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1. Ukraine's Second Chance
By ADRIAN KARATNYCKY and JAN NEUTZE
The Wall Street Journal, December 2007

Travel south from Kiev along the arbored R-12 highway and you will see perhaps the most public symbols of Ukraine's rampant corruption: a wide array of luxurious estates that have sprung up in Koncha-Zaspa, a leafy suburb of the capital. Many of these multimillion-dollar homes belong to senior state officials with only modest salaries. Investigative journalists have compiled evidence suggesting quite a few of these mansions were bought with ill-gotten gains. This prompted President Viktor Yushchenko to demand in August that the public servants explain how they came to possess such lavish accommodations. But at the time his political opponents from the Party of Regions still ran the government, and they responded to his call for accountability with stony silence.

Ukraine's graft problems are hardly of recent vintage, though. It was the massive corruption during the presidency of Leonid Kuchma that helped spark the 2004 Orange Revolution. Public anger at large-scale vote buying and voter fraud swept Mr. Yushchenko and his camp, who promised to rid Ukraine of sleaze, to power. But political infighting brought down the Orange government under Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko in September 2005 and prevented any real progress on corruption.

Now she has a second chance, after Ukraine's Orange reformers re-elected her Tuesday to lead a new government. If the Yushchenko-Tymoshenko team fails again, the Orange coalition's hold on power will prove tenuous. More importantly, corruption could reverse Ukraine's record of recent economic growth and even threaten its national security.

Transparency International's Global Corruption Perception Index ranks Ukraine 118th out of 180 states. A recent World Bank study on corruption and good governance shows that after the Orange Revolution, the country actually slipped from its lower-middle position and now has a worse record than nearly three-quarters of the countries surveyed.

Practically all sectors of Ukraine's government, business and civic life are affected by widespread corruption. Bribery and extortion are particularly common in Ukraine's judiciary, where favoritism rather than merit determines the appointment of judges. Evidence is routinely "lost" at Ukraine's courts and bribes can facilitate almost any desired ruling.

In a famous case involving the 2000 murder of journalist and anti-corruption crusader Heorhiy Gongadze, police destroyed evidence related to the case, including some that may have implicated a police unit that had been tailing Gongadze. In 2004, a judge summarily closed the case against a police general who had ordered the evidence destroyed in what press freedom groups and the International Union of Journalists denounced as a cover-up.

Similarly, corruption among politicians is rampant. Alleged vote buying of parliamentarians, who can hide behind extensive immunity rules, has in part been responsible for the political paralysis plaguing the country over the past two years.

Corruption has also serious consequences for Ukraine's national security, as much of the graft is concentrated in the energy sector. Ukrainian analysts and investigative reporters assert that massive bribery has played a key role in perpetuating Ukraine's overreliance on Russian gas. Such corruption, experts say, has halted or impaired Ukraine's efforts to promote internal energy exploration and diversification. The net effect has been to expose Ukraine to Russia's authoritarian influence. These views are corroborated by Western officials, including U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State David Kramer who at a talk earlier this month at Harvard University called on Ukraine to get rid of all "Middlemen companies" which he said "thrive on non-transparent arrangements[,]...fester in a corrupt environment...[and] serve no useful purpose." He specifically cited RosUkrEnergo, a Swiss-registered company that plays a dominant role in gas imports to Ukraine.

There are a number of key steps Ukraine's reunited Yushchenko-Tymoshenko tandem should take in the first 100 days of the new government:

- Strengthen weak and contradictory anticorruption legislation and update government ethics codes that are currently ambiguous or absent altogether.
- Establish a new judicial chamber, staffed by a new generation of judges untainted by sleaze.
- Create an independent national investigative bureau to uncover and root out grand corruption.
- Eliminate or reduce the scope of parliamentary immunity, which lawmakers have used to escape prosecution.
- Increase transparency by obliging senior public officials and politicians to publish annual statements of assets and incomes.

Anticorruption campaigns must not become mechanisms of political retribution. Thus, prosecutions cannot only focus on the activities of members of the opposition. They must target officials from across the political spectrum, wherever the evidence leads.

But Ukraine is unlikely to win the battle alone. The U.S. and the EU need to step up their assistance in helping Ukraine face this challenge by quickly deploying teams of anti-corruption advisors to Kiev to work with the new government. If they do, the hopes and aspirations of the Orange Revolution will be realized and will contribute to the emergence of a mature and prosperous democracy.

Mr. Karatnycky is president of the Orange Circle and senior scholar at the Atlantic Council of the U.S. Mr. Neutze is program officer at the German Marshall Fund of the U.S. They are co-authors of the new Atlantic Council report "Corruption, Democracy, and Investment in Ukraine."

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB119818898634843179.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

2. Yanukovych heads shadow cabinet Interfax-Ukraine, 21 December 2007

Kyiv, December 21 (Interfax-Ukraine) - Regions Party leader Viktor Yanukovych has become the premier of the shadow government.

Interfax-Ukraine learned this from the press service of the oppositional government.

Besides, the composition of the shadow cabinet was confirmed at a meeting of the opposition on Friday.

The shadow cabinet will consist of Finance Minister Mykola Azarov, Economics Minister Irena Akimova, Defense Minister Oleksandr Kuzmuk, Interior Minister Mykola Dzhyha, Fuel and Energy Minister Yuriy Boiko, Coal Industry Minister Serhiy Tulub, Transport and Communications Minister Vasyl Kazak, Labor and Social Policy Minister Mykhailo Papiev, Education and Culture Minister Dmytro Tabachnyk, Foreign Minister Kostiantyn Hryshenko, Justice Minister Oleksandr Lavrynovych, Environment Minister Anatoliy Tolstoukhov, Agriculture Minister Viktor Slauta, Communal and Housing Industry Minister Oleksandr Popov, Emergencies Minister Nestor Shufrych, Construction Minister Volodymyr Yatsuba, Industrial Policy Minister Anatoliy Kinakh and Youth, Family and Sports Minister Viktor Korzh.

Serhiy Levochkyn was appointed shadow NBU governor, Inna Bohoslovka - head of the State Tax Administration of Ukraine.

