

Max Hunder: Ukraine's gladiators face England in Rome's Olympic Stadium

→ Page 2

Peter Dickinson: It's more than football, it's an international showcase for Ukraine

→ Page 13

5 Ukrainian-Canadians are among many who help their ancestral homeland from afar

→ Page 5

Parliament passes key reform bills essential for resumption of IMF lending this year

→ Page 3

Iconic Tblisi club Bassiani to build cultural bridges in Kyiv

→ Page 13



# Kyiv Post

## 26th year!

UKRAINE'S GLOBAL VOICE • SINCE 1995



World in Ukraine: Canada

In partnership with

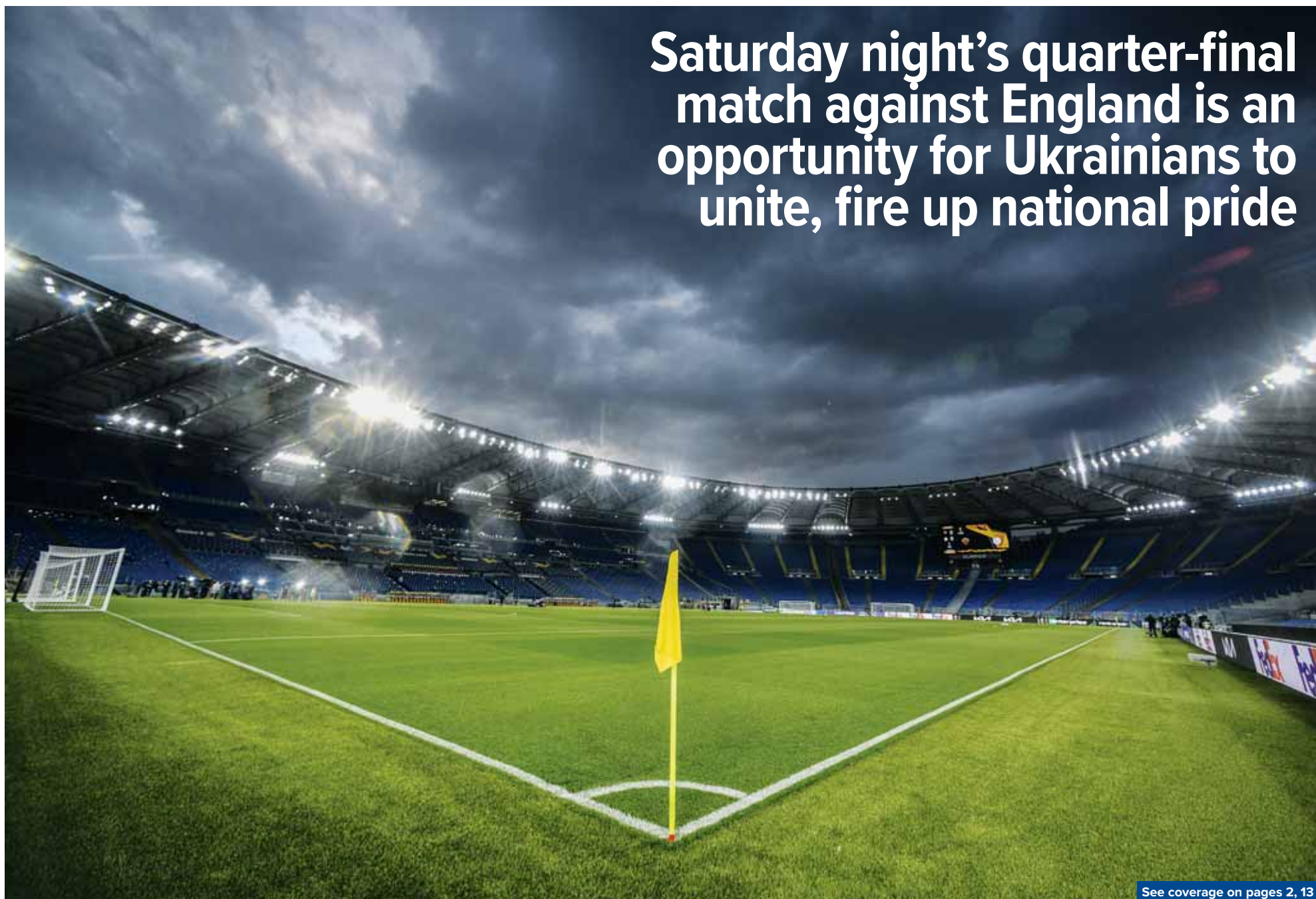


→ pages 5 — 12

Euro 2020 quarter-final: Ukraine vs. England — July 3 at 10 p.m. on Ukraine TV channel

# Showdown In Rome

## Saturday night's quarter-final match against England is an opportunity for Ukrainians to unite, fire up national pride



See coverage on pages 2, 13

It's a safe bet that millions — if not most — people in Ukraine will be watching football at 10 p.m. on Saturday, July 3. Ukraine's national team unexpectedly advanced to the final eight round in the Euro 2020 championship. The yellow & blue are the underdogs against England in Rome's Olympic Stadium. Ukraine earned its spot with a thrilling 2-1 victory over Sweden on June 29, with football legend Andriy Shevchenko as coach. The victory came a little more than nine years after Shevchenko, as a player, scored both goals in a 2-1 victory over Sweden during the Euro 2012 tournament co-hosted by Ukraine and Poland. Read Max Hunder's preview on page 2 and Peter Dickinson's take on page 13.



### Kyiv Post DOING BUSINESS magazine is published!

Pick up your copy at one of these locations: [distribution.kyivpost.com](http://distribution.kyivpost.com)  
Or contact us to order copies at [subscribe@kyivpost.com](mailto:subscribe@kyivpost.com) or 044-591-7788

The material published in the Kyiv Post may not be reproduced without the written consent of the publisher. All material in the Kyiv Post is protected by Ukrainian and international laws. The views expressed in the Kyiv Post are not necessarily the views of the publisher nor does the publisher carry any responsibility for those views.

Газета "Kyiv Post" видається  
ТОВ "БІЗНЕСГРУПП".

Щотижневий наклад 7,500 прим. Ціна за до-  
мовленістю. Матеріали, надруковані в га-  
зеті "Kyiv Post" є власністю видавництва,  
захищені міжнародним та українським за-  
конодавством і не можуть бути відтворені  
у будь-якій формі без письмового дозволу  
Видавця. Думки, висловлені у дописах не  
завжди збігаються з поглядами видавця,  
який не бере на себе відповідальність за  
наслідки публікації.

Засновник  
ТОВ "БІЗНЕСГРУПП"

Головний редактор  
Брайан Боннер

Відповідальний за випуск  
Брайан Боннер

Адреса видавця та засновника  
співпадають: Україна, м. Київ, 01033,  
вул. Жилинська, 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  
звертайтеся: +380 44 591-7788  
Відповідальність за зміст реклами  
несе замовник.

#### Mailing address:

Kyiv Post, 68 Zhylianska St.,  
Kyiv, Ukraine, 01033

#### Advertising

tel. +380 44 591-7788  
advertising@kyivpost.com

#### Editorial staff

tel. +380 44 591-3344  
news@kyivpost.com

#### Subscription & Distribution

tel. +380 44 591-3344  
subscribe@kyivpost.com

#### Employment Advertising

tel. +380 44 591-7788  
advertising@kyivpost.com

**Adnan Kivan**  
Publisher

**Brian Bonner**

Executive Director/Chief Editor

**Olga Rudenko**

Deputy Chief Editor

**Alyona Nevmerzhytska**

Commercial Director

#### News Editor

Igor Kossov

#### Business Editor

Liliane Bivings

#### Lifestyle Editor

Toma Istomina

#### Photo Editor:

Pavlo Podufalov

#### Video Editor:

Austin Malloy

#### Chief Designer:

Vladyslav Zakharenko.

#### Staff Writers

Daryna Antoniuk,

Natalia Datskevych, Olena Goncharova,

Max Hunder, Elina Kent,

Anastasiya Lapatina, Yana Mokhonchuk,

Anna Myroniuk, Illia Ponomarenko,

Alexander Query, Liza Semko,

Daria Shulzhenko, Olexsiy Sorokin,

Oleg Sukhov, Asami Terajima

Social Media: Sofia Fedeczko.

Website: Victoria Petrenko,

Anastasiya Shepeleva, Helen Mukhina.

Deputy Photo Editor: Veronika Strashko.

Photographers: Kostyantyn Chernichkin,

Oleg Petrasniuk, Volodymyr Petrov.

Video: Arsen Drobakha, Tamara Kiptenko,

Iryna Yavorska.

Designer: Yura Borovik.

KP Brand Studio Director: Jakub Parusinski.

Sales: Yulia Kovalenko, Vita Shvets,

Elena Symonenko.

Project Manager: Yulia Krus

Subscription: Tetyana Garanich.

Website Developers: Roman Kryvenko,

Dmitry Senchenko

Digital marketing: Daria Vashkulat

Chief Accountant: Galyna Bondarchuk.

Accountant: Aleksandra Lyfar.

Transport Manager: Mykola Andruska.

Office Manager: Lena Veshchuk.

IT: Olexsiy Bondarchuk,

Oleksandr Slipachenko

Cartoonist: Anatoliy Vasylenko.

# Ukraine's gladiators face England in Rome

By Max Hunder

hunder@kyivpost.com

It is rare for a nation to be so powerfully seized by football mania that its Cabinet of Ministers wears the national team's uniform after a victory in the Euro 2020 round of 16.

But the context of Ukraine's dramatic 2-1 win over Sweden in the historic footballing city of Glasgow explains the exuberance.

Few pundits expected the Yellow and Blues to make it past the Swedes into the final eight teams contending for the championship. But the Ukrainians proved their doubters wrong. They will now play the red-hot England team, which is favored to win in Rome on July 3 (game time is 10 p.m.).

This is the first time that the Ukrainian national team has reached the knockout phase of the European Championship finals.

It's only ever made it to the quarter-final of one other major tournament. In the 2006 World Cup, Ukraine was knocked out by Italy after overcoming Switzerland in a round of 16 contest, which the Guardian newspaper later described as "the dullest game in World Cup history."

Fast-forward 15 years, and there was nothing tedious about the Yellow and Blues' match on June 29. The game flowed rapidly from one end to the other, with two goals in the first half, three shots hitting the post in the second, and an ending worthy of a Hollywood thriller.

England's journey to the quarter-final was no less momentous. Hours before Ukraine's victory, the Three Lions broke a 55-year curse by finally beating Germany in a major tournament.

They last defeated the Germans in the 1966 World Cup final, earning England the only international trophy it's ever won.

## Five years of progress

For Ukraine, reaching the quarter-finals is a reward for five years of progress made under the management of Andriy Shevchenko, the country's biggest living football legend.

Ukraine's all-time top scorer put his reputation on the line when he took on the job of rebuilding a deflated national team that had just been unceremoniously dumped out of Euro 2016, having lost all three of its group games.

The team was rudderless, in need of a complete overhaul after the retirement of stalwarts such as Shevchenko, Anatoliy Tymoschuk, and Oleg Husyev.

When the Yellow and Blues narrowly failed to make the 2018 World Cup, the Ukrainian Association of Football stuck with Shevchenko.

London-based Ukrainian football expert Andrew Todos sees the first two years of Shevchenko's management as "sub-par" but also maintains that since the disappointment of 2018 he has done a "superb job".

"He's instilled a more European footballing philosophy into the team with his Italian backroom staff,"



Ukraine's forward Artem Dovbyk (L) heads the ball and scores his team's second goal during the UEFA EURO 2020 round of 16 football match between Sweden and Ukraine at Hampden Park in Glasgow on June 29, 2021.

Todos told the Kyiv Post. "He's created a mentality where Ukraine don't drop their heads when they go behind."

"There's a self-belief in the players, a very good work ethic, and a team mentality of togetherness that I don't think has ever been there before."

Ukraine enjoyed a barnstorming Euro 2020 qualifying campaign, in which it won six of its eight games and drew the other two. Highlights included the 5-0 thrashing of Serbia in Lviv and a 2-1 victory over reigning European champion Portugal in Kyiv.

## Making history

After reaching the tournament, Ukraine sometimes struggled under the pressure.

