



UKRAINE
OPEN FOR BUSINESS

EU EXTENDS PREFERENTIAL TRADE REGIME FOR UKRAINE FOR ANOTHER YEAR



The European Union (EU) is extending trade protection measures for Ukrainian exports to the EU, known as autonomous trade measures, for another year.

“In solidarity with Ukraine, we have proposed extending the suspension of import duties, quotas and trade protection measures on Ukrainian exports to the EU for another year. And we are working to deepen Ukraine’s integration into the EU single market,” European Commission Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis said Tuesday at the end of a meeting of the EU Economic and Financial Ministers Council (Ecofin).

There are also plans to send Kiev a second tranche of emergency financial aid at the end of March.

“As for the EU emergency financial support for Ukraine, the second disbursement under the macrofinancial aid plus instrument, 1.5 billion euros, should be made at the end of this month,” Dombrovskis said, adding that the total financial support for Ukraine’s budget in the first quarter of this year will result in a total of 4.5 billion euros.

According to him, at the Ecofin meeting he briefed on the status of implementation in Ukraine of reforms necessary to pay the second tranche. The EC is “at the final stage of assessing the conditions for making a decision,” Dombrovskis specified.

In April 2022, the European Commission proposed that import duties on all Ukrainian exports to the EU be suspended for one year.

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20 March 2023



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UKRAINIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SEEKS CANDIDATES FOR AMBASSADORIAL VACANCIES IN 21 COUNTRIES

The Foreign Ministry has launched an open search for Ukraine's ambassadors due to a "personnel famine," with ambassadorial positions currently vacant in 21 countries, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said.

"I am convinced that Ukraine has strong and professional people. The only problem is that either a) we have not found them yet, or b) they themselves have not yet learned about the possibility of taking on the super difficult but very necessary job of Ukraine's ambassador. That is why we are taking the unprecedented step of creating an open mechanism that allows both diplomats from within the system and people from outside to propose their candidacy for the ambassadorship," the minister wrote on Monday.

A corresponding page has already been created on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the "Vacancies. According to Kuleba, an open search among internal and external candidates will avoid unacceptable situations when a vacancy of an ambassador to a certain country remains unfilled for several years.

He noted that the problem of "staff hunger" is now familiar not only to state institutions but also to the private sector. "It is particularly difficult to find candidates for ambassadorial positions. Looking for them in the diplomatic system. Looking in the business community. Looking among academics. But the pace of our diplomatic expansion, particularly in Africa, is also increasing. That is why there are still more than two dozen countries without ambassadors," underlined Kuleba.



According to the foreign minister, an open search for ambassadors is an opportunity for the system to expand its horizons and an opportunity for "worthy candidates to try themselves there, where previously they could get only through closed institutional mechanisms."

"For the first time in the history of Ukrainian diplomacy, I am opening the door for everyone to have an equal opportunity to try to become a strong manager, which the state needs so much in the world now. I note that the special focus now is on African countries. Applying to these countries automatically increases the chances," the minister emphasized.

In addition, subject to equal professional performance, preference will be given to women.

"Simply because diplomacy has been unfair for many decades about women's careers," he added.

According to the minister, 21 countries in Europe, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, the South Caucasus and Southeast Asia are currently listed in the vacancies section.

25% EMPLOYEES OF UKRAINIAN IT-COMPANIES WORK FROM ABROAD – RESEARCH

The number of employees in the top 50 IT-companies in the period from August 2022 to January 2023 decreased by 5.3% to 92.4 thousand due to relocation in foreign offices of companies and legalization abroad, such research results were published on the DOU website on Monday.

According to him, most companies have up to 25% of their Ukrainian team members abroad.

“As the companies explained, the reduction, with some exceptions, does not mean a reduction in the number of specialists in the company. The IT specialists moved abroad to work in other offices of their own companies, they legalize there and stop paying taxes in Ukraine,” reads the text of the research.