Posts of culture and health ministries, heads of the Security Service of Ukraine and the Customs Service remain vacant.

The press service said that these posts were secured for other participants of the opposition.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:
<http://www.interfax.com.ua/en/news/main-news/93579/>

3. Who Is Who in Tymoshenko's Government? Ukrayinska Pravda, 23 December 2007



First Vice Prime Minister Oleksandr Turchynov (BYuT) was born on March 31, 1964 in Dnipropetrovsk. He graduated from Dnipropetrovsk Metallurgic Institute, Department of Technology. Mr. Turchynov worked at Kryvorizhstal. He is an old ally of Yulia Tymoshenko. They used to have a common business in Dnipropetrovsk.

In 1993 he was appointed advisor in economy issues to PM Leonid Kuchma. Then he became Vice President of Ukrainian Union of Industrialist and Entrepreneurs. In 1994 Mr. Turchynov was creating Hromada party together with Pavlo Lazarenko.

In 1998, he was elected to parliament under Hromada party but after scandal around Mr. Lazarenko, he left the faction together with Yulia Tymoshenko's Batkivshchyna (Motherland). Mr. Turchynov worked in the budget committee.

Since 2002 he has been one of the most active opposition politicians. After Viktor Yushchenko's victory at the presidential election in 2005 Mr. Turchynov was appointed the Head of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU).

In 2005 he was fired together with Yulia Tymoshenko's government. In 2006-2007 Mr. Turchynov was in charge of the BYuT campaign headquarters.



Vice Prime Minister Ivan Vasyunyk (NU-NS) was born on July 7, 1959 in Lviv region.

In 1981 he graduated from Ivan Franko National University in Lviv, engineering department.

In the second half of the 1990s he was advisor to Viktor Pynzennyk and PM Viktor Yushchenko.

In April 2003 he was elected to parliament under Our Ukraine list. In 2005, after Viktor Yushchenko's victory at the presidential election Mr. Vasyunyk was appointed the First Deputy Head of the President's Secretariat where he worked ever since.



Vice Prime Minister Hryhoriy Nemyrya (BYuT) was born on April 5, 1960.

He graduated from Donetsk University, the department of history. Mr. Nemyrya is associate professor, Ph. D. in History, MP of the two convocations: in 2006 and 2007. In 1996-1998 he was a Vice-Chancellor of Kyiv Mohyla Academy, head of Vidrozhennya (Renaissance) Fund. In 2005, Mr. Nemyrya was appointed Mrs. Tymoshenko's advisor.

In 2006 he was elected to parliament under the BYuT list. Mr. Nemyrya was in charge of international relations of the bloc and organized Mrs. Tymoshenko trips to foreign countries.

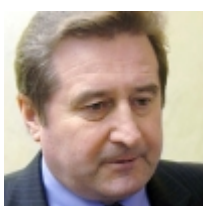


Minister of Education Ivan Vakarchuk (NU-NS) was born on March 6, 1947 in the village of Stari Bratushany, Moldova.

In 1970 he graduated from Ivan Franko State University, department of physics. In 1970-1973 he was attending post-graduate courses at the Institute of Theoretical Physics.

In 1990 he became Chancellor of Ivan Franko State University in Lviv.

Mr. Vakarchuk has completed over 200 scientific works. He is the father of Ukrainian rock-n-roll icon Svyatoslav Vakarchuk.



Minister of Transport Yosyp Vinsky (BYuT) was born on January 2, 1956 in the village of Loshkivtsi, Khmelnytsk region.

He graduated from the agricultural college. Besides, he was educated at the Higher Party School and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine.

In 1991 joined the Socialist Party of Ukraine. Mr. Vinsky chaired Khmelnytsk regional branch of SPU. He has always been considered a grey eminence in the party.

In July 2006 he left the party after betrayal of Oleksandr Moroz and formation of the Anticrisis coalition.



Minister of Culture and Tourism Vasyl Vovkun (NU-NS) was born in 1957 in the village of Mashchonyn. He graduated from Lviv Studio of Theatre Arts and Karpenko Karyi State Institute of Drama Art in Kyiv.

In 1988 he joined Ukrainian Actors' Association. In 1994, Mr. Vovkun became a director at the Ukrainian State Centre of Culture Initiatives. He has been awarded as the best director of music concerts and mass shows in Ukraine.



Minister of Economic Bohdan Danylyshyn (BYuT) is a Doctor of Science, Economics.

Mr. Danylyshyn is the author of over 150 scientific works concerning formation of a regional policy, economics and exploration of nature resources.



Minister of Labor and Social Policy Ludmyla Denysova (BYuT). She is 47. Mrs. Denysova was MP in the 5th and 6th Verkhovna Rada. She was the Minister of Finance of the Crimean Republic.

In 2000 Mrs. Denysova was detained charged with power abuse.

Soon, this criminal case was closed. Mrs. Denysova became a devoted fighter against the Prosecutor General's Office, State Tax Service accusing these state organizations of destroying financial system in the Crimea.

Yulia Tymoshenko introduced Mrs. Denysova as an ardent supporter of reforms in the pension system.



Minister of Defense Yuriy Yekhanurov (president's quota) was born on August 23, 1948 in Yakutia. He graduated from Kyiv Building College, Kyiv Institute of National Economy, postgraduate courses.

He is a doctor of Economy Sciences. In 2002, he became the professor at Taras Shevchenko National University.

In 1998 Mr. Yekhanurov was elected to the Verkhovna Rada. From 1999 to 2001 he occupied the office of the First Vice Prime Minister in Viktor Yushchenko's government.

After discharge of Mr. Yushchenko's government Yuriy Yekhanurov became the First Deputy Head of the President's Administration. In November 2001, Mr. Yekhanurov was appointed presidential envoy in the matters for the Administrative Reform.

In 2002, when Our Ukraine won the parliamentary election Yuriy Yekhanurov headed parliamentary committee for industrial policy and private business. In March 2005, Mr. Yekhanurov became the head of Our Ukraine executive committee.

On September 20, 2005 he was appointed the PM, however sacked in early 2006 because of shady gas talks with Russia.