After coming back from trailing 2-0 against the Netherlands, the Yellow and Blues collapsed to a late 3-2 defeat. They also failed to pull themselves together after conceding an early goal against Austria in the final group game, which ended 1-0.

Nevertheless, Ukraine progressed to the knockout phase, thanks to its 2-1 win over North Macedonia and a lucky break with the other teams. Ironically, it was Sweden's 3-2 victory against Poland which sealed Ukraine's place in the last 16.

Shevchenko's men repaid their Scandinavian opponents by eliminating them from the tournament in a game that went down to the wire.

Both sides grabbed a goal apiece in the first half, but despite several dangerous moments in the second period, the game went into extra time.

The tempo heated up after the 99th minute, when Swedish center-back Marcus Danielson was sent off for a reckless sliding tackle on Artem Besedin. The Ukrainian forward looked to be in severe pain as he limped off the field and will now be out of action for up to six months.

In spite of the Yellow and Blues' numerical advantage, the

game looked destined for penalties. This was until Artem Dovbyk met Olexandr Zinchenko's perfectly weighted cross in the 121st minute and made football history.

The young forward's first senior goal for Ukraine was also the latest winning strike ever scored at a European Championship, beating French legend Michel Platini's 1984 record by almost two minutes.

## 55 years of hurt

England promises to be an opponent of a whole different magnitude. The Three Lions are now tipped by most bookmakers as tournament favorites, and have yet to concede a goal in the competition.

Their three central defenders create a formidable back line, allowing England to bide their time and play incisive long-range passes to world-class forwards Harry Kane and Raheem Sterling.

They will also be riding a wave of confidence, having just overcome the biggest demon in English football – the 55-year inability to beat Germany in a tournament.

Hatred of the German team is something of an obsession among England fans, who for years have sung provocative songs such as "Two World Wars and one World Cup" to drown out the anguish of bruising defeats in 1990, 1996 and 2010.

The 2021 victory took place on the hallowed turf of Wembley

Stadium in London, giving it added poignancy. It is there that the Three Lions won in 1966 but lost in the 1996 semi-final. Gareth Southgate, then a player and now England's manager, missed a crucial penalty kick that fateful night.

"I can't change the fact that the guys I played with in '96 didn't get to play in a final. That will always live with me," he said after England's victory on Tuesday.

"But what this group of players have been able to do is give a new generation a lot of happy memories and another afternoon where they've made a bit of history," Southgate added, his typically calm voice cracking with emotion.

That group of players will now have to overcome Ukraine in Rome on July 3.

Todos reckons that the contest will be "a slog of a game," Ukraine lining up defensively once more with five defenders and two holding midfielders.

"They're going to try and create opportunities either down the wings or through (Roman) Yaremchuk up front."

"If Ukraine can seize the one or two chances they may get, then anything is possible."

Todos says that many pundits in England are taking the Three Lions' victory on Saturday for granted.

"Hopefully Ukraine can spoil that." ❄️

# Parliament passes reform bills necessary for IMF lending

By Oleg Sukhov,  
Anna Myroniuk  
and Illia Ponomarenko

The Verkhovna Rada this week passed several bills required for cooperation with the International Monetary Fund and other Western lenders.

These important pieces of legislation concern judicial reform, deoligarchization and restored jail terms for officials who lie on their mandatory asset declarations.

In February, the IMF suspended talks with Ukraine on a \$700 million loan tranche due to the country's failure to deliver on several reforms, including overhauling the distrusted judiciary.

The bills were also passed just in time for a planned meeting between President Volodymyr Zelensky and U.S. President Joe Biden in July.

"The mood music is turning more positive, but the devil in all the bills will likely be in the details," said Tim Ash, an emerging markets strategist at Bluebay Asset Management. "I hope that this is all not just window dressing for that particular meeting. Helping provide a nice family photo for Zelensky but then all things reversing again a few weeks later."

Ash said that the key question is whether Zelensky is committed to fighting corruption.

"Have we actually seen any progress at all over the past two years in actually fighting corruption? I simply don't know – too hard to tell, few people have been sent to jail, brought to account, and I don't sense that behavior is changing. But again, time will tell."

The President's Office did not respond to requests for comment.

## High Qualification Commission

On June 29, the Verkhovna Rada approved the final reading of a bill giving foreign experts a decisive role in the appointment of a new High Qualification Commission – a body that hires and fires judges.

The selection panel for choosing the Qualification Commission would consist of three Ukrainian judges and three foreign experts. At least four panelists will be needed to approve candidates. When the vote is split three to three, the foreign experts' opinion will prevail, according to the legislation.

However, there are still obstacles that may block the reform. One problem is that the discredited High Council of Justice, the judiciary's unreformed governing body, will have a lot of say over who gets chosen, which may sabotage the attempt at reform. The council will choose 16 appointees out of 32 candidates nominated by the selection panel, according to the legislation.

Under the new bill, half of the new High Qualification Commission members would be judges. Civic activists think this will preserve the old corrupt judiciary.

Moreover, it is not clear when the legislation will be implemented, if at all. In 2019, Zelensky signed similar legislation to reform the High Qualification Commission but it was not implemented due to the High Council of Justice's refusal to carry it out.

Vitaly Tytytch, ex-head of judicial watchdog Public Integrity Council, argued that the passage of the legislation was a trick by the Zelensky administration to get an IMF loan. After the money is disbursed, the authorities will likely derail the judi-



The lawmakers are pictured while voting for the law bills during the parliamentary session in Verkhovna Rada in Kyiv on June 30, 2021.

cial reform to avoid losing control over judges, similar to what happened in 2019, he said.

Zelensky dismissed such accusations in a Facebook post on June 29. "I hope nobody managed to hide legal loopholes in the bill or distort its meaning with 'spam' amendments," he said. "The High Qualification Commission must and will be created in such a way that none of its members will have obligations before or links to the so-called judicial mafia."

## High Council of Justice

On June 30, the Verkhovna Rada's legal policy committee also approved a bill giving foreign experts a crucial role on the Ethics Council, a body responsible for firing tainted members of the High Council of Justice, the judiciary's main governing body. The bill has been passed in the first reading and may be considered in the second reading on July 13–16.

However, this version of the bill has also been criticized by anti-corruption watchdogs.

"Some clauses of the bill may completely block the Ethics Council's work, jeopardizing genuine judicial reform in Ukraine," legal think tank Dejure said.

If the Ethics Council rules that a

High Council of Justice member violated ethics and integrity standards, that member would be suspended temporarily. The problem is that the bodies that appointed High Council of Justice members – associations of judges, lawyers and prosecutors – may decide not to fire the suspended member.

Moreover, it will be possible to appeal the Ethics Council's decisions in the Supreme Court on any grounds, under the bill. This will allow the Supreme Court to block the Ethics Council's decisions; the grounds for appeal should be limited in the final version of the bill, Dejure said.

The High Council of Justice has been involved in numerous corruption scandals.

In wiretapped conversations released by the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, notorious judge Pavlo Vovk, a graft suspect, mentioned the involvement of Andrii Ovsienko, head of the High Council of Justice, along with other council members in his alleged corruption schemes. Council members did not respond to requests for comment.

## Asset declarations

Parliament on June 29 also passed

the final reading of a bill reinstating prison terms for lying on asset declarations.

The previous version of the bill was passed on June 3 but it was undercut by a clause exempting officials from having to disclose their relatives' property. That version was vetoed by Zelensky, and parliament had to approve a new version without this loophole.

Asset declarations, one of the pillars of Ukraine's anti-corruption reform, was all but destroyed in October, when the Constitutional Court eliminated penalties for lying and deprived the National Agency for Preventing Corruption (NAPC), which is tasked with checking declarations, of most of its powers.

## Deoligarchization

The parliament also supported Zelensky's bill on deoligarchization in the first reading on July 1.

For the first time ever, it legally defines what an "oligarch" is and imposes restrictions on anyone who meets this definition. They will be banned from donating directly or indirectly to political parties and participating in the privatization of state assets.

→ page 12

## ON THE MOVE

### CMS promotes three to counsel and senior associate in Kyiv

CMS Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang in Kyiv is pleased to announce the promotion of three lawyers to Counsel and Senior Associate as of 1 July 2021.

Maryna Ilchuk (Energy) has been promoted to Counsel while Mykola Heletiy (Commercial) and Louise Çakar (Corporate/M&A) have both been promoted to Senior Associate.

Graham Conlon, Managing Partner of CMS Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang in Kyiv, comments: "These promotions reflect the excellent work and contribution by our three colleagues in delivering for our clients as well for the firm. They are also a reflection of our commitment to investing in the future success of our people and for our business in the wider CEE region. I would like to congratulate Maryna, Mykola and Louise on this significant and well-deserved recognition."



CMS Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang  
38 Volodymyrska str., 6th floor  
Kyiv 01054, Ukraine t: +38044 391 3377  
e: KyivOffice@cms-cmno.com www.cms.law



Maryna Ilchuk

Maryna Ilchuk, a lawyer in the Energy team in Kyiv, advises domestic and international clients operating in the energy, oil & gas sector on a broad range of legal and regulatory issues, and across the entire lifecycle of energy companies, with a particular focus on commercial and technical aspects. She represented a foreign investor on the first ever full-scale Production Enhancement Contract (PEC) in Ukraine, and was also involved in the unbundling of state-owned energy company Naftogaz Ukraine. Maryna has substantial experience in renewable energy projects, leading projects for acquisition purposes. She has also supported on projects related to the structuring of public-private partnerships, particularly those involving the cooperation between foreign investors and state enterprises and authorities.



Louise Çakar

Louise Çakar is an English-qualified solicitor who specialises in advising multinationals on cross-border corporate transactions in emerging markets. Beyond Ukraine, she has experience in various jurisdictions, having acted on mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures and multi-jurisdictional re-organisations throughout Central and Eastern Europe, the UK and the Middle East. She has a particular focus on the financial institutions and services sector, as well as the technology, media and communications, and energy sectors. Louise is also able to bring a well-rounded view to the table having previously worked in-house for MetLife Insurance as the Commercial Contracts Manager for the EMEA region in the Strategic Initiatives Team.



Mykola Heletiy

Mykola Heletiy, a lawyer in the Commercial practice in Kyiv, advises foreign and local clients on various aspects of their business operations in Ukraine, including general commercial matters, employment, data protection and competition issues. His experience includes advising clients on various types of commercial contracts, including IT services, e-commerce, and telecoms agreements, as well as on matters of data protection, advertising, gambling, consumer sales, software licensing, outsourcing, agency, distribution and franchise agreements, purchasing and procurement, production and product liability.

Advertisement

EDITORIALS

# Putin never changes

After his June 16 summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Geneva, U.S. President Joe Biden said: "We'll find out within the next six months to a year whether or not we actually have a strategic dialogue that matters."

It didn't even take two weeks. Putin remains a global menace who must be contained with the strictest of sanctions, strictly enforced, not the current milquetoast, porous ones that allow critics to proclaim that "sanctions aren't working." Sanctions aren't working because they are not tough enough.

The Biden-Putin summit was an ill-advised bust, even more damaging because Kremlin appeasers such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron are undermining any semblance of European unity by seeking separate meetings with Putin.

Germany has lost credibility as the leader of the European Union by putting its crass commercial interests ahead of any others – most glaringly with Nord Stream 2, which destroyed the possibility of meaningful sanctions against the Kremlin. Berlin also arrogantly downplays the legitimate collective security needs of Eastern European nations such as Poland, the Baltics, Ukraine and others. Don't take our word for it. Plenty of Germans are unhappy with Merkel as she fades into retirement after September's elections.

"The problem is that thanks to Nord Stream, Germany has lost all credibility as a representative of European interests," said Franziska Brantner, the German Green Party spokesperson on Europe. "Some European Union member states really wonder whether the German government is acting in the interests of Europe or just those of German business."

On June 30 during his annual national call-in show, Putin displayed his usual imperial, ill-informed, condescending stance on Ukraine.

He again repeated there is no difference between Ukrainians and Russians – they are "one people" and said the problem lies with Ukraine's leaders. He accused President Volodymyr Zelensky of accepting "full external management" of Ukraine by the United States and, to a lesser degree, Germany and France.

Also, since the summit, the Kremlin has threatened to bomb any foreign ship that goes near Ukraine's territorial waters in Crimea (which Russia illegal claims as its own). Putin may also close a humanitarian aid corridor on July 10 that is desperately needed by the Syrian refugees he helped create. He keeps foes imprisoned and free speech suppressed ahead of Russia's Sept. 19 parliamentary elections.