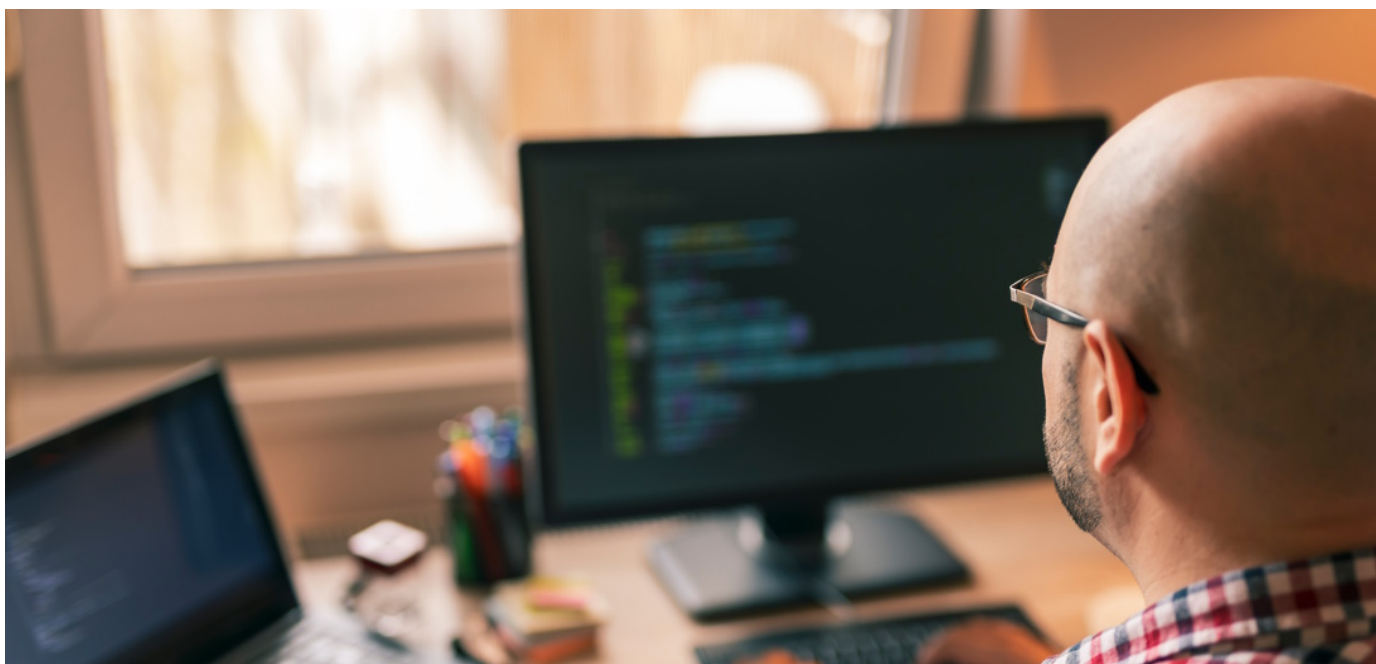
Its authors recall that before the full-scale war, in January 2022, 50 largest IT-companies employed 100.3 thousand people, and in January 2021 – 76.3 thousand people.

It is noted that mostly companies began to actively legalize abroad it is technical specialists. If in the first half of 2022 the number of technical specialists was kept at the same level, in the second half there is a clear negative trend: minus 4.6 thousand specialists. The total number of technical specialists in the top 25 IT companies in January 2023 was 57.9 thousand compared to 62.5 thousand in January 2022.

In the five largest companies (Epam Ukraine, SoftServe, GlobalLogic Ukraine, EVOPLAY, Luxoft) the number of specialists decreased by 3.3 thousand in the second half of 2022, according to the study.

In particular, in company Epam Ukraine which occupies the first step in DOU rating, the number of working specialists decreased on 1260 persons in the first half-year of 2022 and 1225 in the second – to present 11,375 thousand persons (working in Ukraine or continuing to pay taxes in Ukraine even in case of moving abroad). The number of technical specialists of the company decreased by 9% to 10.4 thousand people. It is noted that some of the company’s specialists left Ukraine to escape the war and remain there. Jobs for EPAM in Ukraine today are few, because the need for specialists will be covered mainly through bench – internal specialists of the company, the material says.

The number of employees in Ukraine SoftServe (2nd place) decreased by 164 people in the first half of 2022 and by 1468 people in the second half – to 9.45 thousand people. The company has 22% fewer technicians (7,393). These changes are also explained by relocation: about 2 thousand SoftServe specialists moved abroad after the start of the full-scale invasion. Some of them returned, but many of them still stay abroad and now legalize in other locations of the company. Also, according to the DOU, there is some optimization going on, but not a massive one.



