructure for the premium quality of life for those looking for peace and comfort.

Designer studios for all ages, a spa and fitness club, as well as a kids entertainment area would be helpful in satisfying the most picky tastes of its residents.

'The company aims to bring its long standing expertise in successful world-wide development to Ukraine. We engage the world's best architects and engineers in our projects, to create unique environment-friendly facilities and stable infrastructure.

Business reputation is of the utmost importance for us. That is, the company's reputation makes the reputation of the family, and the family's reputation creates its honor,' Mehmet V. Saçaklıoğlu emphasizes.



**BOSPHORUS**  
DEVELOPMENT



AFP

### Lovely Istanbul lights up the night

A picture taken on Aug. 24, 2018 in Istanbul shows a night view of July 15 Martyrs' Bridge, known as the Bosphorus Bridge and the financial district of Levent.

# Kyiv's ambassador in Turkey has worked there before, also in Russia and Poland

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ern world, this won't work as in previous ages." He also predicted that any further attempts by the Russian military to "capture new territories will bring more sanctions to Russia and not lead to any accomplishments."

#### Turkish experience

Bodnar, besides overseeing Ukraine's policy in Turkey as an acting department head from 2004–2006, also lived in Turkey when he served as minister counselor at the embassy from 2013–2015.

He hopes that deepening tourism, cultural and religious ties will be a big part of his mission.

In his short time, he's already met in Istanbul with Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader to 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide. Bartholomew endeared himself to Ukrainians by recognizing the independence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in 2018, to the chagrin of the Moscow Patriarchate.

He also met with the Ukrainian diaspora in Istanbul. An estimated 35,000 Ukrainians live in the

nation of 82 million people. Many are women who married Turkish men, he said, but the community also includes professors and business leaders.

He said an estimated that Turkey had 1.6 million tourism visits from Ukraine this year by September and the total could hit 2 million by year's end, which would "actually be a record" number of visitors, he said, vaulting Ukraine into the ranks of the top three nations visiting Turkey.

Despite the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Bondar doesn't believe that Turkey will impose a lockdown that bans foreign tourism. "The signals are they will not close the country. They are pushing for more, stronger vaccinations and tougher measures on the streets. In comparison to Ukraine, there is a stronger and more disciplined attitude when it comes to wearing masks."

If the pandemic allows, Bondar hopes to organize more historical, literary, scientific, theatrical and musical events, as well as so-called "cuisine diplomacy," to celebrate each other's specialty foods.

"It's always important to strengthen our cultural presence," he said.

# Kyiv Post

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# TOP 30 UNDER 30



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# Enerho-Syla Group: we build the future of Ukraine together

*Enerho-Syla Group is a group of companies born in Ukraine that develops technologies and implements renewable and fossil-fuel energy projects*

Enerho-Syla Group is a reliable construction contractor. Its main services include architectural and engineering design, capital construction, finishing works, utility services, etc. The company implements turnkey projects.

and landscaping for petroleum stations were built in Kyiv and the Kyiv region.

Enerho-Syla Group performed civil works and finishing works, arrangement of utility services and the installation of



The company is a reliable partner and general contractor of MacDonal'd's chain. The firm performed civil works, finishing works, arrangement of utility services, furniture installation structures, landscaping for the first MCDonald's in Ukraine located along the Boryspil highway.

The restaurant is single-storey unit. Dressing rooms and shower rooms are equipped with underfloor heating and the walls of the utility rooms are made of innovative materials.

The company, as a general contractor, performed civil works and finishing works, arrangement of utility services

furniture structures for several restaurant projects in Kyiv.

Enerho-Syla Group performs Engineering, Procurement, Construction in the renewable energy sector, including turnkey implementation of investment-construction projects, from choosing the construction facility, collecting and preparing primary enabling documentation, design, equipment supply to commissioning and connection to the electricity grid.

Such contracts provide full control of the project's implementation by the contractor without involving the client.



The company's experienced project design team allows it to design complex projects.

Our team is responsible for designing 35 photovoltaic plants with a total capacity reaching more than 435 megawatts

We ensure a complete cycle of construction and maintenance of already existing installations of up to more than 700 megawatts:

- ▶ selection of the construction site
- ▶ preparation of the permissions, support in obtaining technical conditions
- ▶ project design, approval, project design expertise
- ▶ preparatory works
- ▶ construction of the access and internal roads long of more than 210 kilometers
- ▶ innovative solutions to optimize construction time - arrangement of 110 meters pontoon
- ▶ procurement of the optimal equipment
- ▶ construction of grid connection facilities and approvals
- ▶ preparation of a complete package of documents for commissioning

The company has the ability to perform



works at any time of the year, in particular, in winter at low temperatures and in autumn during the rainy season, which makes it possible to reduce the payback period.

The experience and professionalism of the design team minimize the construction time of energy facilities.

The company has its own heavy equipment park and electrotechnical laboratory, which allows providing a full cycle of construction works.

The big number of the company's own piling machines makes it possible to carry out work on driving piles in the shortest possible time.

The key benefits of solar power plants construction in Ukraine are an accessible procedure to calculate the cost of connection to the grid facilities

and a simplified procedure to obtain a building permit.

The mission of the company is to ensure the sustainable development of the construction of solar power plants in Ukraine and abroad.



**Valerii Nytchenko,**  
CEO Enerho-Syla Group

The company is a reliable general contractor for the construction of high-complexity facilities and solar power plants.

Thanks to the effective organization and coordinated team, we are fully responsible for the implementation of the project within the contract period, high quality of work, and compliance with the budget.

We perform service of implemented projects.

We build long-term and mutually beneficial relationships with customers. Delivering energy transition to Ukraine – Valerii Nytchenko, CEO Enerho-syla Group LLC

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AFP

This aerial picture taken on April 25, 2020 shows the Sultanahmet mosque, known as the Blue mosque, in Istanbul. Turkey is a favourite destination for Ukrainian tourists. In 2021, the average cost of a tourist package to Turkey was just \$329 per person.



# Ukrainian tourists flocking to Turkey, lifting tourism industry

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This travel was encouraged by a passport-free travel agreement between the two nations put in place in 2017, as well as an increasingly Ukrainian-friendly tourist market in Turkey.

According to Artyukh, Turkey is both extremely profitable and affordable for Ukrainian consumers. All inclusive holidays continue to be a driving factor for tourists.

“99% of our tourists take all inclusive holidays, and this destination ticks all the boxes,” she said.

“Turkey has excellent opportunities for both sea and city recreation.”

Upen Sharma, administrative

director of Satguru Travel in Ukraine, an Indian international tour operator with a presence in more than 68 countries worldwide, concurred with Artyukh.

The influx of Ukrainian had encouraged more resorts to switch toward an all-inclusive model, he said, as Ukrainian travelers tend to be more price savvy.

For Sharma, Ukrainians travel to Turkey because of convenient charter airline services and low prices.

He also pointed out how easy it is to cross the border.

“The main reason why so many Ukrainians are visiting Turkey is because they can travel without a passport,” he said.

“And now, it’s cheaper to go to

Turkey than to go on holiday in Ukraine.”

### Affordable, hospitable

Robert Markov, a Kyiv resident, travelled with his partner to Istanbul in September. He chose Turkey because of its proximity, good weather, child-friendly hotels, and all-inclusive options.

Despite pressures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many hotels and tour operators to invest in new social distancing and sanitary measures, prices for package holidays to Turkey have remained stable.

In the first half of 2021, the average price of a tourist package to Turkey from Ukraine decreased from \$373 to \$329 per person, according to Turkish tourism publication Turizm Ajansi.

Up to 70% of Ukrainian tourists going to Turkey used an all-inclusive package that includes flight tickets and accommodation for an average of \$1,100 for a family of three in 2020, according to Anex Tour, a Turkey-based tour agency which has offices in Ukraine.

Ukrainians also noticed that Turkish resorts’ personnel were keen to talk to them in Ukrainian. Turkish tourist destinations, formerly dominated by Russian tourism, are now

### Top 4 foreign visitors to Turkey by nationality in 2017-2021

**2017:**  
 Russia — 4.7 million  
 Germany — 3.6 million  
 Iran — 2.5 million  
 Georgia — 2.4 million

**2018:**  
 Russia — 6 million  
 Germany — 4.5 million  
 Bulgaria — 2.4 million  
 United Kingdom — 2.2 million

**2019:**  
 Russia — 7 million  
 Germany — 5 million

Source: Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, Association of Turkish Travel Agencies

Bulgaria — 2.7 million  
 U.K. — 2.6 million

**2020:**  
 Russia — 2 million  
 Bulgaria — 1.2 million  
 Germany — 1.1 million  
 Ukraine — 1 million

**January-April 2021:**  
 Russia — 552,000  
 Iran — 194,000  
 Ukraine — 187,000  
 Germany — 185,000





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making efforts to attract Ukrainian-speaking tourists.