A very short list of Putin's crimes: Military occupation of Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Syria. Countenance of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad's chemical-weapons use and help bombing Syrian civilians into submission. Shoot-down of MH17, killing 298 innocent civilians, in 2014. Sanctioned murders of opponents, on Russian and foreign soil, including use of banned chemical weapons. Interference in democratic elections abroad. Support for domestic hackers seeking to cripple infrastructure in the West. Likely bombing of his own citizens, killing more than 300 in their homes in 1999.

If the West can't unite around the need to stop Putin after all of this, what more will it take?

# Much ado

President Volodymyr Zelensky has been vocal about going after Ukrainian oligarchs. Yet, months after the start of "deoligarchization," we still don't know if the president is genuine on his promise.

On July 1, Zelensky's Servant of the People party passed the draft bill dubbed "the oligarch law," in the first reading. It is set to introduce a legal definition for an oligarch and impose limitations on them.

However, with all the promotion of the idea, the lack of transparency raises serious concern on whether the proclaimed war on oligarchic influence is real – and whether it will target all oligarchs equally.

In mid-February, pro-Kremlin politician Viktor Medvedchuk was stripped of his media business and media and is now charged with treason. Medvedchuk's Opposition Platform – For Life party has been rising in electoral ratings prior to the sanctions.

The National Security and Defense Council proceeded, issuing more sanctions almost every week. One Friday it imposed sanctions on "crime bosses," another week it went after corrupt Customs Office officials.

The weekly show started to grow stale when, on June 18, the council went after the big fish. It passed sanctions against oligarch Dmytro Firtash, who's been fighting off a U.S. extradition warrant in Vienna for seven years – and yet hold a destructive sway over Ukraine's life.

But there's a catch. Two weeks after sanctions were imposed on Firtash, society still doesn't know what sanctions did to him or his businesses.

Firtash's company, Group DF, said they continue to operate. Firtash's gas distribution companies are obviously not frozen, too. So did sanctions even do anything to the oligarch?

This goes in parallel with persistent rumors and reports about another oligarch, Rinat Akhmetov, blocking attempts to limit his influence and harmful rent-seeking "business practices."

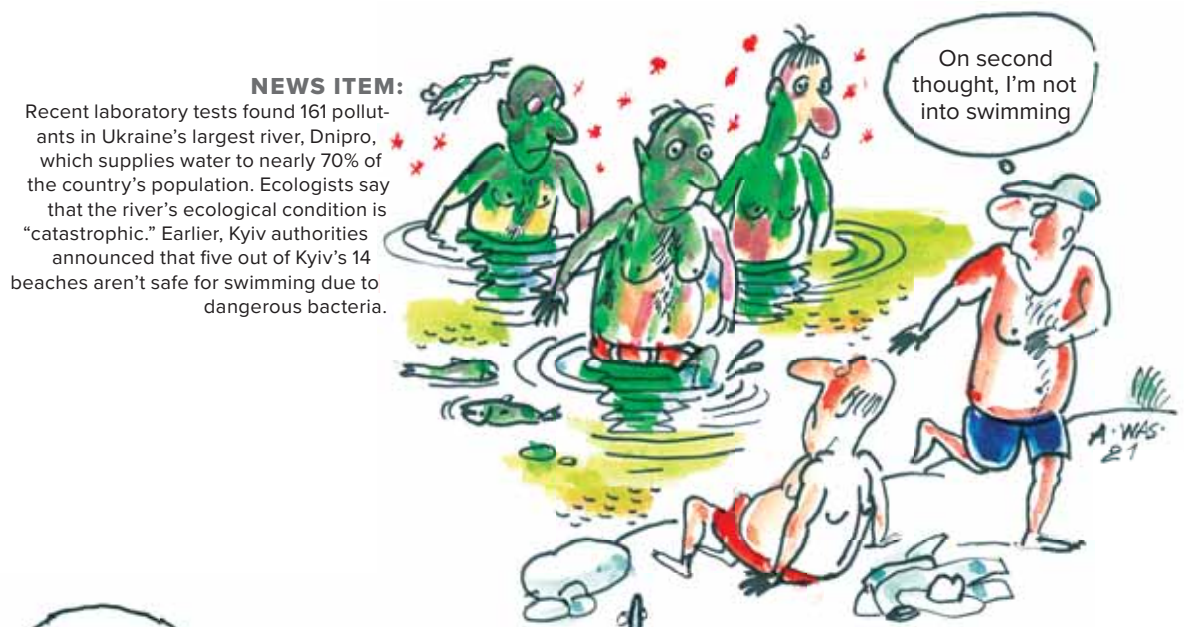
Parliament passed on July 1 in the first reading a bill that seeks to raise a number of taxes and fees, most importantly the iron ore extraction fee. Akhmetov's companies extract over 50% of iron ore. Experts say that the fees are being raised far less than originally expected.

Another battle is taking place over Ukrzaliznytsya, a state-owned railway monopolist transporting iron ore for Akhmetov at a very low price. In 2020, Ukrzaliznytsya suffered \$426 million in losses, while Akhmetov was able to increase his wealth by \$5 billion.

According to a Kyiv Post source who wasn't authorized to speak to the press, the government is looking to increase the tariffs on the transportation of iron ore by less than 10 percent. It will save Akhmetov's companies billions of hryvnia a year.

Promises of deoligarchization and the Defense Council's actions prompted Zelensky's electoral rating to show a slight increase after months of sharp decline.

Now it's time to show us the actual results behind the sanctions. The critical lack of transparency is undermining our trust in Zelensky's anti-oligarch drive.



**NEWS ITEM:** Recent laboratory tests found 161 pollutants in Ukraine's largest river, Dniro, which supplies water to nearly 70% of the country's population. Ecologists say that the river's ecological condition is "catastrophic." Earlier, Kyiv authorities announced that five out of Kyiv's 14 beaches aren't safe for swimming due to dangerous bacteria.



**NEWS ITEM:** Ukraine, U.S. and 30 more countries are holding a joint Sea Breeze 2021 military exercise in the Black Sea on June 28 – July 10. The Russian government has asked the U.S. to withdraw from the drills because its participation "encourages a militaristic mood in Kyiv."



**NEWS ITEM:** Oleg Lyashko, a former lawmaker known for his extreme populism, reportedly got involved in mining cryptocurrency. His associates told Ukrainian media that Lyashko, who appeared with a pitchfork in political ads and once tried to bring a cow to parliament, has a cryptocurrency farm.



**NEWS ITEM:** Ukraine's parliament on July 1 passed in the first hearing a so-called "oligarch bill." The bill, proposed by President Volodymyr Zelensky, seeks to limit the influence of oligarchs. Among other things, they wouldn't be able to fund political parties and privatize large state-owned enterprises. Passing the bill in the final reading will prove challenging: The parliament is largely influenced by oligarchs.

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

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



**Franziska Brantner, Germany's Green Party member**  
The lawmaker continues offering strong criticism to Berlin's dubious policy of appeasing the Kremlin. She is absolutely right in saying that the unholy alliance with Russia is derailing Germany's credibility as a champion of European interests.



**Ted Galen Carpenter, a National Interest columnist**  
The author called Ukraine "a dangerous and unworthy ally" for the United States. According to him, only paid lobbyists and propagandists can call on helping a peaceful nation defend itself from the world's second military power – Russia.

**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: Canada



In partnership with TIU Canada



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

To sponsor this news feature, please contact the Kyiv Post's sales team at [advertising@kyivpost.com](mailto:advertising@kyivpost.com) or call 591-77-88

# These Ukrainian-Canadians are devoted to ancestral land

By Olena Goncharova  
[goncharova@kyivpost.com](mailto:goncharova@kyivpost.com)

Although they were not born in Ukraine, the nation is a part of them in many ways: Through philanthropy and promotion, on the pages of books, and in songs that are sung around the table on Christmas.

For the last 130 years, Canada's 1.5-million-strong Ukrainian community — the largest Ukrainian diaspora outside of Europe — has had a strong voice both in Canada and their ancestral homeland. They helped gain formal recognition of the Holodomor as an act of genocide, raised money for projects acknowledging Canada's internment of Ukrainians during World War I, and have sent hundreds of election observers and military instructors to Ukraine.

This community, built over four waves of immigration, began on the prairies and has spread throughout Canada's other provinces.

These are just a few of the many prominent Ukrainian-Canadians:



A view of downtown Montreal, Quebec, taken on Nov. 4, 2018, from the Mount Royal Mountain.

tance of community: As the president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC), she is committed to representing the interests of one of Canada's largest ethnic and cultural communities. She believes "we are all part of something bigger than ourselves," and that a hromada (Ukrainian for community) is more than the sum of its parts.

It comes naturally from her upbringing. Chyczij's parents and grandparents were refugees who emigrated to Canada after World War II. They raised her and her sisters with a love for Ukraine, its culture, language and traditions, and instilled in them the importance of preserving and protecting their heritage at a time when Ukraine was under Soviet occupation.

"As a family and as part of the Ukrainian community in Toronto, we celebrated the beautiful Ukrainian traditions — Christmas, Easter — and we have passed down the importance of keeping our identity with

→ page 6



**Chrystia Freeland**  
Deputy prime minister, minister of finance of Canada  
If there is one minister in Canada's federal government who stands above all others in terms of commitment to Ukraine, it is Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland. She is the first female finance minister and the first Ukrainian-Canadian to serve in that role. She is the most influential member of Cabinet after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.  
Holding on to her roots and family traditions is something Freeland has never lost sight of.  
"The traditions of Ukrainian Christmas and Easter are very important to my family and me. Every year, we gather with family and friends around the table," Freeland said in written comments to the Kyiv Post.

After the third Ukraine Reform Conference that took place in Toronto on July 2, 2019, bringing Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to his first official trip to Canada, local journalists wrote that Canadian-born, Harvard and Oxford educated Freeland spoke the language of Ukraine better than the country's president, whose first language is Russian. The explanation stems from family traditions.

"My mother was Ukrainian-Canadian and I speak Ukrainian, including at home with my children," Freeland says. "It is very important to me that they are also able to speak Ukrainian, so I have made each one attend Ukrainian school on the weekends. It was hard at first, but all three of them are now proud to speak Ukrainian."

Freeland is also among the Canadian politicians who have deep insights on Russia's aggression against Ukraine. She is considered internationally as a key point person on Ukraine.

"We have been at the vanguard of defending Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of Russian aggression," she says.

She reiterates Canada's principal message to Ukraine: "Our government is committed to the international rules-based order. Canada is a steadfast partner of Ukraine and will always stand up for its sovereignty and territorial integrity."  
Freeland cheers for independent

Ukraine because she personally experienced what it was like under the Soviet regime.

"I was in Ukraine, as a student, between 1988 and 1989. It was the Soviet era and I am very grateful to have had that experience, to have lived that part of history. It gave me a very personal understanding of life in the Soviet Union, a communist and authoritarian regime," she says. "What struck me, very powerfully, and which I have never forgotten, was how quickly a political system can collapse. An important life lesson — that I carry with me today — is the possibility of dramatic, discontinuous change."



**Alexandra Chyczij**  
President of Ukrainian Canadian Congress  
Alexandra Chyczij knows the impor-

## Canada at a glance

Government type: **Federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy**

Monarch:  
Queen Elizabeth II

Prime Minister:  
Justin Trudeau

GDP, PPP:  
**\$1.64 trillion**  
(2020)

GDP per capita, PPP:  
**\$44,860** (2020)

Total area: **9,984,670 square kilometers**      Population: **38 million**

World Bank's Doing Business Ranking: **23**      Credit ratings: **S&P — AAA (stable), Fitch — AA+ (stable), Moody's — Aaa (stable)**

Main economic sectors: Real estate, mining, oil and gas, construction, healthcare, financial services, tourism

Trade: **\$406 million (2020)**

Exports from Ukraine to Canada:  
Ferrous metals, copper and copper products, chemicals, wood and wooden products, toys, grain, honey, milk products  
**\$81.2 million**

Imports to Ukraine from Canada:  
Ukraine imports fish and crayfish, meat, pharmaceuticals, optical devices, vehicles  
**\$201.4 million**

Canada foreign direct investment **\$30.4 million (as of Sept. 30, 2020)**

Sources: World Bank, International Monetary Fund, State Statistics Service, Embassy of Ukraine to Canada

# Despite distance, Ukraine is close to their hearts & minds

page 5 —&gt;

our children, as our parents did for us,” Chyczij says.