NATIONAL BANK PUBLISHES LIST OF MOST PROFITABLE BANKS IN UKRAINE

State-owned PrivatBank in January 2023 received UAH 6.316 billion in net profit, Oshchadbank – UAH 2.242 billion, which amounted to 57% of all profits earned in January by 60 profitable Ukrainian banks.

According to the data published by the National Bank of Ukraine on its website, the top five leaders are also two banks with foreign capital: Raiffeisen Bank – UAH 715.8 million, Sense Bank (formerly Alfa Bank) – UAH 680.5 million and state Ukreximbank – UAH 623 million.

Three other banks with foreign capital: OTP Bank – 617.6 million UAH, Ukrsibbank – 605.3 million UAH, Citibank – 544.9 million UAH, FUIB – 499.1 million UAH and Universal Bank (mono) – 378.5 million UAH were slightly behind.

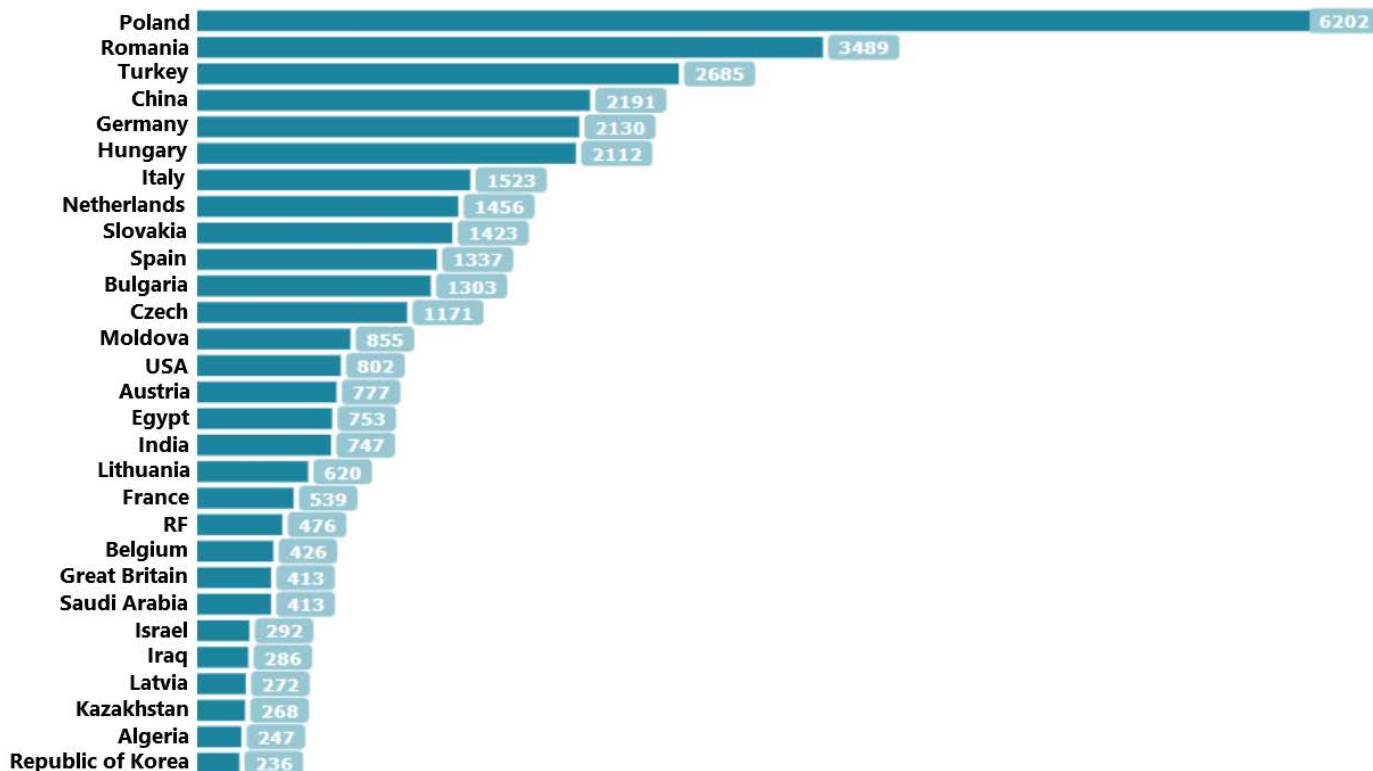
As for the most loss-making bank in January, it was Forward Bank, owned by Russian Rustam Tariko, which the National Bank considered insolvent on February 8 – UAH 298.3 mln with an increase of reserves by UAH 291.8 mln.