In June, Kharkiv native Tania Stolarova travelled to Marmaris on Turkey’s Mediterranean coast. Stolarova visited the resort area when Russians were not able to travel to the region.

She told the Kyiv Post that the Turkish tourism industry adapted to accommodate the influx of Ukrainians, by speaking their language instead of Russian.

Stolarova travelled to Turkey

because it was highly recommended by her friends and family.

The Turkish government has now rolled out Ukrainian audio tours of several key cultural locations in Cappadocia, Istanbul, and Ionia.

For many Ukrainians, hearing Ukrainian is very important in a tourism industry largely dominated by Russian.

“It was very nice to see and hear when the Turks greeted or thanked us in Ukrainian, or switched to Ukrainian entirely,” Stolarova said.





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Ukrainian president press service

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (C-R) and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky (C-L) attend a meeting during the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Sept. 21, 2021.

# Will Ukraine & Turkey become best friends forever...or not?



Mark Temnycky

*Editor's Note: This article was originally published by the Center for European Policy Analysis and is republished with permission.*

Ukraine has a malign and aggressive neighbor, which has seized great swathes of its territory, maintained an unending war in its east, questioned its statehood, threatened its energy supplies, and taunted its leadership with threats of more to come.

Like any country in this position, Ukraine has looked for friends where it can find them. One important ally has been NATO member and Black Sea neighbor, Turkey. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has developed links with Ukrainian leaders regardless of their political background throughout the period of Russian military aggression and now represents one of the country's most important regional allies.

Yet while the relationship has endured, how much can Ukraine

expect from Erdoğan, and how enduring will his friendship prove? As a significant regional power with access to some advanced technologies, Turkey is well-placed to assist.

First, Ukraine needs lethal and nonlethal assistance to counter the Russian invasion of the Donbas. Turkey has provided military aid through the sale of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and communications technology. Ukraine is keen for another 24 drones, which has — predictably — upset the Kremlin. Erdoğan and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy have continuously discussed their security concerns over the Black Sea, as well as how they might cooperate on defense capabilities — Ukraine has engine-making facilities which interest Turkey.

Second, Ukraine has called for political support as it continues to pursue its goal of reintegrating the Russian-occupied Crimea and Donbas. Turkey has continuously supported Ukraine's territorial integ-

riety and sovereignty, as well as its NATO aspirations. Turkey has condemned Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, and Erdoğan rejected the Russian elections in Crimea. Turkey also sent a delegation to Ukraine's Crimea Platform summit in a signal of solidarity.

Third, Ukraine requires financial assistance. Over the past few years, Turkey has become one of Ukraine's top foreign investors. More recently, Erdoğan and Zelenskyy met to discuss the potential of a free trade agreement. They also discussed the supply of liquefied gas, something of great importance and interest to Ukraine given Russia's Nord Stream pipelines to Germany, which were designed to bypass Ukraine and make it more vulnerable to Russian supply cuts. When the controversial project, Nord Stream 2, is complete and Ukraine's gas pipeline becomes obsolete, the country could be denied gas altogether.

But while there is good reason to believe that Turkey is seeking to assist Ukraine, there are equally good reasons to think that this help is limited. Russia is a neighbor of



Courtesy

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), the first president of the Republic of Turkey, which he founded in 1923, marking the end of the Ottoman Empire. Still revered today as a national hero, Atatürk launched a program of revolutionary social and political reforms that shaped modern-day Turkey.

# Temnycky: There are limits to how much Turkey can help Kyiv

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both countries and Turkey has more critical interests elsewhere.

Erdoğan has been slowly building relations with President Vladimir Putin, which were badly (and expensively) damaged in 2015 when Turkey shot down a Su-24 Russian jet. Since then, Turkey has been keen to keep relations with Putin cordial and the pair meet regularly to discuss the multiple issues between them, including Syria, Libya, and the South Caucasus.

Last month's meeting in Sochi was described by Aleksandr Dugin, a Putin advisor, as having historical significance: "At this summit, the heads of the two states drew their red lines and a roadmap for the new world. From now on, Turkey and Russia have embarked on a new path, and this will affect both region-

al dynamics and the whole world."

That may be code for Russia's understanding of Erdoğan weakness. The Turkish economy is in serious trouble; while growth is rapid, inflation is almost 20% and the lira has plunged by 20% against the dollar this year, mainly because of political interference in monetary policy. Russia provides a major market for Turkish food exports and sends large numbers of tourists each year, giving it powerful leverage. Meanwhile, the natural gas crisis and swiftly rising prices are refilling the Kremlin's coffers. It is reasonable to conclude, given its past statements, that one of Russia's "red lines" in its discussions with Turkey is the supply of high-tech weaponry.

Meanwhile, Turkey is becoming ever-more dependent on Russian arms. Having ignored U.S. warnings that advanced F-35 jet sales would be halted if Erdoğan chose to buy



A Nord Stream 2 pipeline on Sept. 23, 2021 in Russia. The controversial pipeline completed in September will allow the Kremlin to send gas to Europe through the Baltic Sea and Germany instead of Ukraine, potentially causing at least \$1.5 billion in lost transit fees. Kyiv is turning to Ankara to develop its energy security, but Turkey has its own agenda with Russia.

S-400 Triumf long-range anti-aircraft missile systems (because the system is designed in part to destroy F-35s), Turkey chose to proceed with the reported \$2.5 billion deal despite concerns raised about its strategic orientation. Now it is seeking more S-400s.

Energy policy is also necessarily skewed toward Russia. In December 2014, six months after the Russian military incursion into eastern Ukraine, Russia announced its new Turkstream pipeline deal to deliver gas from Russia to the Balkans through Turkey, bypassing the pre-

existing pipelines that flow through Ukraine, Belarus, and Poland to Central Europe. TurkStream became operational in 2020. The finished pipeline has given Turkey and Russia greater influence over the European continent as they have a direct route into southern Europe. They can also control the flow of gas into this region. Meanwhile, Turkstream has "depriv[ed] Ukraine and Moldova of transit revenue," though they are two of Europe's poorest countries.

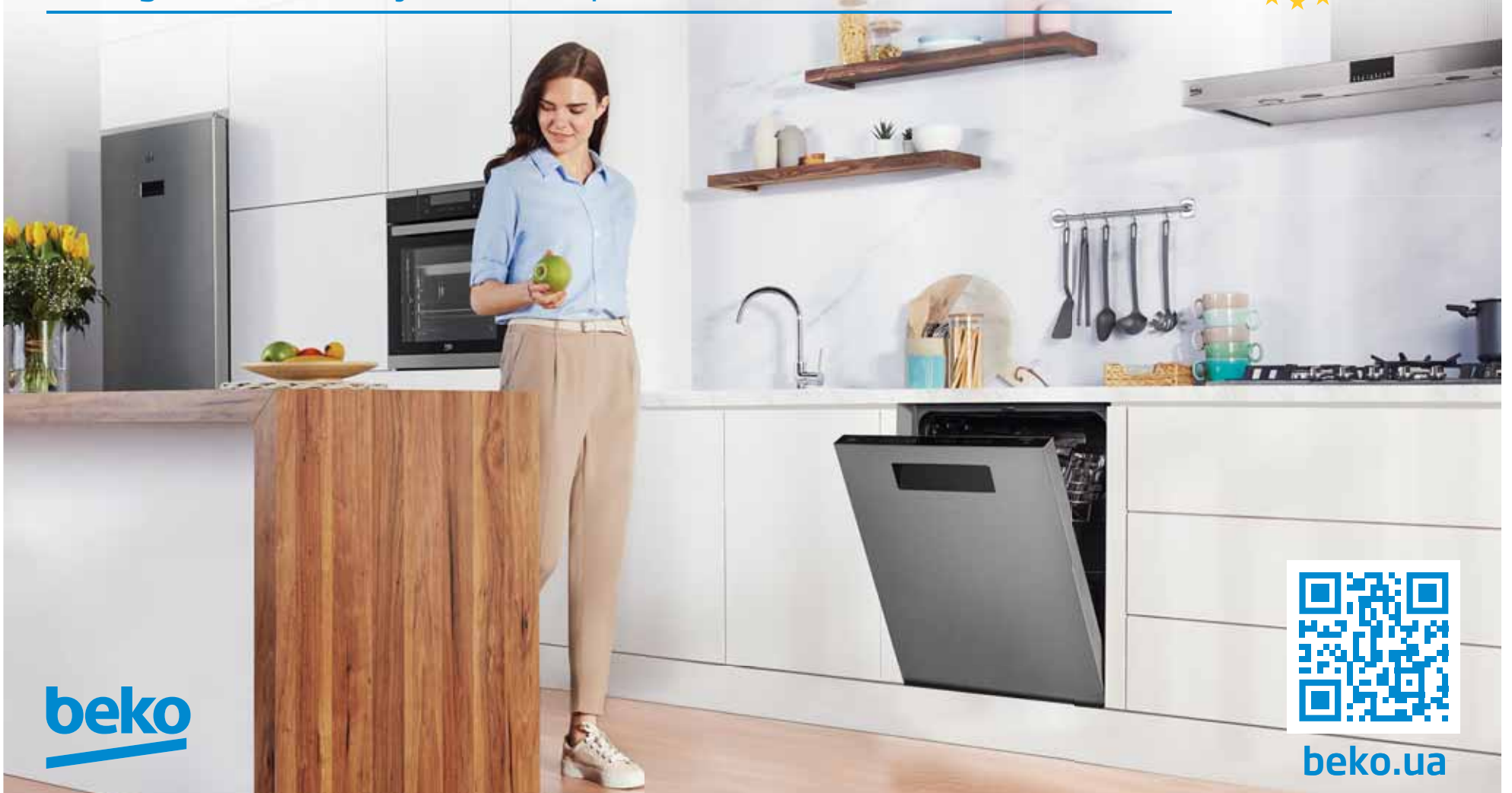
Overall, given the continued souring of Russo-Ukrainian relations, Ukraine needs allies who can read-