BYuT was one of the factions that initiated discharge of Mr. Yekhanurov's government. Introducing her government, Yulia Tymoshenko mentioned Yuriy Yekhanurov only in the end of her speech, saying that he was the president's quota.



Minister of Health Care Vasyl Knyazevych (NU-NS).

He was born in March 1956, graduated from Ivano-Frankivsk Medical Institute. Mr. Knyazevych used to work as an emergency doctor and the chief doctor at all levels.

In 2005, he was appointed the head of health care department of the state executive secretariat.



Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers Petro Krupko (BYuT).

A 49 year old Mr. Krupko used to occupy this position in 2005. According to Mrs. Tymoshenko, he was an ideal minister.

In 2007, he represented the BYuT in the Central Election Commission.



Minister of Regional Development and Building Vasyl Kuibida (NU-NS) was born on May 8, 1958 in Komi, Russian Federation. Mr. Kuibida graduated from Ivan Franko State University in Lviv, department of applied mathematics and mechanics, Institute of State Governance and Self Government at the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

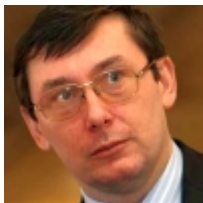
He has been elected the mayor of Lviv several times since 1994. In 2000-2002 he was a Vice President of the Congress for Local and regional Governments of Europe.



Minister in Matters of Housing and Public Utilities Oleksiy Kucherenko (NU-NS) was born on April 3, 1961 in Vinnytsya. He graduated from Taras Shevchenko State University in Kyiv, the department of Cybernetics. Mr. Kucherenko was MP in the Verkhovna Rada of three convocations.

In 1995, he was the head of Supervisory Council in Poltava ore-dressing and processing enterprise.

In 2005 he became the head of the State Committee for housing and utilities matters.



Minister of Internal Affairs Yuriy Lutsenko (NU-NS). Mr. Lutsenko participated in the protest action "Ukraine without Kuchma", "Rise, Ukraine". Also, he is known as one of the Maidan leaders.

He was born on December 14, 1964 in Rivne. Mr. Lutsenko graduated from Lviv Polytechnic Institute. In 1998-1999 he was advisor to PM Pustovoitenko. Mr. Lutsenko used to be close to Oleksandr Moroz in 1999-2002.

In 2005 he headed Interior Ministry in Mrs. Tymoshenko's government. In 2007 he headed People's Self-Defense Party.



Minister of Agrarian Policy Yuriy Melnyk (NU-NS) was born on August 5, 1962 in Cherkasy region. He graduated from Agricultural Academy.

In 2002-2003 Mr. Melnyk was the Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry for Agriculture.

He used to work as a Deputy Minister of Agrarian Policy. In 2007, Mr. Melnyk was appointed the Minister of Agrarian Policy of Ukraine.



Minister of Industrial Policy Volodymyr Novytsky was born in 1947.

He is Doctor of Engineering, specialist in oil and gas processing.

He has been Deputy Minister of Industrial Policy since 1992. In 2002-2003 Mr. Novytsky was advisor to President Kuchma.



Minister of Justice Mykola Onishchuk (NU-NS) was born on October 26, 1957 in the village of Dolynivka, Zhytomyr region. In 1982 he graduated from Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv, legal department.

Member of the Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs. He refused to join the Anticrisis coalition with Anatoliy Kinakh.



Minister of Foreign Affairs Volodymyr Ohryzko (president's quota).

Mr. Ohryzko was born on April 1, 1956 in Kyiv. In 1978 he graduated from Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv, department of foreign affairs.

In 1996-1999 he headed the department of foreign affairs and foreign policy at the President's Administration.

In February 2005, he was appointed Deputy Foreign Minister. In 2006 the Anticrisis coalition refused to support his candidature for the position of the Foreign Minister.



Minister of Family, Youth and Sport Yuriy Pavlenko (NU-NS) was born on March 20, 1975 in Kyiv. In 1997 he graduated from Taras Shevchenko University, department of history. He is a member of Our Ukraine since 2002. In 2005, Mr. Pavlenko was appointed Minister of Family, Youth and Sport Yuriy Pavlenko in Mrs. Tymoshenko government.



Minister of Finance Viktor Pynzennyk (BYuT). Mr. Pynzennyk is the head of the Reforms and Order Party.

He worked in different governments as Vice PM and advisor for economy issues to President Kuchma. He has been elected to the Verkhovna Rada for four times.



Minister of Coal Industry Viktor Poltavets is a legendary character in the coal industry.

He is an organizer of several world records in production of coal.

In 1993-1994 he was a freelance advisor to the president.

Since 1999 Mr. Poltavets has been working as a director of the major state planning enterprises.



Minister of Fuel and Energy Yuriy Prodan (NU-NS) was born on January 27, 1959 in Norilsk, Russia.

From 1985 to 1999 he was working in the energy company KyivEnergo.

In 2001-2005 he was the head of the National Commission for Energy Issues.

During 2005-2006 Mr. Prodan was the First Deputy Fuel and Energy Minister.

Mr. Prodan used to be advisor to Viktor Yushchenko and the First Deputy Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council.



Minister of Environmental Protection Heorhiy Filipchuk

Mr. Filipchuk was the head of the BYuT regional election staff in Vinnytsya.

He used to be Viktor Yushchenko's representative at the presidential election-2004.



Minister for Emergency Matters of Protection of People from the Consequences of Chernobyl Disaster Vasyl Shandra

In 2002 he was elected to parliament as a member of Viktor Yushchenko Bloc.

Mr. Shandra was the Minister of Industrial Policy in Tymoshenko's and Yekhanurov's governments.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:
<http://www.pravda.com.ua/en/news/2007/12/23/9641.htm>

4. Yanukovych Threatens With Mass Protest Actions Ukrayinska Pravda, 23 December 2007

Ex-PM and leader of the Party of Regions Viktor Yanukovych states that the opposition will not tolerate political persecution.

"As an opposition we have our constitutional responsibility. We are obliged to effectively control the authority," said Mr. Yanukovych in an interview with Russia TV Channel.