In January, seven banks worked with losses, although the banks formed almost 4 billion UAH of additional reserves (PrivatBank took the biggest losses – 824.4 million UAH).

After the growth of assets of all banks by 91.6 billion UAH in December 2022, in January they increased only by 18.2 billion UAH, including at Ukreximbank – by 14.1 billion UAH, while PrivatBank even decreased by 5.48 billion UAH.

Due to the increase of the National Bank on January 11, the mandatory reserve requirements and permission to form up to half of them at the expense of government bonds, banks' investment in government securities in the first month of the year increased by 20.9 billion UAH. The largest increase in portfolios was demonstrated by Oshchadbank (UAH 7.397 billion), Raiffeisen Bank (UAH 3.171 billion), FUIB (UAH 2.279 billion), Ukgasbank (UAH 2.067 billion), Ukreximbank (UAH 1.688 billion), and Universal Bank (mono) – UAH 1.578 billion.

EXPORT OF UKRAINE BY COUNTRIES IN JAN-NOV 2022



Source: Open4Business.com.ua and experts.news

MAERSK LAUNCHED CARGO DELIVERY FROM CONSTANTA PORT TO RENI PORT

One of the world leaders Danish transport and logistics company A.P. Moeller-Maersk AS, which stopped its ship calls to Ukraine since February last year after a full-scale Russian invasion, has resumed delivery of clients' cargoes to the Ukrainian port of Reni from Constanta (Romania) by barge, the company's official website says.

“Development in Ukraine remains in focus, as well as the implementation of solutions for our customers in terms of security,” it said.

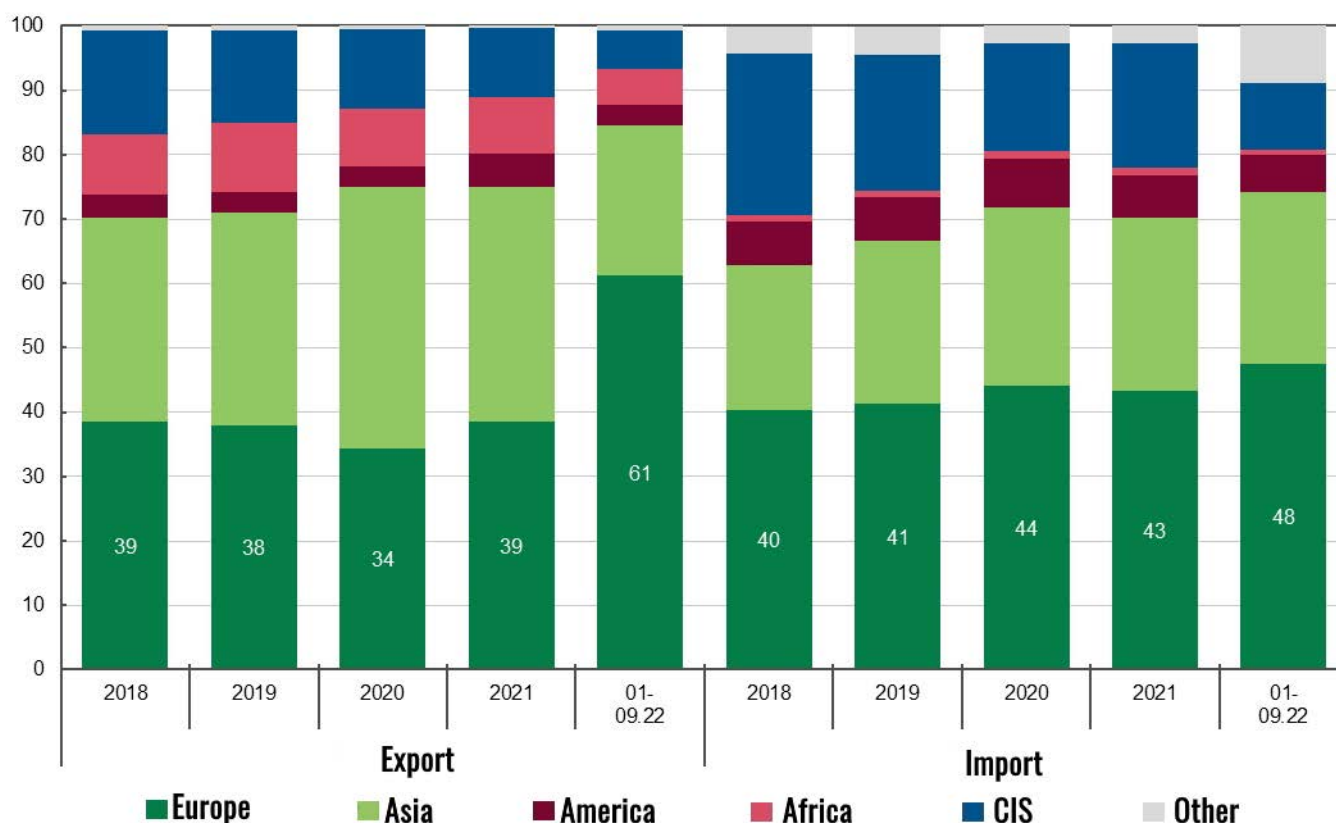
According to it, Maersk is launching a new weekly barge service from Constanta port to Reni port on two routes – via Constanta/Danube Canal and the Black Sea with a transit time of approximately 1.5 days.