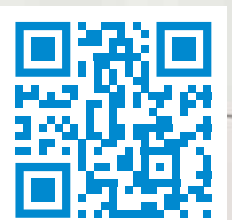
ily come to its aid if the conflict was to escalate. Countries such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom have supported Ukraine, but their response to any escalation would come too late given Russia's geographic proximity. And yet, while Turkey provides Ukraine with such an opportunity, Erdoğan's foreign policy is based on realpolitik rather than shared principles. Ukraine will have to tread lightly as it continues to develop the relationship.

Mark Temnycky is an accredited freelance journalist covering Eastern Europe. 🇺🇦

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# Why war-torn Ukraine takes part in peacekeeping abroad

By **Thaisa Semenova**  
[semenova@kyivpost.com](mailto:semenova@kyivpost.com)

For more than two decades, Ukrainian peacekeepers have been working alongside the United Nations and NATO to prevent crises and massacres worldwide. As many as 45,000 military and civilian personnel have participated in 27 peace support operations since 1992, according to Ukraine's Armed Forces.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014, Ukrainian peacekeepers often face criticism for participating in missions abroad instead of transferring more troops to combat the Kremlin-sponsored forces in Donbas. However, experts disagree.

Ilya Yehorov, the deputy chief of the army land forces command, training command, mechanized and tank units training department, commented on the issue during the Kyiv Post/NATO webinar "How Ukraine's participation in peacekeeping missions advances nation's readiness for NATO membership" on Oct. 27.

Yehorov and the other panelists concurred that Ukraine's participation in the UN's operations is actually serving the national interests of Ukraine as troops gather experience from their foreign colleagues.

"The military can use this experience to carry out tasks in Ukraine, particularly in the combat zone in Donbas," Yehorov said, noting that thanks to the collaboration with Ukraine's allies during missions, new methods and guiding documents for combat use are being developed.

International missions teach the military how to apply *Jus ad Bellum* (the law of war) in decisions, according to Oleksandr Kosynskiy, the Ukrainian Armed Forces' most senior non-commissioned officer and a veteran of peacekeeping missions in Sierra Leone and Iraq.



Panelists discuss Ukraine's participation in the peacekeeping missions during the Kyiv Post/NATO webinar on Oct. 27, 2021.

Volodymyr Petrov



## Peacemaking activities

Ukraine is one of the most active nations when it comes to peacekeeping. NATO is Ukraine's significant part-

ner in this regard. Together with the 30-nation alliance, Kyiv recently concluded its mission in Afghanistan, and it has boots on the ground in Kosovo with NATO-led mission KFOR.

And even more lies ahead: Ukraine wants to send its peacekeepers to Bosnia and Iraq.

Over the years of peacekeeping activities, Ukraine's personnel have transported over 91,000 troops and over 200,000 tons of cargo on over 56,000 plane and helicopter flights, Colonel Valentyn Levchyk, then deputy chief of the Department for Military Cooperation and Peacekeeping Operations of



Volodymyr Petrov

Oleksandr Kosynskiy, most senior non-commissioned officer of Ukraine's Armed Forces, a veteran of peacekeeping missions in Sierra Leone and Iraq, talks during the Kyiv Post webinar 'How Ukraine's participation in peacekeeping missions advances nation's readiness' on Oct.27, 2021.



Ukrainian servicemen take part in the joint Rapid Trident military exercises with the U.S. and other NATO countries near the western city of Lviv on Sept. 24, 2021, as tensions with Russia remain high over the Kremlin-backed insurgency in the country's east.

Ukraine's General Staff in 2019.

Taras Chmut, Marine veteran, head of Come Back Alive charity and chief editor of Ukrainian Military Portal website, believes that Ukraine needs to be active in peacekeeping missions as the country is one of the UN's founders. He says that such participation doesn't mean that troops are less efficient in fighting Russian-supported forces in Donbas.

"Obviously, not all Ukrainian troops are involved in active hostilities in the Donbas. Some are in the rear, others – in training."

## NATO membership

Since Ukraine became independent in 1991, its attitude towards NATO, the grand defensive alliance of the West, has come a long way. What started out with Kyiv's non-aligned status, which delighted Russia, turned into a Ukraine at war looking

for membership at any cost.

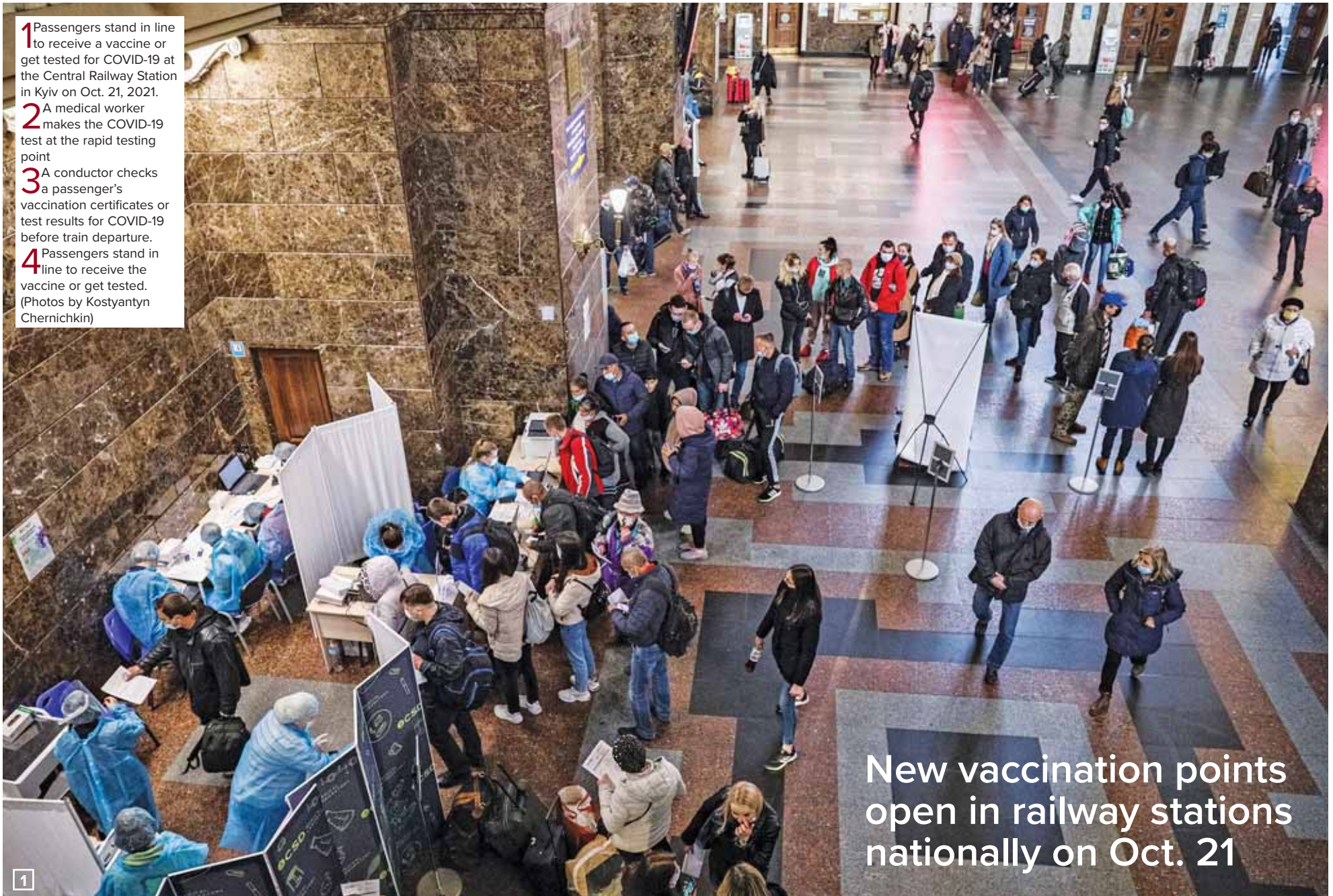
Ukraine keeps introducing new defense reforms, while NATO headquarters keeps saying that the "door is open."