Her parents' generation started the first Ukrainian day school in Canada — St. Josaphat's in Toronto — which is now part of a Canada-wide network of bilingual schools that teach Ukrainian language and preserve Ukrainian heritage.

“My family instilled in us the importance of education, learning and achievement. Having been a *plastunka* (member of *Plast*, a Ukrainian scouting organization) in a displaced-persons' camps in Germany, my mother sent us to *Plast*. This scouting organization had a profound influence on my sisters and me as it taught us voluntarism, patriotism, and community service,” she recalls.

Now as the president of UCC, Chyczij feels an obligation to carry on the work of those who came before them.

“My generation inherited a strong and united community with thriving institutions and we have a responsibility, both to those who came before us and built it, and to those who will come after us and will continue to reinforce and consolidate the efforts of our predecessors, who struggled in much more trying circumstances than those we face today,” she says.

A lawyer by profession, Chyczij says she was struck by how far the legal profession in Ukraine has come and the vital role that women are now playing in reforming Ukraine's legal system. In 2019, she was invited to speak at a conference of *JurFem*, a women's legal organization that was supported by one of Canada's development projects through Global Affairs Canada and the Canadian Bureau of International Education.

“This is a sea change from the early days of independence and just one example of the many profound changes in Ukrainian society that Canada has been able to support,” she says.

But more changes are still on the horizon.

“We often hear about the need for reforms to move quickly, that Ukraine isn't doing enough quickly enough,” she says. “We have

to remember that a nation can't emerge from centuries of foreign domination without addressing and working through the damage and trauma that was wrought by genocide and oppression.”

There will be steps backward, reversals and frustrations, she adds, but it is worth remembering that where Ukraine was 30 years ago and where it is today are worlds apart.

“This should fill us with hope for the future.”



## Victor Hetmanczuk

Ex-president, CEO of Canada-Ukraine Foundation  
Ukrainians may not know Victor Hetmanczuk by name, but they know his work.

For six years he served as president and CEO of the Canada-Ukraine Foundation (CUF) before retiring in 2020. During that time, CUF was able to annually deliver a craniofacial surgery training program at Ukrainian military hospitals by bringing over teams of surgeons and their support staff for a week at a time.

“The competition to get chosen (for surgery) was fierce,” Hetmanczuk explains. “Because of COVID-19, we have gone to a video format that has allowed us to expand to the civilian hospital system as well. Over 300 patients have received life-changing surgeries. Less visible (since 2014), has been our psychosocial trauma therapy programs for male and female veterans as they

struggle with issues around PTSD or reintegration into civilian society.”

Hetmanczuk first visited Ukraine in 1968 after his university graduation and did not have a chance to return until the early 1990s.

“As I was leaving, the question was posed: When will Ukraine become a European style democracy? I answered: In 45 to 50 years, or in two generations of citizens that have not lived under Soviet rule.”

Thirty years down the road, he says his forecast has now been reduced to 25 years.

Among the obstacles he lists combating corruption, further reforms in the security sector, promoting the rule of law, decentralization reform as well as promoting an inclusive political process.

Hetmanczuk's family immigrated to Canada from Britain in 1955 after seven years of trying to establish roots there. They came straight to Toronto and his religious and social life revolved around the St. Volodymyr Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral.

“After church, we would all meet as a family and partake of our Ukrainian culinary traditions,” he says. “These special family meal get-togethers are still going on with my grandchildren who cannot wait to get to Baba and Dido's house to see what new dish we have added to the menu to reflect our heritage.”

Hetmanczuk believes that growing up and attending school with a second language and cultural paradigm helped him better prepare for university and the working world after.

“Never in my dreams did I see myself talking in person to Ukrainian presidents in our native language about current issues in Ukraine — yet it happened,” he says. “My frequent visits in recent years have expanded my knowledge of the different regions of the country and the people that live there. Canada is proud of its multiculturalism — and Ukraine has started on that same path.”



## Lubomyr Luciuk

Academic, author  
When Lubomyr Luciuk was seven years old, he and his mother were yelled at in a bus in his native Kingston, Ontario for speaking “a foreign language” — Ukrainian. The Ukrainian community in Kingston was very small at the time.

The incident was shocking, but it also boosted Luciuk's desire to tell the world about Ukraine. Now he can say he has fulfilled his childhood



Paul Grod, a Ukrainian-Canadian who is the president of the Ukrainian World Congress, is shown in a file photo during his visit to Kyiv on Nov. 28, 2018.

promise.

Luciuk, a professor of political geography in the department of political science and economics at the Royal Military College in Kingston, has devoted his academic life to globally promoting the Ukrainian cause and raising awareness about the country's fight for freedom and independence through dozens of books, newspaper articles and public appearances.

Love for books stems from his childhood — every week his mother would take him to the library and let him pick any book he wanted with one condition — he had to read it within a week. Luciuk wanted to learn more about his ancestral land, but was disappointed to find no books in English about Ukraine at the library.

“I thought: I will make sure that books in English about Ukraine are on the shelves of libraries around the world,” he says.

His parents also raised him with the sense that people can achieve more by working together for a common cause.

“I'll work with any Ukrainian or other person who is ready to devote their time for Ukraine,” he says.

Luciuk has organized dozens of projects across Canada and overseas, focused on the political geography of Ukraine in the 20th and 21st centuries. He is behind projects such as securing funding in 2017 for a memorial walk at Loos-en-Gohelle, France, remembering Cpl. Filip Konowal, a Ukrainian-Canadian soldier of the WWI whose valor at the Battle of Hill 70 earned him the Victoria Cross.

In 2019, Ukraine recognized Luciuk's work, giving him the Cross of Ivan Mazepa, a presidential award that marks a person's significant contributions to the revival of Ukrainian national interests.

With his colleagues in the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association, Luciuk also spearheaded the campaign to secure official acknowledgment and symbolic redress for Canada's first national internment operations of 1914 to 1920, leading to the creation of the \$10 million Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund, supporting dozens of educational, cultural and commemorative proj-

ects across Canada.

“My parents always said: Make a difference, do something — and I love that,” Luciuk says.

## Paul Grod

President of Ukrainian World Congress

The Ukrainian World Congress coordinates a network of organizations and communities in more than 60 countries, supporting efforts to preserve Ukrainian national identity. Behind its powerful voice representing over 20 million ethnic Ukrainians living abroad, is its president, Paul Grod.

Lately, the UWC has been hosting a series of meetings and public discussions with government officials and prominent experts on a NATO vision for Ukraine.

“Ukraine's NATO membership is the surest and fastest path to peace and security in Ukraine. It will bring an end to Russia's war against Ukraine and stop Russia's ongoing provocations in Eastern Europe,” Grod says. “Continued appeasement of Russia will continue to deliver oppression in Belarus, bloodshed in Ukraine and global aggression by (Russian President Vladimir) Putin and his henchmen.”

Grod knows what totalitarian regimes are: As teenagers, his parents were taken with their families from western Ukraine to Germany as slave laborers.

His parents were fortunate to immigrate to Canada. They reunited in Toronto, got married in the Ukrainian Catholic Church and had three sons.

“They always wanted to make sure their children remained conscientious Ukrainians who would continue to fight for Ukraine's independence,” Grod explains.

And Grod does exactly that: A lawyer and business leader, he served as the UWC's vice president for 10 years prior to his election as president in November 2018. He has chaired several projects including election observation missions to Ukraine and UWC's Council in Support of Ukraine, among others. He believes that Ukrainians abroad must build strong self-help institutions and stay engaged in the nations where they are living and with Ukraine. ☺

Kostyantyn Chernichkin

**Ukraine Digest – a daily newsletter by the Kyiv Post**



Go to [WWW.KYIVPOST.COM](http://WWW.KYIVPOST.COM) to subscribe. It's free!

**STOP THE RAIDER-OLIGARCH!**



**UKRAINE,  
PROTECT THE INVESTORS!**  
**#STOP\_RAIDER\_SAVE\_TIUCANADA**

# Canadian solar energy firm, egg producer fend off raider attacks

By Mark Rachkevych

Two companies that represent millions of dollars in Canadian investment say they are facing raider attacks and getting no help from a Ukrainian government that created “investment nannies” to promote the nation as an attractive place to do business.

The companies sounding the alarm are TIU Canada, a solar energy company, and Ovostar, one of Europe’s biggest egg producers.

Their encounters with Ukraine’s powerful business elite, the nation’s distrusted courts and other accessories to corruption, such as notaries, are not going to help the nation’s already dismal reputation for international investors, despite government promises assign officials – or “nannies” – to pay close attention to solving problems for big investors. The lack of rule of law and trustworthy institutions are why Ukraine has attracted a paltry \$50 billion in foreign direct investment in 30 years, keeping living standards among the lowest in Europe as politicians talk big about breaking up the competition-stifling oligarchy.

## 322 new raider attacks

More than 322 new raider attacks have been registered as of May 26, according to the Prosecutor General’s Office. The vast majority of them are still tied up in court. According to Open Data Bot, they usually fall under two articles of the Criminal Code: sham business and obstruction of legitimate business activity and illegal seizure.

For green-energy investor TIU Canada, the problems started when it received a letter on Dec. 23, 2019, notifying it that the company’s solar power plant would be disconnected from the nation’s electric power grid.

The letter came from the Nikopol Ferroalloy Plant in southeastern Dnipropetrovsk Oblast on whose premises the 10.5-megawatt plant and its high-voltage substation lies. However, the plant leases the land from the municipal government in a 30-year agreement.

## Kolomoisky company

The Canadian firm held meetings with plant officials, including the plant’s prominent shareholder, billionaire oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky, who faces sanctions and criminal investigations in the United States for “significant corruption.” For their efforts, the plant disconnected TIU Canada’s renewable energy plant from the grid on March 2, 2020.

Ostensibly, the plant cited the need for repairs. More than a year later, TIU country director Valentyna Beliakova told the Kyiv Post she has seen “no evidence of repairs.”

What the company got, however, was an offer to buy the plant for 10 percent of its value.

Kolomoisky wasn’t available for comment following phone calls to three Swiss-based numbers. Two voicemail messages left on a Ukrainian number went unanswered.

## Costly attack

The disconnection has cost TIU more than \$1.5 million in damages. It is repaying its 7-million-euro loan



One of TIU Canada’s four renewable projects in the country located in the Dnipropetrovsk regional town of Nikopol with 10.5 megawatts of generating power.

on this particular project with cash flow from its other three in-country renewable energy projects in which \$65 million has been invested.

An administrative assistant of Nikopol plant chief executive Volodymyr Kutsin acknowledged receiving a Kyiv Post inquiry and stated that the dispute “is in no way a raider attack,” repeating the need for “overdue repairs.”

A court date in Kyiv at the commercial appellate court was postponed until July 26 because co-defendant DTEK – Ukraine’s largest private electricity producer belonging to billionaire Rinat Akhmetov – didn’t appear at a late June hearing to have TIU’s grid connection reinstated.

The solar plant connected to the grid via DTEK’s Dnipro oblenergo power distribution company.

## Appealing lower court

The Canadian firm lost the initial lower court hearing in favor of Kolomoisky and other principal Nikopol Ferroalloy Plant shareholders, which include the tycoon’s long-time business associate Hennady Boholyubov.

“There is no other way to explain this other than it’s a raider attack,” Beliakova said, noting Kolomoisky has a track record of allegedly taking over other foreign firms, including airport cargo handler SwissAir at

Kyiv Boryspil International Airport.

U.S. authorities are investigating him for laundering money from Ukraine’s largest private lender, PrivatBank, where international auditors found losses of \$5.5 billion. The bank, owned by Kolomoisky and Boholyubov until December 2016, required a taxpayer bailout and nationalization to stay afloat.

The U.S. State Department has banned Kolomoisky and his immediate family members from traveling to the country.

Kolomoisky has denied wrongdoing and has publicly asserted that he is still the rightful owner of PrivatBank while engaging in litigation to regain control of the bank.

Kolomoisky, who backed Volodymyr Zelensky’s winning 2019 presidential campaign, has not faced any criminal bank fraud charges stemming from the PrivatBank losses.