"We should also offer alternate decisions which are more effective for a particular economy, social or industry sector," Interfax-Ukraine cites Mr. Yanukovych.

"Opposition will be not only in parliament. Everything will depend on how the authority works. If it works efficiently we will behave adequately. But if the authority will keep doing what it is doing now our reaction will be different," he said.

Mr. Yanukovych has stated that the political lustration is a commonplace practice in the authority at all levels.

"Today, many officials are being sacked just because they supported our political force," he added.

"If we unable to stop it we will organize mass protest actions against political persecution. We will not tolerate discharge of people just because they backed Viktor Yanukovych and his government," ex-PM pointed out.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:
<http://www.pravda.com.ua/en/news/2007/12/23/9642.htm>

5. Yekhanurov, Turchynov Decide To Establish Hot Line At Defense Ministry For Soldiers And Their Parents
Ukrainian News Agency, 23 December 2007

Defense Minister Yurii Yekhanurov and First Vice Premier Oleksandr Turchynov have decided to establish a hot line at the Defense Ministry for soldier and their parents, so as to urgently react to complaints about cases of humiliating treatment of juniors.

Ukrainian News learned this from a statement by the press service of the Cabinet of Ministers.

The statement reads that First Vice Premier Oleksandr Turchynov and Defense Minister Yurii Yekhanurov on December 21 discussed the situation with the death of soldier Yurii Stashenko at the 61st arsenal of the South Operational Command of the Land Troops of the Armed Forces.

"The accident is another argument for the acceleration of the transition of the army to the professional basis," the press service quoted First Vice Premier Oleksandr Turchynov as saying.

He said Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko had taken personal control over the investigation of the case.

As Ukrainian News earlier reported, private Stashenko on December 19 died of a trauma as a result of humiliating treatment of juniors in Lozova, Kharkiv region.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:
<http://www.ukranews.com/eng/article/90318.html>

6. Ukraine president appoints rival's ally to key post
By Pavel Polityuk
Reuters, 24 December 2007

Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko on Monday gave a top job to an ally of his "Orange Revolution" rival, former Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, but Yanukovich said he opposed the appointment.

The president named Raisa Bogatyryova to the post of secretary of the National Security and Defence Council a week after overseeing the return to government of a team linked to the 2004 "orange" protests that swept him to power.

Bogatyryova has long been linked to Yanukovich, the president's rival from the 2004 upheaval. Yanukovich stepped down as prime minister last week to be replaced by Yulia Tymoshenko, who heads a post-election "orange" coalition.

Within hours of the appointment, Yanukovich said his allies could not take senior positions in the new administration.

"We have taken a decision to go into opposition and this does not provide for our participation in the government," he said in a statement on the Web site of his Regions Party.

"We cannot head state institutions which are going to implement programmes that are not consistent with our vision of Ukraine's prospects."

He believed top party officials would back him at a meeting on Tuesday. Yanukovich is also to meet the new prime minister.

During the election, Yushchenko backed the formation of an "orange" coalition, but later said its opponents should also get top jobs to bridge longstanding differences between Ukraine's nationalist west and centre and the Russian-speaking east.

INITIAL WELCOME

Yanukovich's allies had initially welcomed the appointment.

"The president is trying to achieve balance in the system of power and find common ground with the east," top Regions Party member Anna Herman told Interfax Ukraine news agency.

Oleksander Lytvynenko of the Razumkov Centre think tank said the president's move was aimed at dividing his rivals.

"This was done in the spirit of a policy of 'divide and conquer', to sow discord in the Regions Party," he said.

But Volodymyr Fesenko, head of the Penta political research centre, said the appointment "could cause big problems for Yushchenko ... it could create an outflow of supporters to the prime minister."

The Security Council, chaired by the president, is periodically convened to deal with issues of strategic interest or national security. Its decisions must be implemented by law.

Previous holders have unequivocally backed the president.

Tymoshenko, prime minister for seven months in 2005 before being fired by Yushchenko, secured parliament's endorsement as prime minister last week on her second attempt.

She heads a fragile coalition of her own bloc and Yushchenko's Our Ukraine Party that emerged from the September election and won backing from the minimum number of members.

Tymoshenko has promised a comprehensive programme to uproot corruption and vowed to revise the 2008 budget to take account of an increased gas price and higher-than-anticipated inflation.

(Writing by Ron Popeski; Editing by Charles Dick)

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUKL242905720071224?sp=true>

7. Ukrainian president appoints national security council secretary Xinhua, 24 December 2007

Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko appointed Raisa Bohatyriova, a member of the Regions Party led by former prime minister Viktor Yanukovich, as secretary of the National Security and Defense Council on Monday.

"The president has signed the decree on Raisa Bohatyriova's appointment on Monday," the presidential press service said in a statement.

The Regions Party viewed Bohatyriova's appointment as the president's attempt to forge a balance in power structures and find a common language with the east of Ukraine.

"The Regions Party has been informed about the appointment," the party's lawmaker Anna Herman added.

Bohatyriova, 54, is one of leading figures of the Regions Party and was number 2 on the party's list during September's elections. She is the first woman to become the secretary of the National Security and Defense Council since Ukraine's independence in 1991.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-12/25/content_7306331.htm

8. Yushchenko, Timoshenko discuss coop between branches of power Itar-Tass, 24 December 2007

President Viktor Yushchenko met Prime Minister Yulia Timoshenko on Monday to discuss steps towards improving cooperation between all branches of power in Ukraine.

The meeting also involved parliament speaker Arseny Yatsenyuk and chairman of the Our Ukraine – People's Self-Defence bloc faction Vyacheslav Kirilenko.

According to the presidential press service, Yushchenko said he is convinced that among strategic goals should be such initiatives as increasing competitiveness of Ukraine's economy, fighting corruption and improving an investment climate. In addition, the president noted the importance of realising social initiatives and taking them into account in the 2008 state budget.