This has been going on for years, with no end in sight.

Panelists agree that participating in the peacekeeping mission alongside the alliance is a crucial step towards membership as the Ukrainian military gets the opportunity to better understand how to integrate into the western system.

"It is a way to see how other countries work in different circumstances, which approaches they have to solve a particular combat task," Chmut said during the webinar.

"Our NATO colleagues' experience is based on peacekeeping operations, where they improve and modify their tactics. For our military, it is important to study that," Kosynskiy added. ☺



New vaccination points open in railway stations nationally on Oct. 21



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# Hunger-striking Saakashvili 'ready to die' if not set free

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**TBILISI, Georgia** — As Mikheil Saakashvili's hunger strike in a Georgian prison nears the one-month mark, authorities in the Black Sea nation are flummoxed by what to do with the stubbornly defiant ex-president as his health deteriorates.

A public tug-of-war has broken out between doctors and government officials over possible hospitalization for the 53-year-old leader of Georgia's 2003 Rose Revolution, who has warned that he is "ready to die" if he is not released.

A team of physicians and other medical experts, including Saakashvili's personal doctor, emerged from an examination on October 19 warning of potentially irreversible damage to his health and urging authorities to relocate him to a fully equipped hospital.

Georgia's justice minister responded by saying a prison infirmary could provide adequate care.

According to his lawyers, Saakashvili, who is not eating food but drinking water, has refused to be moved to a prison hospital.

"Clearly, each passing day is more dangerous than the previous one," Zurab Paghava, a doctor who examined Saakashvili along with the rest of a team of medical experts on Oct. 19 and again on Oct. 23, told RFE/RL's Georgian Service this week.

Paghava, a cardiologist, said the group was unanimous in its conclusion that Saakashvili should be sent to a so-called "Category C" hospital.

"There was no difference of opinion among the members of the council on this issue," he said, adding, "What happened then, I can't tell you."

Paghava has since resigned from the team, citing his own health.

## From leader to gadfly

Tens of thousands of supporters have demonstrated for Saakashvili's release, and hundreds of supporters have showed up outside the prison facility in Rustavi, in southeastern Georgia, where Saakashvili is being held.

A former lawyer, Saakashvili became a symbol of post-communist and democratic reform after helping to expunge former Soviet elites in the 2003 revolution and steering widely lauded economic reforms over the next decade.

His popularity slipped amid backbiting and a disastrous five-day war with Russia over two breakaway Georgian regions in 2008.

Saakashvili faces six years in prison over a conviction in absentia on abuse-of-office and other charges that he dismisses as politically motivated. The accusations arose after he and his former party allies lost elections to the Georgian Dream party of billionaire businessman Bidzina Ivanishvili in 2012–13. More charges purportedly stemming from Saakashvili's two terms as president are said to be pending.



People hold banners and wave flags during a rally in the city of Zugdidi, about 300 kilometers from the capital Tbilisi, on Oct. 27, 2021, to demand the release of their ex-president and opposition leader Mikheil Saakashvili. Saakashvili, Georgia's president from 2004-2013, was arrested and imprisoned Oct. 1, days after he secretly returned from exile in Ukraine. The flamboyant pro-Western reformer has been on hunger strike for nearly four weeks to protest the ruling he says is politically motivated.

Since fleeing Tbilisi in 2013, Saakashvili has been a constant gadfly for Georgian Dream, punctuated by Georgia's withdrawal of the ex-president's citizenship in 2015 after he took a job in exile for the Ukrainian government.

## 'Ready to die'

While Saakashvili has become known for his sometimes dramatic antics, his prison hunger strike risks permanent harm to his own health and possible long-lasting damage to Georgia's political reputation.

Saakashvili declared his fast following his detention on Oct. 1 after announcing his plan to return and sneaking into the country — reportedly in a dairy truck — to support the opposition in local elections the following day.

Government officials initially rejected reports that Saakashvili was even in Georgia.

One of Tbilisi's major backers, the United States, has said it is following the case "very closely" and urged Georgian authorities "to ensure that Mr. Saakashvili is afforded fair treatment in accordance with Georgian law, and Georgia's international human rights commitments and obligations."

On Oct. 20, Saakashvili's lawyer shared a letter in which he said he was "ready to die" but consented to medical care in order to "preserve my consciousness and ability to work to the

But after visiting her son in prison on Oct. 27, Saakashvili's mother, Giuli Alasania, said that he'd

changed his mind and is now refusing medical care or resuscitation because prison officials are denying him his right to confidential counsel with lawyers.

"I communicated with him just now, but there is a window between us and we don't have a direct connection," the 74-year-old Alasania said as she left the Rustavi penitentiary where Saakashvili is being kept. "As I understand it, lawyers should have such a [direct] connection as well. This is impossible because the connection with the lawyer should be confidential. How can they do this?"

Saakashvili's doctor and lawyers say he has an underlying blood condition that risks exacerbating the effects of his hunger strike.

The ex-president's doctor, Nikoloz Kipshidze, said Saakashvili was given a blood transfusion on October 22 after a worrying indicator in a blood test. Kipshidze said the procedure "stabilized" Saakashvili's condition but he urged authorities to move him to a civilian hospital because a recurrence "would be difficult to cope with...in a prison hospital."

## Finding the right hospital

Justice Minister Rati Bregadze said that, if hospitalization were required, Saakashvili would be sent to the N18 penitentiary hospital in Gldani, a district in Tbilisi.

But the office of Georgia's public defender, an ombudsman, inspected that facility on October 24 and concluded that it was under-equipped and unsuitable for a prisoner in Saakashvili's situation.

"There's an error in the equation," Deputy Public Defender Giorgi Burjanadze told RFE/RL's Georgian Service. "The doctors' recommendations can't be followed in the prison hospital."

Health Minister Ekaterine Tikaradze vowed that authorities would reinspect the N18 infirmary to assess the level of care it can provide.

The medical team concluded after visiting Saakashvili that his case could require magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), CT scans, ultrasounds, and a list of laboratory services and specialists on-site.

But Burjanadze told RFE/RL that N18 was unequipped for so-called duplex ultrasounds, which specifically target blood flow, and that medical staff there who were questioned by inspectors were unaware of whether they even had a resuscitator on the premises.

"It's planned in the coming days" — that's how they answered," Burjanadze said.

## Wavering Support

Saakashvili is a polarizing figure on a political landscape marked by oversize personalities and bitter personal squabbles.

But the eight-year rule of Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream since Saakashvili's ouster has coincided with mounting Western fears of democratic backsliding in Tbilisi.

Major street protests and a parliamentary boycott that required EU mediation followed last year's elections, and the arrest of an opposition

leader earlier this year prompted Georgian Dream's own prime minister to resign in outrage.

Georgian Dream outperformed the opposition in that vote, garnering nearly 47 percent overall, but many mayoral and other races — including in the capital, Tbilisi — are headed for runoffs on October 30.

It's unclear how much public support Saakashvili still enjoys after years in exile.


His former United National Movement (UNM) won nearly 31 percent of the vote on Oct. 2. And many supporters of the man affectionately known as "Misha" regard him as a political prisoner.

A number of residents told Current Time TV during an informal poll in Tbilisi last week that they thought Saakashvili was being persecuted for his politics.

"But in general, it's a shame that the president is in jail in Georgia today — a big shame. And this is very bad for the prestige, in general, of our country," one man said.

He added that such things — including Saakashvili's pledge to remain active in Georgia's politics — are better left up to the voters.

"Whether he will return or not, it is up to him to decide and the people to choose. Whatever choice people make, so be it."

Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili has said that Saakashvili will serve his entire six-year sentence in prison. New national elections are expected in Georgia for the parliament and the presidency in 2024. 

AFP



# Ukrainian town vaccinates 74% of residents, has no COVID-19 hospitalizations during the latest upsurge

By **Thaisa Semenova**  
[semenova@kyivpost.com](mailto:semenova@kyivpost.com)

In the western town of Morshyn, there's not much COVID-19 vaccine skepticism.

According to local officials, about 74% of the town's adult residents are fully vaccinated. This is above the threshold that some scientists say is needed to establish herd immunity.

It's a far cry from the rest of Ukraine, where less than a quarter of the population is vaccinated and over half doesn't want the shot, according to a September poll.

That's because in April, Morshyn, a resort town in Lviv Oblast, some 622 kilometers southwest of Kyiv, was selected for an experiment and a large majority of its adults were vaccinated. At the time, only people from priority groups were being inoculated in the rest of the country.