## ‘Paid no attention’

TIU’s predicament comes only two years after Zelensky, on an official visit to Canada in 2019, singled out the company as an example of a successful investor from a nation with some 1.5 million people of Ukrainian heritage.

“We think about the future, that is why green energy will be one of the key sectors of our economy during the upcoming years,” Zelensky said in July 2019. “I know that we have here Canadian company TIU that already successfully works in this area. We are grateful to them for this – please, follow their example.”

Today, however, Beliakova said Zelensky’s administration “has paid no attention” to the dispute with the Kolomoisky-affiliated company.

To date, TIU is the biggest Canadian foreign investor since Kyiv and Ottawa signed a free trade agreement that went into force on Aug. 1, 2017.

Ultimately owned by Refraction Asset Management in Calgary, the company refused the Kyiv Post’s request for a due diligence report on the Nikopol solar energy project, a study conducted by consultancy CMS McKenna in 2017.

But the Ukrainian government’s shabby treatment of renewable energy companies has caused many investors to freeze commitments to the nation, or to simply invest elsewhere. After promising high payouts, or feed-in tariffs, to spur production of renewable energy, the Ukrainian government stiffed investors. Unpaid debts are currently estimated at \$1 billion.

TIU’s case, as well as others, highlights how poor rule of law is the

main deterrent to attracting more investment from abroad.

It is “the biggest obstacle to doing business in Ukraine,” said Andy Hunder, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine. “Security of investments, property rights, and assets, together with physical security, are vital... Companies that already have invested millions of dollars and created hundreds of thousands of jobs must be protected and treated well.”

Until the situation improves, Hunder said, “Ukraine will forever remain a toy in oligarchs’ hands.”

## Ovostar eggs

Canadian government representatives and Ottawa lawmakers have spoken out about the case of Ovostar Union, one of Europe’s five largest egg producers.

The Kyiv-based egg producer has since 2020 fended legal battles from a former owner of the company that Canadian-based Fairfax Holdings and others purchased at an auction.

In May, Canadian Ambassador to Ukraine Larisa Galadza penned an open letter to Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal, Agriculture Minister Roman Leshchenko and then-Economy Minister Ihor Petrushko.

She warned of “serious consequences” should the initial owner regain the company through the courts. Galadza said the case brought on by the Makarovo firm – which had defaulted on a loan that led to its loss of control over the firm – had approached Ovostar’s new shareholders with a promise to withdraw its legal complaint if a “one-time payment would be provided.”

Ovostar named “raiders Vasyl Astion and Yevhen Astion” as the culprits, both of whom have agricultural and political ties to Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. They could not be reached for comment.

Traded on the Warsaw Stock Exchange, Ovostar has so far successfully won the legal battle after the Northern Commercial Court of Appeal on May 19 ruled in its favor while dismissing the case brought by Makarovo and another former company owner, FC Fingroup.

The plaintiffs allege that the current shareholders, including Polish Generali Group and Aviva Poland, had artificially bankrupted Makarovo, charges that Ovostar denies. The case has been appealed with the Commercial Court of Cassation within the Supreme Court.

Mark Rachkevych, a journalist living in Kyiv, is a former editor of the Kyiv Post.

WORLD IN UKRAINE: USA

in partnership with

COMING in the JULY 9 edition of the KYIV POST

in partnership with

U.S.-UKRAINE BUSINESS COUNCIL  
USUBC

VR CAPITAL GROUP

To advertise, contact us at +38 044 591 77 88 or advertising@kyivpost.com



# How Ukrainian wine, vodka found its way to Canada

By Olena Goncharova  
goncharova@kyivpost.com

Pairing a love for Ukraine and wine brought true magic for Carl Steinke.

More than three years ago, Steinke, a retired salesman, began importing Ukrainian wine to Canada.

In 2018, his family traveled to Ukraine for his stepson's wedding. Struck by its beauty, Steinke and his wife decided to extend their trip and visit Lviv in western Ukraine. The city, famous for its restaurants, coffee and stone lions, quickly won their hearts.

While dining at a local restaurant, the couple asked for good local wine. "They brought us a Cabernet." But they said a better wine, which was not in stock, is Odesa Black. "They told us we can get it in a store right down the street," Steinke recalled.

Intrigued, the couple paid the shop a visit and, to their surprise, the man behind the counter opened it for them on the spot. "We sat at a table right in the street and drank it and it was fantastic!" Steinke said.

When he returned home to Canada, Steinke found that despite a large Ukrainian-Canadian community, Ukrainian wine was nowhere to be found. So his import business began.

## Family roots

Steinke's interest in Ukraine is not surprising: his father, descended from German settlers, came to Canada in the 1920s from a village in the Bessarabian region of southern Ukraine, only 150 kilometers from the Kolonist winery that produces his now favorite Odesa Black.

"My dad used to always talk about the wine that they grew on their farm. That's when I thought: here is a chance to bring wine from where my father was born," he said. "The romantic part of the story is that I simply picked up the phone, found Kolonist winery and dialed the number. And after three tries for

Brad LaFoy



Ukrainian wine importer Carl Steinke (R) talks to a colleague on Feb. 4, 2020 at Taste of Ukraine restaurant in St. Albert, Canada.

somebody who spoke English, I got a hold of the owner."

Based in Odesa Oblast, Kolonist produces approximately 300,000 bottles per year, focused on high-quality dry wines, with some semi-dry and sweet varieties. By 2019, Kolonist wines were gaining popularity in the U.K. and Germany but hadn't yet found their way to Canada.

Kolonist had never heard of Steinke, but they put their faith in his enthusiasm and commitment.

## A door to a new market

With the help of a friend, Steinke learned how to import wine – a tedious, time-consuming undertaking in the highly regulated world of alcohol imports.

Steinke's home province of Alberta is the only one in Canada

with a fully privatized liquor industry. He registered his own import company called Old Country Wines and submitted a business plan and other requirements to the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Board.

More than one in 10 Albertans – roughly 300,000 people – have Ukrainian roots. Yet there are only 42 active listings for Ukrainian liquor products in the province.

At first, Steinke brought only seven cases from Ukraine as samples.

"We wanted to see whether or not they were good," he said. They included Odesa Black and a white wine called Sukholymanske, both produced from grapes indigenous to Odesa Oblast, as well as a cabernet sauvignon. "People here know little about Ukrainian wines and this was

a chance to introduce them to good classic dry wines."

The wines didn't disappoint. Odesa Black – an inky dark red wine that blends purple-black fruits like mulberry, blueberry and blackberry – quickly gained popularity in Alberta's liquor stores and restaurants, including Taste of Ukraine, a restaurant beloved by both expats and locals.

A year and a half after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Steinke is excited to once again return to actively promoting Ukrainian wine.

"Certainly the COVID-19-induced lockdowns have put a large wrinkle in our plans for introducing the wonderful wines of Kolonist and Ukraine to the public, but we continue to make small gains into the marketplace," he said. "Wine shows are the key to what makes any new product

successful and I'm looking forward to interacting with people who love exploring wines."

It helps that he loves what he is doing. "This is work of passion and fun."

## Ukrainian vodka deficit

Around the same time that Steinke embarked on his wine adventure, three friends – Ivan Pedyash, Serhiy Adamyk and Daniel Kryz – decided to take advantage of the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement.

CUFTA, which entered into force on Aug. 1, 2017, aimed to improve market access and create more predictable trade conditions.

"We saw a deficit of Ukrainian vodka in Alberta with only one other company selling it," Pedyash told the Kyiv Post. "Considering the best horilka (Ukrainian for vodka) is from Ukraine, we wanted to bring that to Ukrainians here and introduce it to Canadians as well."

They ordered a few samples and tested them blindfolded. Eventually, they opted for Kozak Vodka from Bayadera Group, the largest distributor of alcoholic products in Ukraine.

Importation proved difficult. "There are extra fees and hidden taxes that are only learned through experience," they said.

So far, the group has made two shipments to Canada. At one point, their vodka was in 70 stores.

These days, the partners are eager to keep promoting Ukrainian Kozak vodka in Alberta. The pandemic complicated their work, but they remain optimistic.

"For the most part, many store owners are quite eager to work with a new product and especially such high quality as Kozak," they say. "We are hoping to expand the consumers of Kozak Vodka in the future because Ukrainian 'horilka' is the best 'horilka,' and once more people try it they will find that out as well." ❖

Advertisement



Ovostar Union's path to become a Ukrainian investment success story began in 2008 when Borys Bielikov and Vitalii Veresenko decided to merge their companies and create a powerful modern agricultural holding, which is now a confident leader in the market of eggs and egg products in Ukraine and abroad.

In 2011, the company conducted an IPO on the Warsaw Stock Exchange. The funds raised allowed it to successfully implement the investment program and increase production by almost five times in ten years.

Today, Ovostar Union continues to grow organically, gradually increasing its production capacity and expanding its network of trade offices. The company is one of the three largest producers of chicken eggs in Ukraine, in the top five in Europe, and its products are in demand in 52 countries. In 2020, 1.67 billion eggs were collected at Ovostar Union poultry farms, and the number of laying hens amounted to 8 million.

Ovostar Union is a progressive innovator in its field – it was the first company in Ukraine to produce egg products, install enriched cages, and

## How to become an investment success story in Ukraine

introduce advanced standards for the management of industrial poultry, including barn and free range.

The company's shareholders include large international institutional investors like the Canadian investment fund Fairfax Holdings, the Polish Generali Group and Aviva Poland.

The company always strives for more and continues to attract large investments in the country's economy. Ovostar Union is currently working on a new project with a total investment of \$ 15 million – the construction of a poultry processing plant using the world's best practices and technologies.

However, success stories like these attract not only investors but also those who seek easy profits gained in a dishonest and illegal way. Over the past two years, the company's top management and investors have been under constant pressure: attempted raider attacks, unsubstantiated legal claims, baseless criminal charges, and even harassment by local authorities.

For instance, the beneficiaries of the financial company Fingroup Factor exert pressure on Ovostar's shareholders and top management, forcing them to purchase the illegitimate rights for a loan claim on assets that have already been lawfully acquired by Ovostar in 2018. In essence, Ovostar is being forced to buy for the second time what already legally belongs to them.

The fact that it is still possible to pull off such illicit schemes in Ukraine shows the high level of corruption and insufficient protection of foreign

investments. The country's judicial system remains inefficient and the rule of law fragile, which makes international investors anxious about the safety of their investments and breeds distrust of state institutions.

In recent years, the Ukrainian government has taken important steps to address this acute problem. Reform of fiscal authorities, support for investment projects with significant investments, creation of the Bureau of Economic Security, and digitalization – all these and other promising initiatives are growth points that prevent the harassment of institutional investors and, consequently, improve the investment climate in Ukraine as a whole.

Nevertheless, significant problems and obstacles for investors still exist, and all the listed positive changes can be negated. International investors will feel confident and safe in our country only when the government provides more clear, transparent regulatory rules, a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of corruption, and effective protection of the rights and interests of foreign investors.



# Say No Mo is a Canadian-owned salon that is gender-neutral and eco-conscious

By Asami Terajima  
terajima@kyivpost.com

The Say No Mo unisex social nail bar in Kyiv feels decidedly gender-neutral.

A chipped concrete archway and exposed brick give the salon an industrial feel. Inside are gold accents and elegant furniture in neutral tones. It's all part of Canadian Elvira Farias' desire to create a salon where both men and women feel welcome.

The interior design fusing feminine and masculine elements won a prestigious design award against 4,000 contestants worldwide. Beyond bending gender stereotypes, Farias' salon aims to set new trends in the eco-conscious beauty industry.

Farias' husband is Ukrainian. After several trips to the country, she found traditional nail salons in Ukraine were using gel polish that were both harmful to the environment and people's nails. She also noticed that every salon she went to was "very girlish."

Inspired by a popular vegan nail salon in Los Angeles, Farias decided to open the first health conscious beauty salon in Ukraine.

The language barrier made the journey difficult, but after four years

Volodymyr Petrov



Elvira Farias, the owner of Say No Mo social nail bar, tells the Kyiv Post about her ambitions to challenge gender stereotypes in the beauty industry on June 18, 2021.

of studying the existing beauty market in Ukraine, Farias opened Say No Mo in October 2019.

"I've been a fighter all my life," the 49-year-old told the Kyiv Post.