Yushchenko said it is necessary to create a new format for cooperation between the president and the government by organising regular meetings every week. He stressed that political forces bore responsibility for carrying out their obligations before the electors. "The activity of all bodies of power and all political forces should be aimed at implementing Ukraine's priority tasks," Yushchenko pointed out.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:
<http://www.itar-tass.com/eng/level2.html?NewsID=12210822&PageNum=0>

9. Yulia Tymoshenko takes Ukraine in her iron hands Pravda.Ru, 24 December 2007

Yulia Tymoshenko, the new Prime Minister of Ukraine, has launched her large-scale activities from the very first day of her stay in the office. It is obvious that everything that the lady is doing now is connected with the pre-election campaign, which is set to start in Ukraine in at the end of 2009.

Yulia Tymoshenko, the "iron lady of Ukraine" is determined to become Ukraine's next president. The biography of the prime minister and the first steps that she takes of the position which she takes for the second time show that the president's office is her primary goal.

To begin with, Tymoshenko decided to clear the power of corruption. "We start the power-cleansing process. I will do everything not to let dirty shadow money become the key factor of the Ukrainian politics, so that it could no longer buy deputies like cattle on a marketplace, so that no other politician would be eager to easily earn tens of millions," Tymoshenko stated during her televised address to the nation.

In just several days Tymoshenko has managed to shake the Ministry of Finance and replace more than a half of ministerial deputies there. Ukraine's national oil and gas corporation – Naftogaz - will be the lady's next goal. She has already specified her stance on the energy matter: there should be no mediators between Ukraine and Russia on the natural gas market.

"My position remains unchanged: there should be no mediators on the gas market. There is Nftogaz of Ukraine, which we will return to its normal financial state," Tymoshenko said.

It is worthy of note that Ukraine's Naftogaz is rumoured to be on the edge of bankruptcy.

Tymoshenko's predecessor on the position of the Ukrainian prime minister, Viktor Yanukovich, who enjoys highest popularity ratings in the country, stated that his opposition party, the Party of Regions, will not let resignations be based on political motives. The party, Yanukovich added, will continue to cooperate with the power.

It is worthy of note that over 18,000 officials were fired from their positions in Ukraine in the beginning of 2005, when Viktor Yushchenko became elected president of the country. Viktor Yanukovich threatens to organize massive riots in the country not to let history repeat itself.

Yulia Tymoshenko decided to make her first visit as the new prime minister to the Donetsk region of Ukraine, where Yanukovich once took the position of the governor and where he still enjoys high popularity. In Donetsk, Tymoshenko met with families of miners who had been killed in Ukraine's recent coal mine explosion. She promised to set up a new governmental committee to investigate Ukraine's worst mine disaster in decades.

Tymoshenko has already managed to meet with Russia's Ambassador to Ukraine, Viktor Chernomyrdin, and have phone conversations with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Vice President Dick Cheney.

At the same time, the iron lady has taken a variety of other issues under her personal control. One of them is connected with the investigation of Yuri Tashenko's death (a private of the Ukrainian Armed Forces). The issue of army hazing is another trump card for Tymoshenko in her initiative to introduce the contractual basis in the Ukrainian army.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:
http://english.pravda.ru/world/ussr/24-12-2007/103105-yulia_tymoshenko-0

10. Ukraine opposition ready to cooperate or confront Itar-Tass, 24 December 2007

The leader of the Party of Regions and Ukraine's opposition, ex-prime minister Viktor Yanukovich, said on Monday the opposition will be ready to help the authorities if they work efficiently but will be ready for a confrontation if they don't.

Yanukovich severely criticized first moves of the new government of Yulia Timoshenko. "How can they say there will be no chaos in the state if laws and the Constitution are disregarded?" he asked. "I believe this situation will last for a rather long time, and the society will be suffering from instability in the activity of the new power," the ex-premier added.

He also noted that "there is no answer concerning amendments to the Constitution and reforms in the economy" from the present authorities, and new Prime Minister Yulia Timoshenko, in particular. "Instead there is pure rhetoric," he stressed.

According to him, Timoshenko is practically calling for re-privatisation. He stressed that a political purge of the ranks and an open anti-Russian rhetoric are underway, "which can tell on good-neighbourly relations with Russia".

"We (the Party of Regions) are in favour of pragmatism in relations with Russia," Yanukovich added.

He said "an upheaval has ended in Ukraine". "We can state that the constitutional fixing of the result of an upheaval has been completed in Ukraine," Yanukovich stressed.

"We understood the essence of what was going on, and agreed to such a development of the events (an early election) for the sake of social peace," the ex-premier emphasized.

"All that time, the government was doing everything possible to neutralize the negative impact on the economy of the country during an unstable situation in the country," he stressed.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:

<http://www.itar-tass.com/eng/level2.html?NewsID=12210788&PageNum=0>

11. New Ukrainian government must be given time for starting – Russia's deputy foreign minister Regnum, 24 December 2007

Yulia Timoshenko's experience of communication with Russian representatives will ease her future work as Ukraine's prime minister, believes Russia's First Deputy Foreign Minister **Andrei Denisov**. He made the statement at a news conference in Moscow today, commenting on appointment of Yulia Timoshenko as prime minister of Ukraine, reports a **REGNUM** correspondent.

"Russia has been doing everything to mark its neutral attitudes to what is going on in Ukraine; it is the choice of the Ukrainian people and our duty is to accept it. We are ready to do the utmost to work with Ukraine within frameworks of the CIS," the official said.

Noting that Ukraine's membership in the CIS "has some peculiarities," Denisov pointed out that this does not prevent Ukraine from working within frameworks of the CIS in all basic directions. Mostly, Ukraine shows itself in the economic field, and it is not alone in this – Moldova has taken the same way, the first deputy foreign minister added. "From our side, we can only welcome the approach, but one needs to understand at that if one wants to move forward in the economic cooperation of the integration type, one needs to establish a new institution for it. If not, we shall have what we have," the official said.