The trial has paid off. While the virus hasn't been completely stamped out, the town has not seen any deaths or hospitalizations from COVID-19 during the latest wave, which began this fall.

Meanwhile, the rest of Ukraine is enduring its deadliest surge of the disease to date. On Oct. 26, the country hit a new daily fatality record, with 734 deaths.

Thousands are being admitted to hospitals daily. Regions are moving into the red quarantine zone one by one.

Oksana Barysh, director at the Morshyn hospital, is relieved that most people in her town are vaccinated.

"A year ago, during the previous coronavirus outbreak, there was panic because many patients were in quite serious conditions. Now the disease is mild for those vaccinated. For others, it's not that easy," Barysh told the Kyiv Post.

Only 22 out of the town's 3,439 residents currently have COVID-19; eight of them are vaccinated.

Morshyn Mayor Ruslan Ilnytsky said that before starting mass inoculation in April, authorities conducted polls to discover people's concerns and then launched an information campaign, debunking myths and explaining the benefits.

"Some family physicians agreed to ring up their patients to invite them to get a shot," Ilnytsky said. "Morshyn is a small town, so people knew firsthand from friends and neighbors that vaccination doesn't lead to negative consequences."

Ilnytsky thinks that business owners also played a crucial role in promoting vaccination in town.

According to the mayor, during



Morshyn city council

A screen grab from the Morshyn administration's promotional video. As of Oct. 26, 2021, 74% of the western Ukrainian town's adult residents are fully vaccinated.

the first month, more than 60% of the residents received the Chinese-made vaccine CoronaVac. However, some people wanted to get the Pfizer vaccine, so they waited until it was available in July.

### Vaccination rate

Many epidemiologists agree that vaccination is the only effective long-term strategy against COVID-19.

Ukraine's vaccination rate remains among the lowest in Europe. As of Oct. 26, only 7.1 million Ukrainians were fully vaccinated out of a population of 42 million.

Many Ukrainians don't trust the vaccines, believing they have not been sufficiently tested. The country

has seen misinformation campaigns discouraging people from getting the jab.

All adults, including foreigners with a residence permit, can get vaccinated in Ukraine for free. They can get a shot at their local clinics or one of more than 400 mass vaccination centers. Kyiv has 36 such centers including the one in Kyiv Boryspil International Airport.

### Mortality peak

Doctors warn that the worst is yet to come, urging people to get vaccinated. Quarantine restrictions only work as a short-term measure to help drive cases down, experts say.

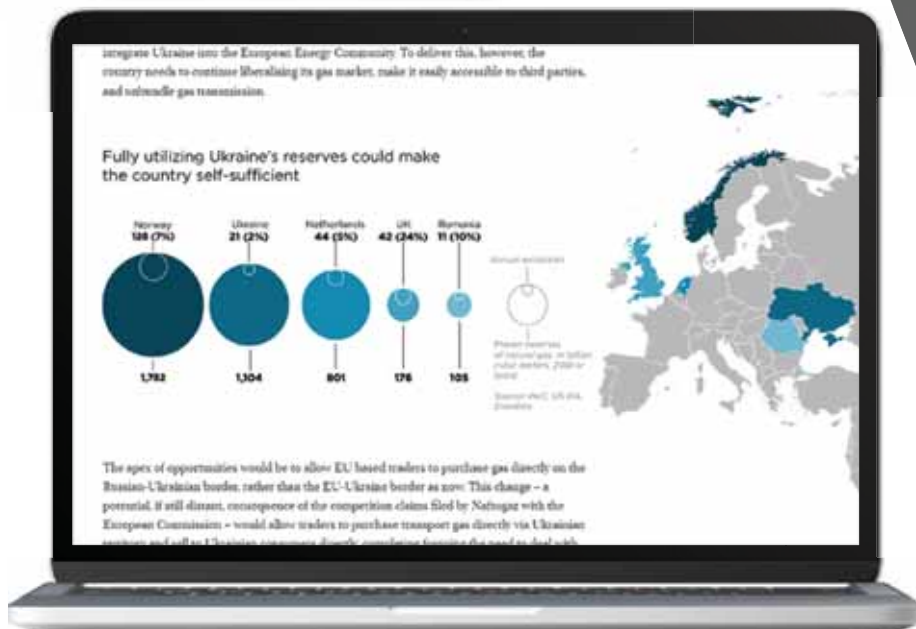
In the past week, new daily cases have exceeded 20,000 and eight regions have moved into the red quarantine zone.

All non-essential businesses must be closed in red zones, including shopping malls, restaurants, cinemas and gyms. Only grocery stores, pharmacies and gas stations must remain open. Businesses can get around these restrictions if all of their staff and visitors have proof of being fully vaccinated.

According to Kyiv School of Economics expert Yuriy Hanychenko, Ukraine may see 30,000 new cases per day by the end of the year. He expects the peak to arrive in early November. 🇺🇦

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# Half-price sale: Taxpayers lose out after Bilshovyk sold on the cheap

page 2 →

made his fortune by investing in various businesses – from pharmaceutical production and renewable energy to information technology and real estate.

The State Property Fund announced earlier that more than 15 investors were interested in purchasing the asset, but the vast majority backed down due to fear of legal hurdles.

Kyiv Post owner Adnan Kivan decided not to participate in the plant's sale at the last moment.

"We can't buy and then spend years in courts," he said.

Khmelnitsky's victory was expected. In 2019, five workshops on the property, taking up 6,300 square meters, were illegally sold to the private company linked to the Khmelnitsky-Ivanov duet, and leased out until 2035.

The workshops are not in one place but scattered throughout the territory, making it impossible to build contiguously.

A source close to the deal, who asked not to be named to avoid retaliation, told the Kyiv Post that, in reality, there was not a single actual participant in the auction.

"They either are companies related directly to Khmelnitsky



View of one of the workshops of the Kyiv's machinery building plant Bilshovyk in Kyiv on Feb. 17, 2021.

and Ivanov or have close business relations with them," the source said.

After the auction took place,

Dmytro Sennychenko, the head of the fund, insisted on the transparency of the sale which "provided equal conditions for all investors."

"The fund always stands for the protection of state interests," Sennychenko wrote on Facebook.

However, Oleksa Shalayskiy, co-founder of the Nashi Grosi investigative journalism project, challenged Sennychenko's statement. He called the Bilshovyk privatization "a corrupt scheme that was once again presented as a great victory."

According to him, the sale was rigged. Shalayskiy wrote that the low price means that the outcome was previously agreed upon with Kyiv authorities and the winner was known in advance.

According to Yuriy Pita, head of Ukrainian Realtors Association, the property went for about \$2,000 per 100 square meters, which is half of the Kyiv average.

The absence of foreign investors during the auction was already an alarming sign, according to Alexander Paraschiy, head of research at the investment firm Concorde Capital.

"This shows their attitude to our privatization," Paraschiy told the

Kyiv Post. "There was no competition between the participants either, which is also alarming."

## Promising estate

The 650,000–750,000 square meter area can be used to build residential property, offices, hotels, hospitals or a fitness center, according to Olexander Nosachenko, CEO of Colliers real estate consultancy.

Khmelnitsky was vague about his plans for the land.

After the auction, Khmelnitsky said the 35-hectare plant would be rebuilt to create "an innovative and comfortable infrastructure for the citizens," without elaborating.

Meanwhile, the Kyiv City Council has already voiced their demand to return one of the workshops, close to the road junction, back to the city's ownership.

Mykola Povoroznyk, first deputy head of the Kyiv City State Administration, told local TV channel Kyiv that it has to be done either through sale or writing off land debts of the plant, Liga.net reported.

"I hope that in the near future the issue will be resolved and we will be able to complete the interchange as it was previously planned," said Povoroznyk.

Bilshovyk's auction is not the first time Khmelnitsky has shown his interest in abandoned buildings.

Khmelnitsky bought Kyiv's state motorcycle plant for nearly \$8 million in 2012 to build UNIT.City, an industrial park for techies. The 25-hectare park offers over office spaces to 100 Ukrainian and foreign tech companies, cultural projects and investment funds.

Khmelnitsky dreams of creating the analog of the U.S.'s Silicon Valley in Ukraine.

"It will be a place where startups, production, and research companies will develop innovative technology," Khmelnitsky said.

As construction began in 2013, some activist groups took Khmelnitsky to court, accusing him of misappropriating public land for the park. Khmelnitsky won the case at the beginning of 2016 and opened the park in 2017.

As of 2020, only 10% of the park's original plan has been completed.