## Cruelty-free nail polish

In April, a Humane Society International short film narrating the story of a blind rabbit named Ralph suffering from cosmetics test-

ing exploded on the internet. The heart-breaking "Save Ralph" underlines the horror he and his fellow rabbits have gone through to test cosmetic products like nail polish, makeup and hair care products.

Globally, the organization estimates that around 500,000 animals suffer and die as a result of cosmetic testing each year.

The cruel reality of animal testing, which includes dripping substances into their eyes or forcing them to ingest huge quantities of chemicals, continues as big beauty companies look for ways to avoid potential incidents or injuries where they may be sued by consumers.

Farias explained that these harmful chemicals found in traditional salon manicures such as gel polish and shellac also damage nails when regularly applied and left on for a long time, making them very brittle. "There is nothing natural" about products that last more than 21 days while being exposed to water or cooking regularly, Farias said.

The cruelty-free nail polishes at Say No Mo are vegan, which means that they don't contain a crystalline material obtained from fish scales, commonly used for its shimmery effect. For customers who are not ready to make the transition quite yet, there are traditional types available as well.

With the non-toxic nail polishes at

Say No Mo, Farias said it is as if her nails can finally breathe, in contrast to oil-based ones that make her feel as though she constantly has something on her fingers.

As a water-based product, these natural nail polishes might not be as resilient as the traditional ones, but the owner said they still last for a long period of time.

## Cocktail bar

Besides manicures and pedicures, the health-conscious salon offers a variety of other beauty services from eyebrow corrections, facials, permanent make-up and sunless tanning.

Wanting to make Say No Mo a place where it's "not boring to do your nails," it was turned into what became the first nail salon to integrate a fully licensed cocktail bar into its service.

Designed by Slava Balbek, founder of Ukrainian award-winning architecture and interior design studio Balbek Bureau, Say No Mo is meant to be a social place to hang out with friends and loved ones.

The centerpiece of the salon situated in an early 20th-century building is a bar where customers can order their favorite drink to sip on while they get their beauty treatment. The bar serves everything from signature cocktails to cappuccinos, sometimes working as an icebreaker to initiate conversations between strangers.

"You can be at any bar getting a drink at night but the only difference is your hands are stretched out and you are getting your nails done," the owner said.

## More than a salon

Say No Mo also runs an event venue business, renting out all or part of the salon for special occasions from corporate parties to baby showers. The venue has a capacity of approximately 65 people, and event planning steps like finding a photographer, catering service or a DJ.

The hourly rental price for the venue is Hr 2,500 (around \$92) and party attendees can also get their nails done during the event for an extra cost.

The entrepreneur said she is looking to open another Say No Mo, but no final decision has been made yet. But her motivation is less about expanding the business than making sure customers leave with "the most unforgettable experience," Farias said. 🍷

## TOP 10 KYIV POST exclusives online this week

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



1. Last-gasp goal sends jubilant Ukraine through to Euro 2020 quarter-finals
2. Explore Ukraine: 7 beach vacation destinations
3. Zelensky admits failed intelligence operation to seize Russian mercenaries
4. Investigation: Huge quantities of Chinese cigarettes smuggled into Ukraine
5. Highway Robbery? \$3.5 billion road project wins exemption from public oversight
6. If women in Ukraine love working in tech, why are there so few?
7. Bohdan Nahaylo: The great betrayal from Merkel & Macron
8. Dragon Capital spends millions to revive Kyiv School of Economics
9. Sweden sends Ukraine copies of Pylyp Orlyk's Constitution on Constitution Day
10. Investigation: Ukrainian cops helped assassins try to kill Balkan drug lord in Kyiv

Subscribe! **\$45** per year

### Online benefits include:

- Unlimited access to all exclusive Kyiv Post stories online
- Continuously updated feed of news stories, analysis, multimedia, opinions and more
- Archives dating back to 1997



[www.kyivpost.com](http://www.kyivpost.com)

Say No Mo is located at 36 Shota Rustaveli, open Monday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Bookings can be made online or through a phone call (050-722-1313).  
 Vegan, toxic nail polish — Hr 800-950 (\$30-\$35)  
 Traditional nail polish — Hr 700-800 (\$26-\$30)  
 Sunless tanning — Hr 1,200 per session (\$44)  
 Eyebrow correction — Hr 200 (\$7.4)  
 Makeup — Hr 500-900 (\$18-\$33)  
 Prices for all other beauty services are displayed on Say No Mo's website.

# Canada cancels national festivities as Indigenous mass burials reveal country's dark past

By Oleksiy Sorokin  
sorokin@kyivpost.com

In response to the shocking discoveries of mass graves of Indigenous children, cities across Canada and foreign embassies decided to cancel Canada Day scheduled for July 1.

The federal government didn't officially cancel celebrations, yet amended the programing. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says that this year's Canada Day will be a moment of "reflection" to consider Canada's historic wrongs and the steps being taken towards Indigenous reconciliation.

The findings of over 1,000 child graves in three former Indigenous residential schools have forced the country, considered around the world as a proponent of human rights, to reckon with its dark past.

On June 30, a mass grave of 182 Indigenous children was found near a parochial residential school in British Columbia. It was the third discovery of a burial site within a few weeks.

A week earlier, an unmarked burial site of 751 Indigenous children was uncovered near a former residential school in Saskatchewan. In early June, a mass grave holding an estimate of 215 remains belonging to Indigenous children was found in British Columbia.

The remains have yet to be exhumed.

Following the gruesome discoveries, over a dozen churches across Canada were vandalized. Four churches were burned down. Canadian police have called the fires "suspicious."

The findings only scratch the surface of the inhumane Canadian residential school system for Indigenous children that has shaped the lives of Indigenous communities across the country for over a century.

Starting with the Indian Act of 1879, Indigenous children were taken from their families, forced into remote boarding schools where they were forced to renounce their language, customs and beliefs and often abused.



People visit the former Kamloops Indian Residential School and a makeshift memorial to honour the 215 children whose remains have been discovered buried near the facility, in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada, on June 3, 2021.

According to the government-led Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), over 150,000 children were forced into the Indigenous residential schools over the program's century-long existence. Thousands vanished without a trace.

The last federally operated residential school closed in 1996, but the extent of the brutality has yet to be examined.

In 2015, the Commission published a report calling the "Indian residential school system" cultural genocide, placing the number of potential victims at over 4,100.

But the recent findings show that

the actual number of deaths may be way above initial estimates.

Brian Martell, 50, who is a member of the Waterhen Lake, a Cree First Nation band government, says more horrific findings are coming.

"There were about 140-150 schools like this across Canada, imagine the bodies they are going to find," says Martell, who attended the Beauval residential school in the late eighties.

### Aggressive assimilation

Martell was part of the last generation of Indigenous children forced to attend remote residential schools.

Martell attended the Waterhen

Lake Indian Day School through middle school. He was later forced to attend the Beauval Indian Residential School located 230 kilometers away.

"I wasn't legally obligated to attend the school, but no other school would take in Indigenous children," says Martell.

Despite the fact that both schools were transferred to the state from the Catholic Church years prior, endemic racism and brutality persisted. Martell says he experienced it first hand in both schools he attended.

→ page 12

## Black Iron – Benefits to Ukraine



**US \$1.2 Billion**

investments for two phases of Shymanivske Project in **Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine** (premium iron ore deposit)

**US \$80 million**

already invested in social projects, technical preparation, feasibility study



More than

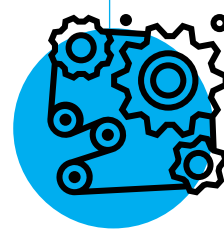
**US \$2 Billion**

tax payments over 20 years project life



**2800 + jobs**

700 direct jobs at the mine  
Over 2000 indirect jobs in the region for the local contractors and service providers



World class industrial engineering, safety and environmental standards

Canadian Black Iron's success will improve investor confidence in Ukraine

visit [www.BlackIron.com](http://www.BlackIron.com) for more information

# Canada Day 2021 is subdued as nation confronts its historical mistreatment of Indigenous people

page 11 →

"In first grade we were obligated to speak only in English, even to ask permission to go to the bathroom," says Martell. "A girl in my class had problems saying it properly in English, she wasn't allowed to leave the classroom. She defecated herself and was forced to sit in the classroom," Martell recounts.

"The teacher laughed," he adds. "We were punished for speaking Cree."

Physical abuse, lack of proper medical assistance and negligence was a common theme during his studies. Martell has a settlement with Indian Day Schools and can't disclose in detail the abuse that he witnessed as a child.

Martell says that his generation had an easier time. Grandson of Fred Martell, Chief of Waterhen Lake First Nation, he remembers horrendous stories told by his aunts and uncles of rape, torture and death in parochial schools.

"We were telling (the state), there are graves here and graves there," says Martell. "Now, they are finding them."

Following the Indigenous North-West Rebellion of 1885, the government of Canada intensified restrictions placed on Indigenous

communities by the Indian Act.

First Nations were bound to camps known as "Indian reserves." A pass system was introduced, denying Indigenous people the right to leave the reserve. Their children were forced to attend remote residential boarding schools governed by the Catholic Church.

Parents weren't allowed to see their children. When children disappeared, no investigations were launched. Allegations are now mounting that those who didn't survive were dumped in mass graves on the schools' property.

In 2008, the government of Canada issued an official apology to the Indigenous community and launched the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The Commission's final report described the policies of the Indian reserve system and the Indian residential school system as 'aggressive assimilation.'

Out of the 94 recommendations put forward by the commission, the government of Canada has fulfilled 13.

## Long way to go

Over the last fifteen years, the Canadian government has reached billions of dollars in settlements with Indigenous communities.



A child's dress is hung on a cross on the side of Highway 5, near the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, where the remains of 215 children were discovered buried near the facility, in Kamloops, Canada on June 3, 2021.

In 2006, the government signed the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement with 86,000 residential school survivors. According to the agreement, a total of \$1.9 billion was to be paid to survivors.

An additional \$3 billion was paid to Indigenous school survivors suffering damages beyond those covered by the initial settlement.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has said that Canadians are "horried and ashamed" by their govern-

ment's long-time policy of forceful assimilation.

"It was a policy that ripped kids from their homes, from their communities, from their culture and their language and forced assimilation upon them," said Trudeau on June 25.

And yet, according to Martell, ending endemic racism towards Indigenous people in Canada still has a long way to go.

Martell moved to the U.S. in the early nineties where he received

a degree from the California State University following a 10-year long battle for higher education.

He has made trips back to Canada since leaving and says society hasn't changed.

"I went to a high-end suit store in Edmonton where I was promptly told: 'hey, you don't want to shop here, it's too expensive, you can't afford it,'" says Martell. He says a potential employer at a government agency laughed at him when he said he didn't have a criminal record during an interview.

Indigenous communities continue to face difficulties as a result of the forceful assimilation policies. PTSD, alcoholism, drug use and high rates of suicide are widespread among First Nations. Martell says that a lack of proper education has pushed First Nation communities into poverty.

And even with the settlements and recognition of past crimes against First Nations, Martell feels that the problem will still be swept under the rug.

He now lives with his wife in Kyiv and has no plans to move back to Canada.

"For Ukrainians, it's easy to go to Canada, to find a decent job and opportunities; Ukrainians can blend in, for me it's better in Ukraine," says Martell. ☪

# With Biden visit and IMF in mind, lawmakers move; but is it enough?

page 3 →

To be recognized as an oligarch, a person must meet at least three out of four criteria: involvement in political activities, considerable influence on mass media, being a beneficiary of monopolies recognized by anti-trust authorities and ownership of assets exceeding Hr 2.2 billion (\$81 million), excluding media assets.

The influence on the media could be both direct or indirect meaning that even a person without official ownership of media outlets could still be defined as an oligarch, according to the authors of the law.

Involvement in political activities is a more precise criterion. A person must either hold a top-level public office or be affiliated with one in such a position. All top government officials will be required to declare any non-public contacts or meetings with oligarchs.

Moreover, a person who has financed political parties, ads or protests can also be defined as an oligarch, according to the legislation.

The National Defense and Security Council will be in charge of deciding who is an oligarch and will maintain a public registry.

Opponents of the legislation say it won't do what it's supposed to.