Speaking about the new Ukrainian government, Denisov noted that "it needs time for starting." Among other things, Yulia Timoshenko has a vast experience of communicating with Russia's representatives, which, according to the first deputy foreign minister would make further work easier. At the same time, Andrei Denisov reminded that Russia's Ambassador to Ukraine **Viktor Chernomyrdin** was the first ambassador to congratulate Timoshenko on being elected as prime minister.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:

<http://www.regnum.ru/english/economy/936444.html>

12. So what does the European Court of Human Rights mean for Ukraine? By Halya Coynash, Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group Maidan.org.ua, 23 December 2007

Put most succinctly, a lot. The Court in Strasbourg has become part of a catchphrase. "I'll take them to the European Court!", so many vow in heated moments. It is of course not so easy, not necessarily so satisfying, and that is as it should be.

However, the more glaring the problems in a country's court system, the greater the need for the ultimate protection of our rights provided by the Court in Strasbourg. The recent damp squib we saw with the Constitutional Court's review of the President's Decrees dissolving parliament is only one example, albeit a highly telling one, of the ailments besetting the judiciary. The main symptom of this illness is an unhealthy mixture of politics and law, which in the given case has led to convulsions, diseased outpouring of spleen and an apparent blood clot.

With a judgment from the Constitutional Court now highly improbable before the elections, it would be useful to consider the events of April and May. The complaints by 5 Judges of the Court that they were

being subjected to political pressure were condemned by two politicians – Serhiy Holovaty, who effectively joined the coalition following the dissolution of parliament and Serhiy Kivalov, National Deputy for the Party of the Regions and former head of the Central Election Commission which gave the electoral “results” eventually overturned by the Supreme Court in 2004. Both immediately and therefore presumably without investigation called the Judges’ allegations evidence of a lack of professionalism and a sign that they were being drawn into politics.

Mr Holovaty’s reliance on intuitive conclusions rather than facts which can be substantiated was seen on many occasions in his previous political role as Minister of Justice representing “Nasha Ukraina” [“Our Ukraine”; one of the “orange” factions]. It is interesting that when Mr Piskun was reinstated by a judge as Prosecutor General (after being dismissed by President Yushchenko), Mr Holovaty also suggested political motives, and said that as member of the High Council of Justice, he intended to initiate a review of the judge’s motives. He then alleged: “Either this was a judicial mistake or something else”.*

There are, we believe, two points here, both with direct impact on the role of the European Court of Human Rights. The first is the degree to which courts in Ukraine are indeed influenced by political motives or subjected to political pressure. Over recent months it has become a regular occurrence for courts to pass judgments they have no jurisdiction to make or to overturn lower court rulings with the reasons raising questions.

Questions or ironic smirks, and these bring us to the second disturbing aspect of the present situation. It has become standard for politicians to accuse the judiciary at all levels of political motives for their judgments. After the Verkhovna Rada effectively blocked the Constitutional Court from functioning for eight months for its own political gain, the events of the last months and wild recriminations have also silenced the Court, which has no chance of passing any judgment now without being labelled politically biased.

What this is doing for the confidence of ordinary members of the public in their judiciary is not difficult to imagine. It is not, incidentally, doing much for their opinion of politicians either! We would question whether any member of the country’s legislative body has the right to behave in such irresponsible manner. We must however state absolutely categorically that we cannot find such behaviour from Serhiy Holovaty, a candidate for the post of Judge of the European Court of Human Rights acceptable.

Ukrainians turn to Strasbourg because the courts in Ukraine all too often let them down. They seek justice at the European Court because Ukrainian politicians erode their confidence in their own justice system.

It is surely therefore not surprising that so many Ukrainians have emphatically registered their opposition to any politician becoming Judge of this most important court.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:
<http://eng.maidanua.org/node/772>

13. Ukraine in "the Slavic Triangle"
By Vitaly Martynyuk, UCIPR
Ukrayinska Pravda, 21 December 2007

On the eve of the official visit of the Russian Federation’s President Vladimir Putin to Belarus on December 13-14 of this year, there were discussed the perspectives of the Union of Russia and Belarus and possibility of appointment the Russian leader a President of the Union. On one side, this matter concerns only these two countries, but on the other hand, the development of bilateral Russian-Belarusian relations directly concerns Ukraine. How can Ukraine depend on the Russian-Belarusian vector of "the Slavic triangle" and what perspectives does the triangle have?

It is obvious that "the Slavic triangle" unites Ukraine, Belarus and Russia by numerous parameters: political, economical, geographical, informational, historical, cultural etc. It was "the Slavic triangle" which put an end to the breakdown of the Soviet Union in December of 1991, when the Belovezhskaya Pushcha agreement was signed. That agreement among three countries started a new stage of development of one sixth part of the land and Community of Independent States was formed. However, it is worth to mention that without Belarus and Ukraine, which has never become full-fledged CIS member, Community may turn from the Eurasian unity into Asian one or even cease its existence.

Unlike Belarus, since the very beginning of its independence Ukraine has avoided deep integration processes with the former socialistic republics. And at the same time our country has followed the policy of active cooperation, mainly in the economic sphere. When in 1994 year Aleksandr Lukashenko came to power Belarus took the course to strengthening integration processes with Russia, what for that moment fully coincided with views of the majority of the Belarusian. This course led to creation of the confederative Union between Russia and Belarus in 1994. However, until now Belarus and Russia have not finished the planned processes in any sphere: confederative power bodies have not been formed, common currency has not been introduced, common armed forces have not been formed and economy has not been integrated.

Autumn of 2007 was marked with buoyancy of activity within the Union of Russia and Belarus. Results of consideration of the union budget for 2008 showed its growth in comparison with 2007 year by 10% to four milliard rubles. In the course of Putin's visit to Belarus urgent questions concerning integration of two countries into one state were discussed, as officially declared. In fact, they may be called the question of Russian-Belarusian intergovernmental relations, as no moves concerning concrete filling of Russia and Belarus Union have been made (see: *the press conference on results of the meeting of the Supreme State Council of the United State of Russia and Belarus of December 14, 2007*).

Putin's visit had mainly political character. It was paid simultaneously with the Summit of the European Union, during which a new basic agreement was signed. Russian emphasis on the Union of Russia and Belarus had to show that in Europe there were other superpower unions. Besides, Russia worries about Belarusian steps towards the EU. Lately, the President of Belarus showed loyalty as regards the EU, and the important step of this was Lukashenko's consent to open in Minsk a representative office of the European Commission. In the light of strengthening of internal positions of the Russian power, a number of conflicts with the West force Russia to make concessions to Belarus in order to maintain it as a political ally. Russia has to avoid conflict situation in Russian-Belarusian relations, and especially against the background of the victory of "the orange coalition" in Ukraine, in order not to lose hold of Belarus.