It is reported that the company's system is updated and accepts reservations from customers with delivery to the port of Reni. Their implementation will be subject to the working capacities, subject to the proper documentation, including the legal adoption of the provision of Ukraine on the risks in the region.

The company advised to contact its local representatives for more detailed information about deliveries to the port of Reni.

In the fourth quarter of 2022, A.P. Moeller-Maersk AS decreased its net profit by 18.8% and revenue by 3.7%, which was worse than experts' forecasts. Net income in October-December was \$4.95 billion compared to \$6.094 billion in the same period of the previous year. Revenue fell to \$17.82 billion compared to \$18.506 billion.

GEOGRAPHICAL STRUCTURE OF FOREIGN TRADE IN GOODS IN 2018-2022 (%)



Source: Open4Business.com.ua and experts.news

ITALY PLANS TO HOLD CONFERENCE ON UKRAINE'S RECONSTRUCTION ON APRIL 26

The Italian government plans to hold a conference on April 26 with the participation of Italian companies on the reconstruction of Ukraine, Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said.

"Today, together with the G7 foreign ministers, I announced that the government will organize a conference for the resumption of Ukraine on April 26 with the participation of Italian companies. Our commitment to peace and freedom for the Ukrainian people continues," Tajani wrote on Twitter on Saturday.



WR GROUP PLANS TO OPEN FIVE SHOPPING CENTERS IN UKRAINE

WR Group plans to open five shopping centers in Drohobych, Truskavets and Lviv in 2023, company founder Petr Punyak said.

"We are developing the format of shopping centers in small towns. We plan to build five shopping centers this year, including in cities with a population of 100 thousand people. People travel less to regional centers because of expensive gasoline and roadblocks, so the flow of visitors to shopping centers in small towns has increased significantly," he said at the workshop "The Retail Real Estate Market at War".

So, in June 2023 the company intends to open two shopping centers in Drohobych and Truskavets.

The area of the Park Shopping Center in Drohobych will be 11.8 thousand square meters (10 thousand square meters of retail space), the tenants include Silpo, Jysk, Luxoptika, Master Zoo, Allo and Prostor. The vacancy rate of retail premises today is about 20%.

The area of SC "Vector" in Truskavets is 8,4 thousand square meters (7 thousand square meters of retail area), among tenants are "Silpo", "Allo", Rozetka, MOYO and others.



The other three complexes will be opened in Lviv, now there is an active work, said Punyak. In 2022, WR Group has opened shopping centers Fabrik (26 thousand square meters), Maidan (22 thousand square meters) and LAZ-695 (12 thousand square meters) in Lviv. "About \$ 60 million we have invested in three shopping centers in 2022. If we talk about this year, we also invested about \$50-60 million in three shopping centers," – Punyak told Interfax-Ukraine, specifying that his company is working with a group of investors and real estate management.

“DOBROBUT” HAS OPENED MULTIDISCIPLINARY HOSPITAL ON LEFT BANK OF KIEV

Dobrobut” medical network has opened a clinic on the left bank of Kiev in the building where “Boris” clinic used to be located.