## TOP 10 KYIV POST exclusives online this week

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2. Ukrainian town vaccinates 74% of residents, has no COVID-19 hospitalizations during latest wave
3. COVID-19 in Ukraine: Record 734 new deaths
4. COVID-19 in Ukraine: 20,791 new cases, 386 new deaths, 129,530 new vaccinations
5. Ukrainian filmmaker's death from movie prop in US shocks family, colleagues
6. COVID-19 in Ukraine: Record 212,013 new vaccinations
7. New daily records in Ukraine: 23,785 cases, 614 deaths, 184,107 vaccinations
8. Kyiv to enter red quarantine zone
9. Ukraine conducts first-ever drone strike in Donbas (VIDEO)
10. Dutch court rules to return 'Scythian gold' artifacts to Ukraine

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Ukrainian tycoon and former politician Vasyl Khmelnitsky, speaks with the Kyiv Post on Oct. 19, 2018 during Kyiv International Economic Forum.

Kostyantyn Chernichkin

# What is it like to be queer in other big cities in Ukraine?

By Elina Kent

[kent@kyivpost.com](mailto:kent@kyivpost.com)

Kyiv is undoubtedly the queer capital of Ukraine but other major cities have bigger and more active LGBTQ+ communities than one might expect.

Southern Odesa, western Lviv and eastern Kharkiv offer opportunities and events for queer people to express themselves and stand up for their rights.

The Kyiv Post spoke to three people to find out what it's like to be queer in these three cities.

## Danylo Kachmarsky

City: Lviv

Age: 22

Orientation: Pansexual

Occupation: DJ, party promoter

Due to its strong religious ties, Lviv is considered a relatively conservative Ukrainian city. But its resident Danylo Kachmarsky, known under his DJ stage name Danny Dier, doesn't think it's that different from other Ukrainian cities.

Born and raised in this western provincial capital of 717,000 inhabitants, Kachmarsky loves his hometown.

"It's wonderful and not fully appreciated," he told the Kyiv Post.

He admits that although there are queer people in the city, there is no coherent community like in Kyiv or Kharkiv.

Kachmarsky believes it's important to have spaces for free discourse and experimentation, which he finds available at events such as the Kyiv queer rave Veselka. When he attended his first Veselka, he saw different types of people dancing and being united.

"Before Veselka I didn't know how many existed among us," he says.

Kachmarsky identifies as pansexual, attracted to anyone with whom he can connect on an emotional level.

Although he doesn't feel completely safe in Lviv or anywhere in Ukraine, he says he has no inner issues with his orientation and accepts himself.

The DJ doesn't want to live in fear and end up feeling that he "wasted his life."

When his close friend Stepan German suggested they launch a party, Kachmarsky co-created an event that could provide for Lviv's community what Veselka did for Kyiv – a mixture of equality and sexuality.

Kachmarsky wanted to translate that over to his city. "And we did," he says.

The two came up with the first queer rave in Lviv, called Neutral, during quarantine. After months of planning, the first Neutral took place in the summer of 2020 with 250 people attending.

"It's hard to describe, but it was really a movement," Kachmarsky reminisces. "There was a lot of emotion, lots of warm words said."

Since then there have been six Neutral raves, with over 400 people in attendance at once. Having been a DJ for two years, Kachmarsky now travels between Lviv and Kyiv and even performs his own sets at Veselka.

He hopes that Lviv's LGBTQ+ community will grow into a happy supporting family. And Kachmarsky plans to keep on participating.

"We need to continue to work onward," he says.

## Olena Dzhurina

City: Kharkiv

Age: 30

Orientation: Bisexual

Profession: Artist, DJ

Olena Dzhurina wasn't shocked when she realized she was queer during her pre-teen years.

Thanks to the access to literature and the internet, she quickly did helpful research. Her deep love for punk music also helped.

"The idea of punkness, anarchy, veganism, vegetarianism, LGBTQ, human rights are all very similar," Dzhurina told the Kyiv Post. "They all are about tolerance."

She moved to the eastern provincial capital of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-most populous city, from the industrial city of Kryvyi Rih in 2013.



Bisexual Olena Dzhurina attends Kharkiv Pride on Sept. 12, 2021. This year, Kharkiv Pride was the longest-running Pride event in Ukraine's history, marching and protesting for 3.5 kilometers.

She soon found herself immersed in the underground scene that provided tolerant spaces for queer people like the club Zhiivot.

"What the punk scene introduced me to, the rave scene solidified in me," she says.

Dzhurina is still exploring her own identity and sexuality as time goes on. But she says her bisexual orientation has never wavered. "I fall in love with a person, their sex has no meaning to me," Dzhurina explains. She says she values the person's qualities and her connection with them rather than their physical attributes.

Although attacks on the LGBTQ+ in Kharkiv aren't rare, just like in the rest of Ukraine, the city also has one of the strongest activist communities.

"I think that Kharkiv is becoming more tolerant with each year," Dzhurina says. "And not because it's a natural progression but due to the years of activists' work."

Kharkiv has a queer community center called Pride Hub, which helps organize Kharkiv Pride and other events. Kharkiv is also the home to two queer choirs, who perform during Kharkiv Pride.

Dzhurina appreciates Kharkiv for the opportunities it provides for her to meet open-minded people and express herself at the increasingly creative events that bring visibility to the queer community.

"It's cool that we have the opportunity to take part in these bright sparks and represent ourselves," she says.

## Ellen James

City: Odesa

Age: 25

Orientation: Non-binary lesbian

Occupation: English tutor, business consultant

Born and raised in Odesa, non-binary person Ellen James finds comfort in their active queer community in the city.

"I wouldn't say politically active because it's not a thing for Odesa," James told the Kyiv Post. "Active

as in visible, represented, and not being too scared or ashamed to hide. You see lesbians everywhere and it's cute."

Many cafes around the city are considered gay-friendly, according to James. They personally like hanging out at cafes such as Daily and Tishina.

Odesa does have a Pride march, although smaller in comparison to Kyiv and Kharkiv. It's not nearly as fun as western European prides that James attended, such as Berlin Pride, because people need to be boxed in within police escorts for protection.

"The more rights you have in the country, the more fun you have at Pride," James says.

James first identified as an ally, a person who supports LGBTQ+ rights, supporting gay marriage since their teenage years.

"I was very supportive, I was such an ally," they say. Only two years later, James realized that they too felt a part of the community.

James doesn't feel entirely safe in Ukraine. They go by a chosen name citing concerns for their family's safety.

However, James jokes that the intolerance towards LGBTQ+ sometimes provides funny stories.

James was once approached by a group of six men after kissing a woman in public. The heated situation de-escalated because James pretended to be a foreigner.

"They explained to me, 'We don't do these things in Ukraine. You can do whatever you want in your country, but in Ukraine, we don't do this,'" James says.

James has known they were lesbian for years but only recently they realized they were non-binary, meaning they identify as neither a woman nor a man.

James explains that the process of exploring their identity never ends for queer people. And no matter how complicated it might be, they say they wouldn't want it to be any other way.

"I was thinking, 'if I could choose to be heterosexual, would I?'" James asks, "I would say no because I love this process so much." 🍓



Ellen James, a non-binary lesbian, poses for a photo at one of the cafes they like to hang out at in the southern city of Odesa on Nov. 8, 2019.



Danylo Kachmarsky, known as Danny Dier, sits in a cafe in Kyiv as he speaks to the Kyiv Post on Oct. 19, 2021. Kachmarsky is the co-founder of queer parties Neutral in his native western Ukrainian city of Lviv.

Courtesy

Courtesy

Volodymyr Petrov



Medical workers prepare a coffin for a patient who died of COVID-19 on Oct. 22, at the morgue of the city hospital in Rivne, a city some 300 kilometers west of Kyiv. Ukraine has seen an increased number of deaths due to COVID-19 since the Delta variant, the most transmissible strain associated with increased mortality, has become dominant across the country.

# Deadly COVID-19 wave engulfs a mostly unvaccinated nation

By **Toma Istomina**  
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**O**lga Opekan lost two relatives on the same day in mid-October.

Both her 52-year-old uncle and 74-year-old grandmother died after a weeks-long battle against COVID-19 in a clinic in Myrnohrad, a city in Donetsk Oblast.

Opekan says she witnessed a nightmare in an understaffed clinic, full of patients in critical condition. Its therapy unit had to be transformed into an infectious disease ward when all nearby clinics ran out of places to put their coronavirus patients.

"It was extremely difficult," Opekan told the Kyiv Post. "I saw lines in front of the morgue, I saw stretchers carrying black bags with the dead being transported from the clinic — all of that is true."

Deaths have become a familiar occurrence during the latest coronavirus wave in Ukraine, as the Delta variant, the most transmissible strain associated with increased mortality, has become dominant across Ukraine.

On Oct. 26, a record 734 patients died in a single day. Authorities predict that the peak is yet to come.

As the crisis intensifies, Ukrainian oblasts are "turning red" one by one, strengthening quarantine restrictions to halt the spread of the disease.

Experts agree that any limitations on public life are temporary solutions, while mass vaccination is an effective tool to battle the pandemic.