As a whole, the question of the United State is more a myth than a concrete pragmatic reality. *Firstly*, long independent existence of Russia and Belarus smoothed over those ruptures of economic ties, which existed in early 90s. Both countries learned to solve their problems independently. With every year interdependence of both countries takes the shape of equal right relations of independent states. *Secondly*, with every year the Belarusian people less wants integration with Russia. According to results of sociological researches conducted in September of this year by the Belarusian independent institute of social and economic and political researches, only 33.8% of respondent supported integration of Russia and Belarus, while 47.4% of respondent voted against the Union. Last year the results showed 46.4% and 33.5% respectively. *Thirdly*, the Belarusian elite do not want to integrate with Russia. Famous Belarusian political analyst Andrey Lyakhovich notes that the Belarusians show no desire to join Russia either at the level of ruling elite or at the society's level. The ruling elite exclusively control the Belarusian market, and they do not need either the West or Russia. The analyst states that the Belarusians support only development of economic cooperation with Russia.

Ukraine did not state plans to join the Union, though Ukrainian communists stood for this idea. Besides, CPU faction deputy Oleksandr Tkachenko declared in 1998 that Ukraine's joining the Union is "a matter of time". Undoubtedly, Ukraine's joining the Union of Russia and Belarus would strengthen this organization and would give it more concrete and specific features, but it is impossible in any sense. In the triangle Russia-Ukraine-Belarus every side has its interest and views and they mainly do not coincide with views and interests of the others.

In the three-side union Russia will try to play leading role and to impose its conditions by right of "the eldest sister." There have been such scenarios in our history. Similar development of events could be noted in Russian-Belarusian relations. President of Belarus Lukashenko constantly stresses on equal rights of both countries in the United State, underscoring that Belarus cannot become one more subject of the Russian Federation.

Ukraine and Belarus have many things in common not only in the historical and cultural sense but also in their choices of future including problems left since times of the Soviet Union. *Firstly*, Ukraine and Belarus are European countries and their place in the European community. *Secondly*, our countries inherited from the Soviet Union mighty industrial complex, which along with great economic opportunities attached to the post-Soviet market. *Thirdly*, both countries are united by geographical location on the crossroads from East to West and from North to South. *Fourthly*, great transit possibilities of both countries guarantee supplies of Russian and Central Asian energy sources to the European Union countries. *Fifthly*, Ukraine and Belarus practically do not have their own energy resources which could satisfy domestic needs. Only in close cooperation due to Belarus' joining the Balto-Black Sea-Caspian dialogue started in Krakow and coordination of energy steps two countries can break the chain of energy crises. But this community of interests is not an impulse to integration, but a premise for fruitful mutual cooperation.

Another reason Russia pays heed to Belarus is that Russia is at the stage of growth. To become a real world center Russia must have its controlled sphere of influence. Russia's geopolitical appetites also include Ukraine. Having solved the question of strengthening influence on our country Russia would be able to settle its main geopolitical issue – renovation of Empire.

Character of Russian influence on Belarus and Ukraine undergoes changes as irreversible processes have happened in the political sphere. Russian government clearly understands that political constituent of Russian-Ukrainian relations was irreversibly lost after the presidential election in Ukraine in 2004 year and after the Ukrainian people finally realized its independent identity. To smooth it Russia put the top priority task to strengthen Russian-Belarusian relations. To gain any victory in Russian-Ukrainian relations Russia has to win in Russian-Belarusian relations.

Striving for strengthening of its influence within "the Slavic triangle" Russia realized that it is time to use an economical and energy lever. To soften conditions of supplies of energy sources from Russia energy dependent Belarus makes certain political concessions and carries out conditions of the political contract with Russia. But Russia strives to set economic control in Belarus, which meets strong resistance from the side of Belarusian elite. Belarus has no intention to let Russia into its internal market. At the peak of the Russian-Belarusian energy crisis this summer President of Belarus Lukashenko considered that Russia wanted privatized not only separate enterprises but the whole Belarus. Now Russia has only one trump as regards both Ukraine and Belarus, which are supplies of energy sources. Ukraine pays higher price for Russian gas (179.5 USD for a thousand cu m of gas for 2008) but keeps bigger independence in relations with Russia. Belarus pays less (119 USD for a thousand cu m of gas for 2008) but in exchange pledged to sell 50% of "Beltransgaz" stock to Russia at the price 2.5 milliard dollars by 2010. In addition, last week Putin brought Belarus financial aid in the form of a credit of 1.5 milliard dollars. Belarus will have to pay it out in exchange for more expensive energy sources. Such steps will only increase energy dependence of Belarus.

Russian energy pressure has its positive consequences for Ukraine and Belarus. Both countries got out of state of euphoria and unruffled consumption of Russian energy sources at low prices. Energy crises forced them to start considering two major problems: diversification of the sources of energy supply and adaptation of national economies to world prices for energy sources. Belarus tries to solve the first problem without assistance, which facilitates strengthening of Russian economic pressure and forces to make concessions. Ukraine follows different way, cooperating with countries with similar energy problems within the frameworks of energy dialogue doors of which are open for any party.

Hence, in the nearest future Russia will take measures to escape weakening of Russian-Belarusian relations and try to tie Belarus economically. Strengthening of the Russian-Belarusian vector of "the Slavic triangle" may lead to weakening of balance in it and to harm bilateral relations of every party. Within "the Slavic triangle" both political and economic integrations are out of the question. Ukraine,

Russia and Belarus can mutually beneficially develop only due to equal right cooperation in all spheres of intergovernmental relations.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:
<http://www.pravda.com.ua/en/news/2007/12/22/9638.htm>

14. In Europe's east, a long frontier opens wide as EU sheds border checks Kyiv Post/AP, 21 December 2007

ZITTAU, Germany - European leaders celebrated the end of border controls along a line stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Adriatic on Friday as many of the European Union's newest members joined the EU's passport-free zone.