"They will be defining people as oligarchs and adding them to the registry without clear criteria," said Viktoriya Siumar, a member of European Solidarity faction, which



A vehicle passes by a quarry of Southern Mining and Processing Plant owned by oligarch Rinat Akhmetov's System Capital Management in Kryvyi Rih in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, on May 17, 2019. The parliament is set to make Akhmetov's companies start paying a higher iron ore extraction fee.

voted against the bill. "The oligarchs will gladly support this bill to put on a show for the electorate."

## Anti-Akhmetov bill

Lawmakers also supported the so-called "anti-Akhmetov law" in the

first reading on July 1. The law would raise rents for iron ore mining companies in Ukraine. This would primarily affect Rinat Akhmetov, whose companies mine over half of all iron ore in the country.

If the bill is signed into law, the

companies will pay rent based on the iron ore market price and not on the cost of production, which could bring over Hr 3 billion to the state budget.

The government also wants to introduce an excise tax on the sale of "green" electricity, offering a wide

range of rates from 3.2% to 40%. This decision will hit Akhmetov's energy conglomerate DTEK, which controls almost a fifth of the renewable energy market.

## National resistance

On June 29, parliament also passed in the first reading a "national resistance" bill with 318 votes.

The long-awaited document is expected to finally incorporate militias into the country's armed forces. It introduces the Territorial Defense Force, an 11,000-strong auxiliary unit that could be deployed in the rear to do checkpoint security or counter-sabotage operations.

The territorial defense troops would be incorporated into the regular military, which increases the number of active-duty personnel to 261,000.

The bill suggests a so-called "Resistance Movement" — an irregular voluntary force that could wage guerrilla warfare in the enemy rear: cutting off supplies, sabotaging assets, assassinating key figures and so on. The resistance movement would answer to the Special Operations Command.

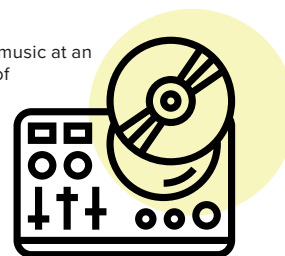
Lastly, the bill envisages educating the general population on civil defense and war zone survival in case of an all-out Russian invasion and occupation of Ukraine.

Kyiv Post staff writer Alexander Query contributed to this story. ☪

# Lifestyle

Play | Food | Entertainment | Sports | Culture | Music | Movies | Art | Community Events

Enjoy summer and music at an outdoor concert of electronic duo Tvorchi on the terrace at 12 Desiatynna St. on July 3 at 8 p.m. Entrance is Hr 550



## Iconic Tbilisi club Bassiani to build cultural bridges in Kyiv

**It's more than just a football game on July 3 for Ukraine**



Opinion

Peter Dickinson

Within moments of Ukrainian substitute Artem Dovbyk's dramatic last-minute winning goal against Sweden at Euro 2020 on June 29, millions of his compatriots were flooding social media with congratulatory posts and patriotic messages. From President Volodymyr Zelensky to Ukrainian author Andrey Kurkov, the whole nation seemed to be celebrating the victory.

This party atmosphere was still evident on Wednesday morning, when Ukraine's Cabinet of Ministers turned up for their weekly meeting sporting national team jerseys.

At first glance, the jubilant mood may not seem particularly noteworthy. After all, fans across Europe (and beyond) are reacting with similarly exaggerated emotions to the highs and lows of the European Championship. What makes Ukraine stand out is the scope of the celebrations, which have gone far beyond the traditional boundaries of the football fraternity and captured the imagination of wider Ukrainian society.

Many of the Ukrainians posting about the game had no prior interest in football whatsoever, and cared little about the intricacies of the beautiful game. They stayed up until well past midnight to cheer on their team precisely because in today's war-weary but increasingly self-confident Ukraine, success at Euro 2020 is about much more than football alone.

In order to understand why the progress of the national football team strikes such a chord with the Ukrainian public, you must first appreciate the complex imperial origins of the country's ongoing seven-year war with Russia.

Ever since Vladimir Putin first ordered the invasion of Crimea in February 2014, the ensuing crisis has been presented to international audiences as a primarily geopolitical struggle between Russia and the West, with Ukraine frequently cast as a hapless and largely passive pawn. This global perspective is both incomplete and misleading. Crucially, it ignores the decisive role played by ordinary Ukrainians and their efforts to build a democratic, European future for their country.

Over the past three decades, Ukraine's nation-building progress has increasingly come to define Russian foreign policy, creating a series of challenges for Moscow that many in the Kremlin regard as exist-



Two of the six co-founders of renowned electronic music club Bassiani in Tbilisi Guri Gotsadze (L) and Zviad Gelbakhiani walk inside the main building of Khvylia Sanatorium, the setting of their upcoming festival Iskpa on June 30, 2021 in Kyiv.

By **Toma Istomina**  
[istomina@kyivpost.com](mailto:istomina@kyivpost.com)

For its vibrant electronic music scene, Kyiv is frequently dubbed "the new Berlin."

And so is Tbilisi.

But what if the two join forces?

There will be a spark, says the team of the world-famous Georgian club Bassiani, which is preparing a major festival in Kyiv named Ickpa (pronounced "Iskra" which means "spark" in Ukrainian).

"We are from Tbilisi but we wanted to have a very authentic and unique project born in Kyiv," Zviad Gelbakhiani, one of the club's co-founders, told the Kyiv Post.

Ickpa will bring together more than 40 DJs and producers for a non-stop run of electronic blast on July 23–24. But it has much more to offer than a star lineup.

One of its core ideas is to establish an annual platform for dialogue between the West and the emerging electronic scenes of post-Soviet countries, which, being at the forefront of liberalization, often struggle

to survive in conservative societies.

"It's the beginning of something new," Gelbakhiani says.

### Mutual affection

Bassiani has thrown showcases in pretty much every country, including Ukraine.

Since its founding in 2014, the Tbilisi club has grown into an international sensation, attracting tourists to the Georgian capital, promoting local producers and getting some of the world's best DJs as residents.

Yet its team has never organized a festival outside of Georgia.

The idea of launching Ickpa has been in the air for about four years. The team saw Kyiv as a perfect location, said another Bassiani and Iskra co-founder, Guri Gotsadze.

This is primarily because of the many historic, political and social similarities Georgia and Ukraine share. Both countries have a Soviet past and suffered from Russia's armed aggression, which pushed both states to aspire to join the European Union. Local creative communities who look up to the

West started developing industries that had bloomed there but were pretty much nonexistent here, like electronic music.

However, the team sees Kyiv as the more international and progressive city compared to conservative Tbilisi. They believe the Ukrainian capital can serve as a cultural link between the West and the former socialist countries.

"Kyiv met us and opened the door easily like it wouldn't happen in any other post-Soviet city," Gelbakhiani says. "This fascinates us and would fascinate the European market."

And last but not least, Gotsadze adds, is the mutual affection between Georgians and Ukrainians. "I don't recall any other nation that Georgians love so much," he says.

After years of putting the idea off, the pandemic has finally given the Bassiani team free time to develop it.

With extremely tight restrictions in Georgia, including a curfew, Bassiani has been closed since March 2020. Since then, the club's team has only thrown several outdoor events in the midst of its struggle to survive.

And while the Georgian authorities are only starting to experiment with mass events this summer, Ukraine has lifted all limits on social gatherings.

"It's very exciting to have this possibility," Gotsadze says.

### Instant hit

Ickpa is entering a competitive market in Kyiv.

This summer alone, the capital is hosting at least four big electronic festivals, as well as countless parties every weekend.

But Ickpa fears no competition. It has sold out a batch of early bird tickets in just a week and expects several thousand attendees.

Though humbled by the high demand, the team wasn't surprised.

"Kyiv has a wonderful and very active electronic music scene," Gotsadze says. "All festivals, as far as I know, get sold out."

Ukrainian DJ and producer Vera Logdanidi, who will perform at Ickpa, is also the co-founder of

# New electronic festival Ickpa will shake Soviet sanatorium

page 13 →

the Rhythm Büro promotional group that runs parties and festivals in Kyiv.

She says that Bassiani's event, if proven successful, will push other summer festivals to improve. Iskpa might also trigger another round of international attention to Kyiv as a city with great potential for developing club projects.

"It means that the Ukrainian market is attractive, that we have a big country, a strong scene, an excellent location," Logdanidi told the Kyiv Post.

Still, Ickpa already stands out from the rest, and not just because of the famous name behind it.

It's one of the few electronic festivals in Kyiv with a title in Ukrainian - most are in English or Russian - since the team aimed to make Ickpa "a very Kyiv and Ukrainian" get-together.

No less extraordinary is its location. There will be no typical industrial premises of factories or warehouses, but a Soviet modernist structure of Khvyliya (Wave) Sanatorium, a working establishment in the woods on the outskirts of Kyiv.

Though Ickpa highlights the shift away from the Soviet past, the team says it shouldn't devalue the Soviet modernist aesthetics, which they very much enjoy.

"The fact that it's Soviet doesn't mean that it's bad," Gotsadze says.

Just like Kyiv, Tbilisi is packed with extraordinary Soviet architectural assets, one of which is home to Bassiani. The club is hidden in the underground of Georgia's largest stadium, Dinamo Arena, with the dancefloor famously located inside the former pool.

Khvyliya has a pool too, right in the center of its main building, surrounded by glass walls, but it will be used for an art installation.



The upcoming electronic music festival Iskpa founded by the team of Tbilisi nightclub Bassiani will take place at Kyiv's Khvyliya Sanatorium. This Soviet modernist structure is located deep in the pine woods on the northern outskirts of Kyiv.

The old shabby gym will host the only indoor stage, occupied by the artists of the local Veselka queer party.

The other three stages will be arranged across the sanatorium territory, in the midst of the quiet pine woods. The team is doing some extensive makeovers to prepare the location. For the "Hot house stage," they have taken out 10 trucks of trash

from a greenhouse and will install some flooring and shading there.

"We have had many options regarding the location, some of them were close to the city center and were less struggle but we wanted to have a very unique project which would be totally different not only in Ukraine but in Eastern Europe," Gelbakhiani says.

## Breakthrough

Ickpa's lineup is a multifarious mix of genres and origins.

Carefully curated by the team, it features names that need no introduction like Detroit techno pioneer Jeff Mills, Bassiani residents DVS1 and Hector Oaks, Berlin underground rebel MCMLXXXV and more. A good share of the program is taken up by Georgian artists the likes of Salome, Hvl and Nawa.

But nearly half the DJs are locals, including some of the most prominent names like Berghain resident Etapp Kyle, arguably Ukraine's most-booked DJ Nastia and local techno pioneer Stanislav Tolkachev among others.

"We want to position Iskpa with its local community," Gelbakhiani says.

The intention was not only to give the event a local sound, but also help Ukrainian DJs with visibility. As members of an emerging scene themselves, Bassiani's team says it's hard for little-known DJs to compete in the West.

Though western European capitals have reignited electronic dance music after its birth in the United States, these scenes are now going down, Gelbakhiani says. The future is East, many now say.

"The members of these scenes are dedicated to creating something fresh, which I do not see in the major cities of central European countries," Gelbakhiani says.

But for these emerging arenas to push the development of the inter-

national industry, they first need to survive. Growing in the complex socio-political conditions of developing countries with their conservative populations, many players fall victim to stigma and ostracism because they advocate for progressive societal and legal changes.

In Kyiv, many clubs were brutally raided during the pandemic, resulting in a mass protest against the police.

Bassiani itself nearly shut down three years ago after being raided by the authorities and blackmailed by the right-wing movements for its activism. The club has actively advocated for LGBTQ rights and protested against the draconian laws for drug offenses.

"We have many obstacles to exist," Gelbakhiani says.

But the team believes there's hope in establishing a cultural conversation between the eastern and western scenes at events like Ickpa. The festival's panel discussions will look for other ways to cooperate. Aside from Tbilisi and Kyiv, it will bring in speakers from Baku, Belgrad, Berlin and Amsterdam.

"Without this unity, we would be isolated and we don't want to have this isolation because there are many threats," Gelbakhiani says. "We want to break through."

*Iskpa festival. July 23-24. Khvyliya Sanatorium (1D Pukhivska St.) Two-day pass — Hr 1,250. Get tickets at [www.kiev.ticketbox.com/en/event/iskra](http://www.kiev.ticketbox.com/en/event/iskra)*



The co-founders of electronic music nightclub Bassiani in Tbilisi Guri Gotsadze (L) and Zviad Gelbakhiani talk to the Kyiv Post on the territory of Khvyliya Sanatorium that will host the first edition of their festival Iskpa on June 30, 2021 in Kyiv.