Only 17% of Ukraine's population has been officially fully vaccinated. But the actual numbers of coronavirus-immune citizens might be even smaller, as the country continues to battle the production of fraudulent vaccination certificates that sometimes end up in the state database.

## Mounting deaths

Ukraine detected its first cases of the Delta strain in late June. In about a month, the first death from the variant was recorded in Kyiv.

The number of those affected by Delta has been growing ever since, leading to the sweeping outbreak this fall. On Oct. 27, the country registered a record daily number of new cases, with more than 26,000 people getting infected in the span of 24 hours.

A recent study by the *Lancet Infectious Diseases* journal shows that people who contract the Delta variant are more likely to be hospitalized than those who catch other variants.

Over the past week, more than 5,000 people have been hospitalized throughout Ukraine nearly every day. This is double the amount of daily hospitalizations in late September.

Olga Kobevko, an infectious disease doctor at the Regional Clinical Hospital in Chernivtsi, a city of 250,000 people some 530 kilometers west of Kyiv, says that the current wave is the toughest one Ukraine has seen since the start of the pandemic.

"Intensive care and (infectious disease) units are overcrowded now," Kobevko told the Kyiv Post.

Kobevko says there are currently over 180 coronavirus patients at her clinic and at least 20 more are being admitted every day.

Since the Delta strain is associated with an increased death rate, the country has seen a spike in the number of fatalities, with hundreds dying every day.

Kobevko says she was terrified a

year ago when nine people died in Chernivtsi Oblast in one day. Today, twice as many deaths each day are frequent.

"Each doctor sees at least one fatal case per shift," Kobevko says. "It's horrible."

More young people now die from the disease as well, according to Viktor Mishchanchuk, the infectious-intensive care unit doctor of the Central City Hospital in Chortkiv, a city of 28,000 people in Ternopil Oblast some 420 kilometers west from Kyiv.

"(Last year) People aged 70 and older were among the common COVID-19 victims," Mishchanchuk told the Kyiv Post. Now it starts at 50, he says.

Mishchanchuk also sees more younger people being hospitalized in worse condition than before. He says complications now develop faster for all patients.

Besides severe lung inflammation and other complications, hypoxia, which is among the main symptoms of COVID-19, can affect nerve cells, causing encephalopathy, a condition that alters brain function leading to hallucinations and delusion.

"They can see hallucinations,

call their mothers, try to take off oxygen masks, screaming that they don't want to live anymore," Mishchanchuk says.

Chernivtsi doctor Kobevko says the hospital now reminds her of "hell filled with oxygen and prayers."

"The sound of moans and cries of both relatives and patients is mixed with the sound of lung ventilators," Kobevko says.

But nothing compares to losing a patient, Kobevko says.

"The last looks of dying people remain in the memory forever."

According to Oleksiy Danilov, the secretary of the National Security and Defense Council, the number of daily deaths from COVID-19 might reach more than 1,000 in the weeks to come. The only way to alter the forecast is to increase the vaccination rate, Danilov said.

## Wave of unvaccinated

Besides the coronavirus itself, Ukraine has been swept by yet another pandemic — COVID-19 vaccine skepticism.

The country's vaccination campaign started in Ukraine in February.

# Kyiv to enter red zone on Nov. 1 as coronavirus cases increase

By Thaisa Semenova  
semenova@kyivpost.com

Kyiv will move into the red quarantine zone on Nov. 1 and impose a series of restrictions, Mayor Vitali Klitschko announced on Oct. 28.

Cinemas, theaters, shopping malls, non-food markets, gyms, swimming pools, cultural institutions and mass events will be shuttered unless all staff and participants are fully vaccinated.

For cafes and restaurants to keep working, both the staff and customers must be fully vaccinated.

Public transport will continue operating. However, people will only be allowed to use it if they have a negative PCR test or vaccination certificate. These documents will not be checked at the entrance but selectively by groups of law enforcement officers.

People will be able to prove their vaccination status by showing the recently-launched digital vaccination documents. The certificates come in the form of a QR code in the Diiia mobile app. International vaccination credentials are also valid.

Minors will only be able to visit shopping malls with adults who have a negative PCR test result or proof of vaccination. Schools will return to distance learning but kindergartens will be open if all employees are vaccinated against COVID-19.

The contagion is getting worse in Kyiv, which saw 1,451 new cases and 39 deaths from COVID-19 com-



A medical worker wearing protective gear arrives at the infectious disease ward of Kyiv's Oleksandrivka Clinical Hospital on Oct. 25, 2021.

lications on Oct. 27. On the same day, hospitals admitted 173 people with a confirmed diagnosis and 325 more who are suspected of having coronavirus and pneumonia. The capital's capacity to supply hospital patients with oxygen is limited.

"About 84% of people who are hospitalized need oxygen support. Over 66% of oxygen beds are full

for the third day in a row," Klitschko said during a press briefing.

Under the adaptive quarantine strategy, Ukraine color codes its regions green, yellow, orange or red, according to the severity of the outbreak there. Currently, three Ukrainian oblasts are yellow, 14 are orange and eight are red.

People who are fully vaccinated

can avoid the worst of the red zone quarantine restrictions. All adults, including foreigners with a residence permit, can get vaccinated for free. They can get a shot at their local clinics or one of more than 400 mass vaccination centers throughout the country.

Kyiv has 36 such centers, including the International Exhibition Center

near the Livoberezhna metro station and Kyiv Boryspil International Airport.

## State of vaccination

Ukraine, with its population of 42 million, has one of the lowest vaccination rates in Europe. Despite COVID-19 vaccines being available to the Ukrainian public since Feb. 24, only about 9.5 million people have received the first of two doses of a vaccine; 7.2 million Ukrainians are fully vaccinated.

The low vaccine uptake has contributed to a surge in new daily cases. On Oct. 27, the country hit a new record, with 26,071 new cases. Thousands are being admitted to hospitals each day.

The government has made vaccinations compulsory for government employees, including teachers, starting on Nov. 7. Employees who do not get a vaccine by this date will be suspended without pay.

On Oct. 21, the Cabinet of Ministers introduced new rules for transporting passengers during quarantine. People can travel between regions only if they have been vaccinated or if they have a negative test result received no earlier than three days before the trip. Children under the age of 18 do not need to have vaccination or testing documents.

Following the government's decision, Ukrzaliznytsia, the state railway operator, has started opening testing and vaccination stations at its largest rail terminals. 📍

# Relatives regret they didn't push loved ones to vaccinate

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Since late July, the entire adult population could get a jab for free throughout Ukraine. Yet the country's vaccination rate remains among the lowest in Europe: As of Oct. 28, only 7.2 million out of 42 million citizens are fully vaccinated.

The low numbers are mainly the result of Ukrainians' low trust in the authorities and the vaccines' efficacy. The country has seen multiple misinformation campaigns discouraging people from getting a shot.

According to the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Foundation and the Center of Political Sociology, Ukrainians' opposition to vaccination is among the strongest in the world. One survey conducted by the center showed that 56% of adult Ukrainians do not plan to get vaccinated.

According to Ukraine's Health Ministry, 94.2% of Ukrainians hospitalized with COVID-19 last week were not vaccinated.

Kobevko says that in her unit, out of every 200 patients, no more than five are those that have been vaccinated. The unvaccinated had various reasons why they haven't gotten a jab.

"Some base it on religious beliefs, others simply don't believe that the vaccine is helpful," Kobevko says. "Some of the explanations are completely unreasonable."

Forged vaccination certificates are also a major issue undermining the vaccination campaign. Both Kobevko and Mishchanchuk say they treated patients with fake COVID-19 vaccination certificates.

The deadliest surge could have been avoided if only more people had been vaccinated, the doctor says.

"I look at them and realize that they could have saved themselves," Kobevko says.

Both of Opekan's relatives who died of COVID-19 had no pre-existing conditions that could have increased the severity of the disease,

she says. The clinic provided them with oxygen masks, while Opekan and other relatives purchased expensive medication, which cost nearly \$60 per day. But it didn't save them.

Both were unvaccinated. Opekan's grandmother didn't mind getting a jab but at her age, any trip takes extra effort, so she kept postponing. Opekan's uncle wasn't a believer in anti-vaccine conspiracy theories either, but he didn't realize the urgency of getting a shot, she says.

Opekan encouraged her relatives to get vaccinated but she wishes she was more insistent.

"I regret it deeply," she says.

## Burden on healthcare

The new wave is taking a toll on the healthcare system, which is facing its most intense burden since the start of the pandemic.

Doctors from all across Ukraine have been sounding the alarm about the medical system being pushed to the brink of collapse.

Kobevko says that in her clinic's

infection unit, one doctor is forced to provide medical assistance to 60 patients, most of whom are in critical condition, throughout one shift. That same doctor is also expected to take care of the newly admitted patients.