““ *As Igor Mazepa, co-owner of Dobrobut, reported on his Facebook page, the area of the 8-storey clinic after the reconstruction amounted to 10 thousand square meters.*

“We had been planning this opening for two years, but first covid-19, then the war, made adjustments to our ambitious plans. But in spite of everything, we opened a new multi-profile hospital “Dobrobut” on the left bank of Kiev,” Mazepa wrote.

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MEDICAL LABORATORY CSD LAB BECAME FIRST PRIVATE LABORATORY, WHICH SIGNED CONTRACT WITH NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE OF UKRAINE

CSD LAB medical laboratory began operating within the framework of the Medical Guarantees Program (MPG), allowing patients to receive free laboratory tests as directed by their physician.

According to a press release from the laboratory, the list of services available under the PMG includes more than 400 tests.

In order to take laboratory tests in the CSD LAB network under PMG, a patient must have an electronic referral from a family physician or a physician of any specialty created in the Electronic Health System (EHS). The results of the laboratory tests performed under the Medical Assurance Program are transmitted to the EHR, as in the case of the state laboratories.

The lab specifies that patients will be able to choose a lab office, date and time of their visit, and make an appointment online.

“We were the first private laboratory to contract with the National Health Service of Ukraine (NHSU). We have a long and quite effective cooperation with medical institutions of all forms of ownership to ensure accurate laboratory diagnosis and its maximum accessibility to all segments of the population. This decision was logical and reasonable, as it expands possibilities for both patients and doctors”, – informed Alexander Dudin, CSD LAB General Director and co-owner.

The CSD LAB, one of the leading laboratories in Ukraine, provides over 1500 analyses, from general blood analysis to genetic disorders in tumors by NGS method, and for 12 years has been one of the largest pathomorphological laboratories in Eastern Europe.

The CSD LAB has six laboratories: pathomorphology, cytomorphology, oncohematology, microbiology, clinical diagnostic laboratory and molecular genetics center. CSD LAB performs more than 1.5 million tests annually.

Production facilities and modern high-tech equipment are located in Kiev and Lviv on a total area of more than 5 thousand square meters, as well as in Moldova and Georgia.

JOINT ART PROJECT AND ART THERAPY PROGRAM WERE PRESENTED AT A CONFERENCE IN POLAND

In March, the University of Łódź hosted an international scientific conference “Between the Reality of War and the Rhetoric of Peace”. The event was held under the patronage of the Voivode of Lodz and the Rector of the University of Lodz. This conference is a part of the Polish-Ukrainian art project aimed at popularizing the works of war artists, holding exhibitions of their works abroad, and publishing books about them as a way of their adaptation in peaceful life after the victory and overcoming the consequences of PTSD.

Aneta Pavlovska, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and History of the University of Lodz, Doctor of Science, Professor, who chaired the conference, emphasized the relevance of the project and spoke about the first such experience, the organization of 7 exhibitions of photographs by Captain Serhiy Belinsky, a press officer of the 28th separate mechanized brigade named after the Knights of the Winter Campaign, a famous musician and art photographer. Two catalogs of his works were published, scientific articles were written, and a monograph on Serhiy’s work in peacetime and wartime is currently being published at the Institute of Art History of the University of Lodz.



The following report was made by Yulia Ivashko, Doctor of Architecture, Professor at the Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture, and press officer Serhiy Belinsky by phone from the Bakhmut direction.

The reports by Anastasia Urakina, a graduate student at the Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture, and Agnieszka Gralinskey-Toborek, a doctoral student and professor at the University of Lodz, were directly related to the events of the war in Ukraine.

Anastasia Urakina presented a program of psychological rehabilitation and art therapy for people affected by the war, developed jointly with the Kyiv think tank “Experts Club”. The program primarily involves group work, which will be led by professional psychologists. Classes will be held at the “**Experts Club**”.

Anastasia Urakina’s theses on art therapy methods were a continuation of Ms. Agnieszka Gralinskay-Toborek’s discussion on which works of war survivors can be exhibited without harming the person, and which are only part of PTSD treatment.

It is worth noting that for the first time, Polish scholars had the opportunity to ask a Ukrainian artist at war questions live. Aneta Pavlovska asked how it is possible to remain an artist in the face of danger even in war. Serhiy answered that he has been in the army since 2021, he is used to it, his camera is always with him, and it is no less important for him than an information war with the enemy.

Yulia Ivashko showed a presentation of Serhii’s photographs and spoke about future plans to expand the circle of artists at war. The same point was emphasized by the Director of the Institute of Art History, Doctor of Science, Professor Piotr Gryglewski.