## Opinion

# Peter Dickinson: Priceless event

page 13 →

tential in nature. Putin is said to have been obsessed by Ukraine since day one of his presidency.

## Moscow's fears

It is not difficult to see why. The loss of Ukraine would weaken Russia's claims to superpower status and relegate the country to the ranks of regional powers. It would cut Moscow off from a close neighbor that has been under Russian domination for centuries, creating a dangerous precedent. It would also undermine the basis of Russia's foundation myth, which places Ukrainian lands at the heart of the country's national story.

## Nightmare scenario

Most importantly of all, if Ukraine were allowed to become a success story of democratic transition, it would serve as a powerful catalyst for political change inside Russia itself. To Putin and his inner circle, this prospect conjures up nightmare visions of the democratic uprisings that swept through Soviet Central Europe in the late 1980s before culminating in the 1991 collapse of the USSR. They are prepared to go to almost any lengths in order to prevent Ukraine from sparking a repeat.

Moscow's current struggles with Ukrainian statehood are nothing new. For centuries, successive Russian regimes have sought to suppress Ukraine's independence aspirations via everything from direct military

intervention and economic coercion to enforced russification. In parallel, great effort has been made to deny and discredit the entire notion of a separate Ukrainian nation.

## Centuries of repression

During the czarist era, the Ukrainian language was subjected to widespread restrictions and officially reduced to the status of dialect, with Ukrainians classified as the "Little Russian" branch of the Russian nation. In Soviet times, the authorities pushed the narrative of Russia and Ukraine as brother nations while demonizing any expressions of actual independence. Ukrainian identity was tolerated in the context of folklore and cultural heritage, but any hint of statehood aspirations remained strictly taboo and was subject to severe punishment.

In the post-Soviet era, Putin has enthusiastically embraced this long tradition of Ukraine denial. He has repeatedly expressed that Ukrainians and Russians are "one nation," and questions the validity of Ukrainian claims to whole regions of its territory. One of Putin's most notorious comments came in 2008, when he reportedly told U.S. President George W. Bush that Ukraine was "not even a country."

## Kremlin in denial

Kremlin officials often echo these sentiments and sometimes go even further than Putin himself. During a recent interview with the Financial Times, influential former Putin advi-



Ukrainian supporters reacts as they watch the UEFA Euro 2020 Group C football match between Ukraine and Austria on a giant screen in Kyiv on June 21, 2021.

sor Vladislav Surkov claimed Ukraine "does not really exist." Surkov's replacement as Russia's point man on Ukraine, Dmitry Kozak, warned in April 2021 that any military escalation in eastern Ukraine would mark "the beginning of the end" for Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin-controlled Russian mass media routinely explores topics such as the allegedly manufactured and foreign origins of Ukrainian national identity. Similarly disparaging narratives are amplified on a daily basis by Moscow's troll factories. Ukraine denial is the unofficial state policy of the Putin regime.

## Jersey flap

One of the most recent examples of Russia's war on Ukrainian identity came during the buildup to Euro 2020, when Kremlin officials lodged a complaint over the design of Ukraine's national football team jersey. Moscow demanded the removal of an outline map of Ukraine from

the front of the shirt because it featured Russian-occupied Crimea, and also objected to the inclusion of traditional patriotic slogans which the Kremlin inaccurately linked to World War II Nazi collaboration.

Such tactics are familiar. Nazi slurs have occupied a central place in Russian efforts to discredit Ukraine's national liberation movement since the height of the Cold War, and have been a prominent feature of the information war that has accompanied Russian military aggression.

## Priceless opportunity

For Ukrainians, these ongoing attacks on their country's identity serve as a constant reminder that Russian ambitions stretch far beyond the current occupation of Crimea and eastern Ukraine's Donbas region. They are well aware that Moscow does not merely seek to secure a strategic victory over Ukraine; Russia's ultimate goal is Ukraine itself.

This is why the success of the


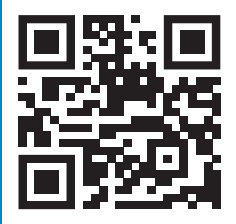
Ukrainian national team at Euro 2020 resonates so loudly throughout Ukrainian society. At a time when Ukraine's right to statehood is openly threatened by a resurgent Russia, the European football championship offers a priceless opportunity to fight back and assert an independent identity on the international stage.

Ukraine's Euro 2020 odyssey may not last beyond July 3's quarterfinal clash with England in Rome, but the progress of Andriy Shevchenko's team is already assured of a place in the Ukrainian national narrative. In purely sporting terms, it represents the country's most impressive performance to date at a European championship. From a nation-building perspective, Euro 2020 is another small but significant step in Ukraine's ongoing escape from empire and journey towards European integration.

*Peter Dickinson is editor of the Atlantic Council's UkraineAlert Service.*

## EMPLOYMENT / CV / TENDER

Look for more jobs here:

Kyiv Post  
UKRAINE'S GLOBAL VOICE

**KYIV POST  
EMPLOYMENT FAIR**

ONLINE – SEPTEMBER 10  
OFFLINE – SEPTEMBER 11

Contact us to learn more about participation:  
[events@kyivpost.com](mailto:events@kyivpost.com), 044-591-7788

**alinea**

Alinea International is one of the Canada's leading international development organization. It executes projects for the Government of Canada, as well as the World Bank, United Nations, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and others.

In October 2019, Alinea International launched a new five-year project in Ukraine: **Support Ukraine's Reforms for Governance (SURGe)**. SURGe is a technical assistance project in Ukraine, funded by Global Affairs Canada and implemented by Alinea International Ltd.

**SURGe Project is looking for the following expert:**

for the Government of Ukraine (multiple Ministries)

- COPR/RBM Consultant;

for the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

- Expert on evaluation of school education quality.

Deadline for applications: **July 9, 2021.**

Please, send your applications to: [valeriias@alineainternational.com](mailto:valeriias@alineainternational.com).

For more detailed information about preferred qualifications and skills, indicative duties and responsibilities, as well as applying procedure, please visit web-site: <https://edge.in.ua/vacancies/>

## CLASSIFIEDS

Follow  
Kyiv Post Employment  
on your favorite  
SOCIAL MEDIA





SUBSCRIBE to our  
Weekly Employment Digest

[facebook.com/kyivpostef/](https://facebook.com/kyivpostef/)  
[linkedin.com/showcase/kyiv-post-employment-fair/](https://linkedin.com/showcase/kyiv-post-employment-fair/@JobsKyiv)  
[@JobsKyiv](https://@JobsKyiv)

More details: [advertising@kyivpost.com](mailto:advertising@kyivpost.com)

Kyiv Post  
employment

follow us on



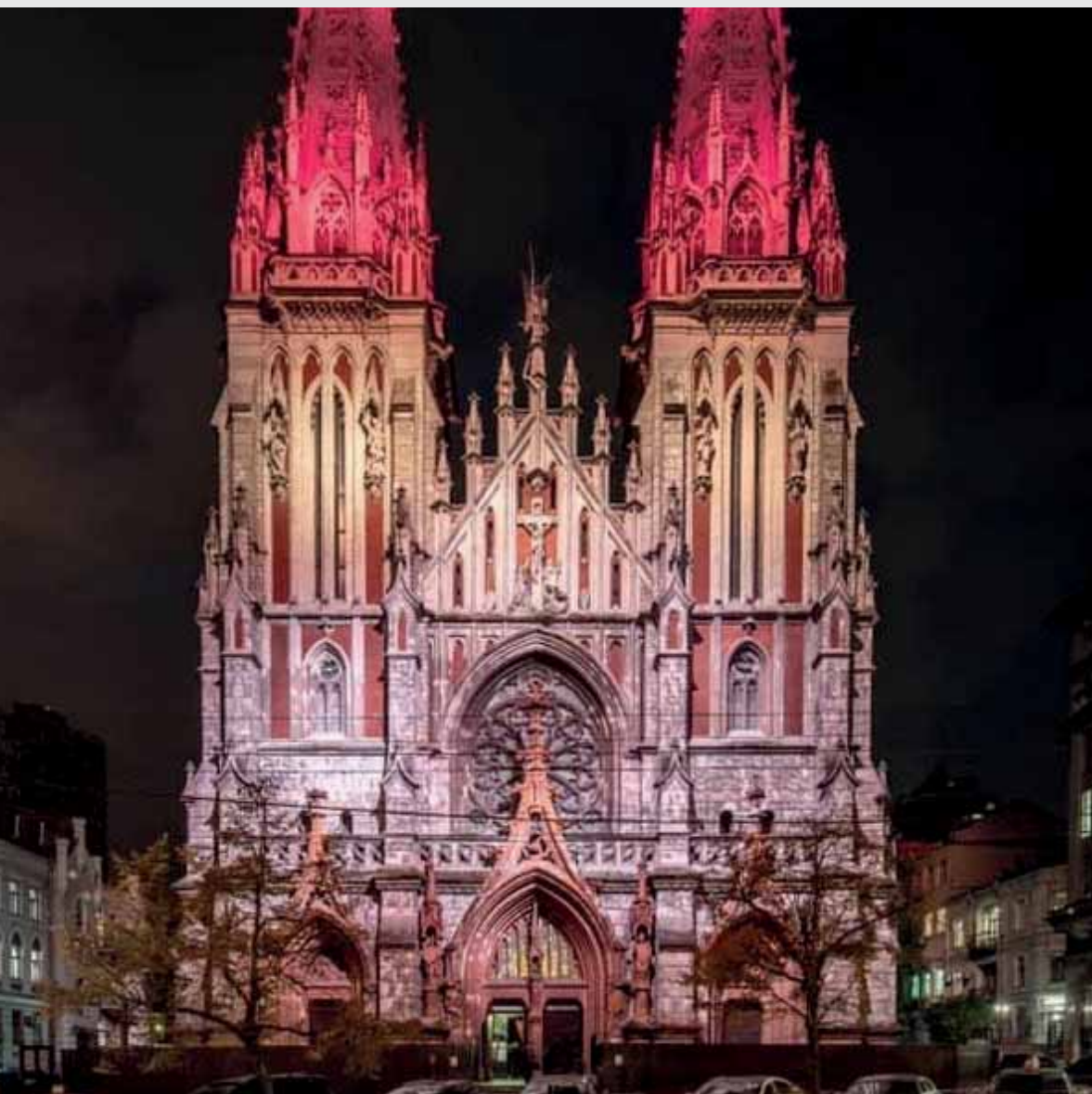

Don't waste your chance to buy a part of Paradise: The house 123 m, two floors in the middle of the river Dnipro, 20 minute to Khreshchatyk by car. Also place for your ship

098 061 45 50

Work permits  
RESIDENCE PERMITS  
Business set up, accounting services  
+380-44-237-72-76  
[www.accounting.ua](http://www.accounting.ua)

# The "Toronto-Kyiv" Complex

is strategically located in the heart of the historical & business district of Kyiv and consists of Class A Office Premises, Retail & Event Spaces, Restaurant & Boutique Areas and the Hotel with the brand Holiday Inn Kyiv managed by the InterContinental Hotels Group. PJSC Toronto-Kyiv is the developer and co-owner of the Toronto-Kyiv Complex. The Management company of the "Toronto-Kyiv" Complex is TK Property Management LTD.



The Complex has become home for numerous reputable International corporations and Ukrainian companies, as well as, the place for various prestigious events & happenings, such as: the International Exhibition of Modern Art **Kyiv Art Fair**, the street culture festival **don't Take Fake**, fashion shows during the **Ukrainian Fashion Week**, presentations of a new auto model by **Lexus** or **Rolls-Royce**, the knowledge exchange platform for local government leaders **International Mayors Summit** or diplomatic receptions like the **Canada Day Celebration**.

Moreover, "Toronto-Kyiv" has one of the most beautiful courtyards in Kyiv with an incredible view to the St. Nicholas Catholic Cathedral. In 2019, the St. Nicholas Cathedral received the necessary night illumination thanks to four patron companies: Toronto-Kyiv, MacPaw, Ring Ukraine and SD Capital. Modern lighting system was developed & implemented by Ukrainian lighting design company – Expolight.