The whole staff is burned out both mentally and physically, Kobevko says, since everyone works overtime.

"We treat patients from morning till night and even if we are at home in the evening, we are still providing consultations on the phone," the doctor says.

"I have been working for 15 years and last week, I thought I had my hardest shift in life," Kobevko adds. "Unfortunately, they keep getting harder and harder."

Kyiv ambulance doctor Iryna Kalyta says her job has never been easy. The pandemic significantly increased the intensity of her shifts but the workload now is incomparable, she says.

During a 24-hour shift, her crew might respond to up to 17 calls. Earlier, 12 calls a shift was consid-

ered a high number, Kalyta says. The crew doesn't return to the base between the calls and barely gets time to eat.

"It turns out, we used to have rest (on duty)," Kalyta told the Kyiv Post.

The doctor says that during different stages of the pandemic, about half of the calls were connected to COVID-19. Now the absolute majority, about 4 out of 5, are coronavirus patients.

This increase affects other patients, too. Those who call an ambulance without an extremely urgent need might be forced to wait for as many as 10 hours, Kalyta says.

"Although we are exhausted, we have no right to not get our job done," the doctor says.

But as the numbers are expected to continue going up, Kalyta fears it simply soon won't be possible to provide medical assistance to everyone who needs it.

"We are at the peak of our abilities," she says. 📍

# Ivan Lozowy: As Saakashvili's health deteriorates, Kyiv authorities silent

page 1 →

ly one-third of the country's entire GDP.

Ivanishvili has unabashedly used his fortune to capture and maintain power in Georgia. Prior to the presidential elections held in 2018, the Cartu Foundation, which is controlled by Ivanishvili, promised to pay back the personal debts of 600,000 Georgian citizens, or about 20% of the electorate. Transparency International stated the obvious: the initiative "contains signs of vote buying and is directed in favor of Salome Zourabichvili." Voters did, indeed, get the message and Zourabichvili, Ivanishvili's preferred candidate, from the Georgian Dream party, won the elections.

Zourabichvili went on air to publicly and firmly declare that she "will never pardon" her predecessor. This seemed unusual, to say the least, given that Zourabichvili made her statement the very next day after Saakashvili's return. But for close observers of Georgian politics with an understanding of who really runs the country there is little doubt but that the president was fulfilling an instruction from Georgia's real ruler, Ivanishvili.

Ivanishvili served as prime minister in 2012–2013, but he holds no official post, nor does he need to. Under his de facto rule Georgia has stagnated for the past eight years, successive governments have seemed rudderless, apart from promises to pay personal debts. This is probably one significant factor why the United National Movement remains popular in Georgia despite its leader's protracted absence from the country. The other is Saakashvili's lasting legacy as a top reformer, the region's most successful reformer by far according to the most authoritative international agencies.

In Ukraine, Saakashvili has led the



People hold banners and wave flags during a rally in the city of Zugdidi, about 300 km from the Georgian capital Tbilisi, on Oct. 27, 2021, to demand the release of their ex-president and opposition leader Mikheil Saakashvili.

Executive Committee of the presidential National Council on Reforms for the past one-and-a-half years and he has his supporters here. Former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma has issued a public statement calling on Georgia's government to view Saakashvili "not as its political opponent, but as the architect of unique reforms recognized the world over." Yulia Tymoshenko has called for Saakashvili's release. His friend, the mayor of Ukraine's western regional center, Lviv, Andriy Sadoviy, has expressed his support repeatedly.

On the international level, both houses of Poland's parliament have appealed to the Council of Europe and the European Union on Saakashvili's behalf, whose detention they characterized as "politically motivated."

David Arakhamia, the head of the Ukraine's ruling parliamentary faction, "Servant of the People," recorded a video in which he called for Saakashvili's "immediate release" and soon after his detention President Volodymyr Zelensky stated his job was to return from abroad

Ukrainian citizens who are being held against their will.

But doubts have begun to creep in as to Ukraine's intentions in this situation.

Sadoviy noted that Ukraine's authorities have been keeping silent on Saakashvili's arrest, despite his worsening health. Immediately upon being incarcerated Saakashvili had announced a hunger strike. On Oct. 23 Sadoviy wrote on his Facebook page: "Ukraine's government cannot simply remain silent." According to Saakashvili's

doctor, Nikoloz Kipshidze, this past week Saakashvili's health deteriorated and he received a blood transfusion.

On Oct. 30, second-round elections will be held in Georgia. No later than soonest thereafter we should expect Zelensky and Ukraine's government to deliver on their promise to obtain the release of a citizen — an extraordinary one — of Ukraine.

*Ivan Lozowy is a member of the ruling council of Mikheil Saakashvili's Ukrainian political party, the Movement of New Forces.*

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### Deputy Chief Editor/Digital News

This person will oversee our news coverage across all platforms and languages, as well as the expanding digital team (programmers, marketing specialists, social media editors) and move the Kyiv Post to the cutting edge of digital news by helping us select vendors, designers, finding better content management systems, adopting analytical tools and AI (artificial intelligence) products (such as voiced stories, archive search, smart layout, etc.) The person will line edit in at least one of our two major languages (Ukrainian or English), as well as write occasional high-profile stories and contribute editorials & opinions. A premium will be placed on smart news judgment and overseeing a team for digital spot news & longer pieces aimed at the weekly print edition.

### Deputy Chief Editor/Enterprise

This person will keep an eye on the big picture to ensure that we are devoting resources to high-quality exclusive stories and investigative stories, journalism that rises about the day-to-day events, including analytical pieces, explainers and "big interview" that will set us apart from competitors in any language. This person will also oversee our attempts to secure grants for journalism and ensure that the coverage for which we have received grants meets the standards of the donors. This person will also take the lead role in sustaining our existing media partnerships and developing new ones. This person will line edit in at least one of our two major languages (Ukrainian or English), and contribute editorials & opinions.

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This person will devise our video, graphics and podcast coverage, maximizing integration and relationships with print and online journalists. This person will also oversee the development of our Kyiv Post studio. The position will explore both editorial and commercial options for taking full advantage of our multimedia resources. The Kyiv Post will put an emphasis on great videos (news, feature, investigative, documentary) on demand to reflect changing viewership habits and work to make our coverage and products accessible to English and Ukrainian language audiences.

### Deputy Chief Editor/Ukrainian-language content

This person, who must have a conversational command of the English language, will carry out the strategy for bringing Kyiv Post-quality content into the Ukrainian language. This person must understand how to drive readership among non-English reading Ukrainians and bring high-level editing skills to the job. This person will play a major role in supervising and assembling a Ukrainian-language content team, one that works with all other employees, but especially the other deputy chief editors, assignment editors, the commercial department and the chief editor.

### Motion/Graphic Designer

The Motion/Graphic Designer plays a key role in producing Kyiv Post's multimedia products and reports to both the Multimedia Head and Digital Head. The Motion/Graphic Designer designs and produces high quality motion and graphics to be used in videos, webinars, presentations, marketing and social media materials. This role also conceptualizes, designs and executes the production of video and visual content and other digital products.

### SEO Manager

The SEO manager plays a key role in Kyiv Post's digital ecosystem and reports to the Head of Digital. Main responsibilities of a SEO Manager is to research, analyze and optimize SEO strategy. SEO manager is responsible for researching and analyzing competitors, target audiences and provides the digital team with insights, key words and other important data for search engine optimization.

### SMM Manager

The SMM manager plays a vital role in Kyiv Post's digital ecosystem and reports to the Head of Digital. SMM manager will be responsible for creating and maintaining an image of our brand among various social media channels. This position also requires eagerness to learn and explore other social media platforms that will be relevant to the digital marketing strategy.

### PPC Manager

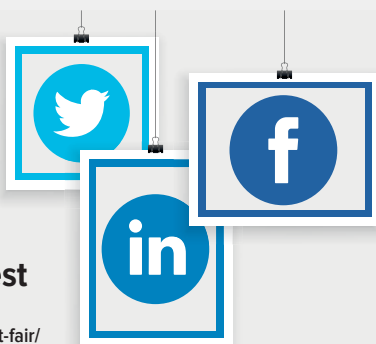
The PPC plays a key role in Kyiv Post's digital ecosystem and reports to the Head of Digital. Main responsibilities of a PPC Manager is to track, analyze and optimize ad campaigns across various digital channels. Our PPC Manager will work closely with the Head of Digital to develop and implement a digital strategy across all digital platforms.

For more information, contact  
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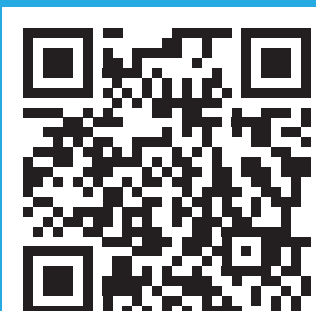
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