IN KYIV VIII ALL-UKRAINIAN TASTING COMPETITION WILL BE HELD IN KYIV ON APRIL 1

On April 1, 2023 in Kyiv will be held VIII All-Ukrainian Tasting Competition “Variety and terroir. Micro winemaking. Unbreakable.”

Organizers of the Competition: All-Ukrainian Association of Winemakers and Sommeliers; Association of Cavistes of Ukraine; the First Sommelier School in Ukraine “Master Class” (since 2000).

General Information Partner: DRINKS magazine, DRINKS+ media holding,

Information Partners: “Club of Experts”, “Kyiv Diplomatic”.

We invite you to take part in this Contest, which will give you the opportunity to present your wines, compare them with the wines of your colleagues, understand what to pay attention to, taking into account the place of the wine in the rating of the Contest, get strong information support and advertising of your wine through our Information Partners. For the first time, wine distillates take part in the Contest.

The objectives of the Contest are to confirm the influence of terroir on the character of Ukrainian wines, to determine the best wines and distillates in their nominations through professional “blind” tasting, to emphasize the important role of micro winemaking in Ukraine today.



The competition will be held in order to:

1. Evaluation of varietal wines of Ukrainian micro winemakers (craft production).
2. Evaluation of wine distillates and determination of the “Absolute Winner”.
3. Determination of the “Absolute Winner of the Competition” (the best wine according to the total score from the jury).
4. Determination of the “Winners of the nominations of the Competition” (12 nominations).

The wines of the “Absolute Winner of the Contest”, “Best Distillate” and “Winners of the Contest nominations” will be presented in November 2023 at the InterContinental Hotel (Kyiv) at the VIII International Forum of Winemakers and Sommeliers.

<http://www.sommelier.in.ua/spip.php?rubrique42>

<http://wines.org.ua/klub-ekspertov/>

<http://wines.org.ua/video-prezentacii/>

<https://wines.org.ua/vseukrainskij-degustacijnij-konkurs-sort-ta-terruar/>

The jury of the Competition will include representatives of the Participants, the best sommeliers and cavists of Ukraine, industry experts, media representatives, and foreign colleagues.

The President of the jury is Dr. Ricardo F. Nunez.

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the Varietal and Terroir Tasting Competition will be held in Ukraine for the 7th time in this format. More details on our websites:

<http://www.sommelier.in.ua/spip.php?rubrique112>

<http://sommelier.in.ua/spip.php?article735>

<http://www.sommelier.in.ua/spip.php?article723>

Such an original and highly professional format of the Contest is the only one in Ukraine – wines and distillates from small producers (craft production) are evaluated, each participant can become a member of the jury, communicate with industry professionals, see the results of the tasting in the final tables of the jury immediately after the tasting.

President of the Ukrainian Association of Winemakers and Sommeliers Natalia Blagopoluchna

Open4business is a media partner

Association Ukrsadvinprom – organizational partner

UKRAINE EXPORTED 6.9 MILLION TONS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN FEBRUARY 2023

Ukraine exported 6.9 million tons of agricultural products in February 2023, up 14% from the previous month, the association Ukrainian Agribusiness Club (UCAB) said on its Facebook page on Monday.

“*This growth was tangible against the background of the fall in the indicator last month, and so – this is the average figure for the last six months. 49% of exports in February 2023 was realized through the work of the “grain corridor,” and the rest through alternative export routes. However, we must necessarily take into account that not all products had time to physically cross the border*”, – clarifies the message of the Association.

UCAB notes that in February 2023 it exported 5.2 million tons of grain crops, which is 23% more than in January. By crops, 3.33 million tons of corn (64% of the total), 1.61 million tons of wheat (31%) and 21 thousand tons of barley (4%) were exported to foreign markets.

Ukraine also exported 557 thousand tons of oilseeds during this period – 30% less than in January. Abroad, 328.6 thousand tons of soybeans (59%), 167.1 thousand tons of sunflower seeds (30%) and 61.3 tons of rapeseed (11%).

UCAB also noted that exports of vegetable oils in February increased by 4% against the previous month – up to 435.7 thousand tons, 93% of which was sunflower oil (405.2 thousand tons) and 7% – soybean oil (26.1 thousand tons). In turn, exports of sunflower and soybean cake and meal decreased by 4% to 414.1 thousand tons, including 85% of sunflower waste (351.9 thousand tons) and 15% of soybean waste (62.1 thousand tons).

“February-2023 was the highest monthly export of grain crops since the beginning of the war – 5.2 million tons. Part of this growth was due to a decrease in oilseed crop exports. With the decline in oilseed exports due to the end of export stocks of rapeseed and the reorientation of sunflower seeds to the domestic market, it became possible to export more crops,” UCAB stressed in a report.

As previously reported UCAB, Ukraine exported 7 million tons of agricultural products in December 2022, in November – 7.2 million tons, in October and September – 6.9 million tons, in August – 4.6 million tons, in July – 3 million tons, in June – 2.7 million tons. According to the Ministry of Agrarian Policy of Ukraine, in May agricultural exports amounted to 1.74 million tons, in April – 0.96 million tons, in March – 0.33 million tons.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RAISES CORN EXPORTS FORECAST FROM UKRAINE

In a March report, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) increased its forecast for corn exports from Ukraine in the 2022/2023 marketing year (MY, July-June) by 1 million tons from February data to 23.5 million tons from 22.5 million tons, while for wheat it kept its estimate at 13.5 million tons.

“ *The U.S. Department of Agriculture said in a report on its website Thursday that its forecast for corn production for the current MY is maintained at 27 million tons and wheat at 21 million tons.*



Also in the March forecast, the estimate of transitional corn balances in Ukraine at the end of 2022/2023 MY was reduced by 1 million tons to 2.39 million tons from 3.39 million tons, and by 0.04 million tons for wheat to 4.17 million tons from 4.21 million tons.

At the same time, the estimate of domestic consumption of corn in Ukraine in 2022/2023 MY remained at 5 million tons, and wheat – 4 million tons.

In general, the forecast of fodder grain exports in Ukraine in 2022/23 MY in the March forecast was increased by 1.1 million tons – to 26.03 million tons from 24.93 million tons in February, and the forecast of its production was kept at 34.16 million tons.

Since the beginning of 2022/2023 marketing year (July-June) and until March 3, Ukraine exported 32.54 million tons of cereals, including 18.8 million tons of corn (-1% compared to the same period a year earlier), 11.38 million tons of wheat (1.58 times less), 2.06 million tons of barley (2.73 times less), 16.1 thousand tons of rye (10 times less) and 100.5 tons of flour (+47.8%).



AMCU ALLOWS TIKRAIT TO PRIVATIZE ZHOVTNEVYI DISTILLERY

The Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine (AMCU) allowed Tikrait LLC (Kiev) to privatize Zhovtnevyi distillery (Karlovka, Poltava region), which is part of state enterprise Ukrspirit, for 85 million and 1 UAH. The relevant decision of March 2, 2023 is reported on the AMCU website on Friday.

According to the Unified State Register of legal entities and natural persons-entrepreneurs, the ultimate beneficiary of "Tikrait" with a share capital of 25 thousand UAH is Alexander Nazarenko. The company is engaged in activities in the field of law, consulting on business matters and activities in the field of real estate agencies. Earlier the company had no experience in privatization of alcohol assets in Ukraine.

According to the State Property Fund (SPF), the auction for the privatization of Zhovtnevyi distillery was held on December 7, 2022. The main activity of the company is the production of organic chemicals.

SPF specified that the asset consists of 93 buildings and structures with a total area of 13.5 thousand square meters. m. It includes production and administrative buildings, a distillery, granaries, cooling towers, a carpenter's workshop, a sawmill, a chalk-and-oil station, a treacle station, alcohol storages, hangars, pumping stations, livestock farms, 23 vehicles and 506 pieces of equipment. The distillery is equipped with all necessary technological equipment and communications.

The company has seven land plots in Karlivka with a total area of 90.2 hectares, which belong to the state enterprise on the right of permanent use.

According to the SPF, Ukrspirit received UAH 58 million in revenue in 2020, UAH 162 million in 2021, and UAH 158 million in the first nine months of 2022.

As reported, the Office of the Prosecutor General in August 2021 announced the suspicion of the acting director of Zhovtnevyi distillery in evasion of excise tax in the manufacture of diluent and disinfectants in August 2020 for a total of about 182 million UAH.

This digest is a mutual project of the Interfax-Ukraine News Agency and the Open4business.com.ua. Maksim Urakin is a project director of the Biweekly news digest of Open4business.com.ua.

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