In Zittau, on Germany's eastern fringe - where the country meets Poland and the Czech Republic - Chancellor Angela Merkel, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk and European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso raised a red and white border gate upward as children set loose dozens of blue balloons covered by the EU field of stars.

"We are all quite happy to be able to celebrate this truly historic moment together," Merkel said as a crowd of onlookers cheered loudly.

Barroso held an old border crossing sign, calling it an archaeological relic.

On the Polish side, in Porajow, Tusk said the day was "exceptional" for the Poles, Germans and Czechs who came of age in a divided Europe.

"Putting an end to border controls ... gives us a deep conviction that Europe's bad time - the division in our minds, in our hearts and on the borders - is definitely in the past," he said.

The ceremony was one of several across the EU to mark the entry of nine mostly ex-communist nations into the Schengen area, which formally took place at midnight Thursday.

Hours before the end of border controls, Polish and German officials gathered at the Frankfurt an der Oder border crossing, east of Berlin, cutting a symbolic ribbon to open the way to passport-free travel.

After the border was opened there were fireworks and cheers, along with the sounds of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy."

But the move has also forced the EU to tighten up controls on its new eastern borders to prevent infiltration by criminal gangs, illegal immigrants and even terrorists.

"It would have been better to wait a year or two longer to abolish the border controls," said Joachim Herrmann, the interior minister of the German state of Bavaria, which borders the Czech Republic. "It's all a matter of how well-protected the border is from Belarus to Poland, from Ukraine to Slovakia."

The EU's formerly communist members have been introducing tighter controls on the eastern border since they joined the EU in 2004, with funding from their richer neighbors.

Meanwhile, the EU's front line in the fight against illegal immigration remains to the south where thousands of poor Africans make the hazardous sea journey to the coasts of Spain, Italy, Malta and Greece, while would-be migrants from the Middle East and Asia take the overland route through Turkey and the Balkans.

Austrian Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer dismissed concerns the expansion would aid criminals or illegal immigrants as he symbolically joined Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico to saw through a barrier on the countries' border.

"Schengen is not crime, not insecurity, not fear," Gusenbauer said. "Schengen stands for freedom, security and stability."

The Schengen agreement is named after the village in Luxembourg where it was signed in 1985 by France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands to allow citizens to travel freely between them. Since then, they have been joined by Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Austria, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, as well as non-EU nations Norway and Iceland.

Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Malta joined the EU in 2004, but have had to wait before gaining access to the frontier-free zone pending reforms to bring standards of their police and border guards in line with EU norms.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:
<http://www.kyivpost.com/top/28057/>

15. WTO can consider Ukraine's application in January ForUm, 21 December 2007

General council of the WTO can consider application of Ukraine for accession to this organization in January. The deputy head of the President's Secretariat Olexander Shlapak informed.

He noted that now the compromise with the EU on export duty is being sought. Now the EU side is considering next in turn variant, submitted by Ukraine.

Kyiv expects to get answer by the end of the week. At the same time he noted that first comments on Ukraine's proposition were positive.

On December 14 the last bilateral protocol between Ukraine and Guatemala concerning the WTO was signed.

Because of disagreement on export duty issue, the schedule for Ukraine's accession to the WTO is broken. So Ukraine will not manage to join the WTO this year as it was planned.

At the same time the European Commission is sure that issue on export duty with Ukraine will be agreed successfully soon and Ukraine will join the WTO in the near future that will contribute to negotiations on creation of free zone trade between Ukraine and the European Union.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:
<http://en.for-ua.com/news/2007/12/21/122033.html>

16. Watchdog: Europe failing on hate crimes JTA, 23 December 2007

A human rights watchdog group said most European countries are not enforcing hate crimes laws.

Just 15 of the 56 countries comprising the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe are meeting their commitment, made through the umbrella group, to combat hate crimes, Human Rights First said this week in its first "Hate Crimes Report Card."

This is despite the fact that more than 30 nations have passed hate crimes legislation in addition to making the OSCE commitment, Human Rights First reported.

In a press release, Human Rights First singled out Ukraine, noting the torching of a Jewish school in Kiev in October and the murder of a Nigerian man in 2006.

"Yet the Ukrainian government still does not publicly monitor or record the number of hate crimes committed in the Ukraine each year," the release said. "Ukraine is among nearly 40 countries where governments provide only limited or no public reporting on violent hate crimes."

Human Rights First launched its hate crimes enforcement monitor earlier this year, filling what it said was a gap. Other watchdogs focus principally on government violations of human rights.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:
<http://www.jta.org/cgi-bin/iowa/breaking/106062.html>

17. Ukraine says foreign films must be dubbed in Ukrainian AFP, 24 December 2007

A Ukrainian court Monday banned the screening or distribution of any foreign films which are not dubbed or sub-titled in the national language, following a campaign against movies translated into Russian.

The constitutional court said foreign films would not be aired or distributed if "they are not dubbed or post-synchronized or do not have the captioning data in the state language."

The move follows a campaign by the Ukrainian public movement Varto! calling for a boycott of foreign films dubbed in Russian or carrying Russian sub-titles.

Ukraine, a former Soviet republic with 47 million inhabitants, is split over the language issue.

Almost 42 percent of 1,800 people questioned in a poll say Ukrainian should be the only state language, whereas 30 percent want Russian to be also declared an official language, according to a poll released Monday.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:
http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5hMvSDB9rvglC2L_HJzqnBA-xQUZw

18. Ukraine power company blasts court on restructuring Reuters, 24 December 2007

A Ukrainian power company on Monday denounced a court ruling striking down a restructuring plan which increased the stake in the firm held by Rinat Akhmetov, the country's wealthiest business magnate.

The appeal court in central Zaporizha region issued the ruling on Dniproenergo DNEN.PFT last Friday, declaring illegal a decision taken last August by a shareholders' meeting to increase the company's capital via a share issue.

The company said it intended to appeal the ruling.

"Dniproenergo believes the Zaporizha appeal court issued its ruling in violation of legal norms. It is prepared to appeal the decision in a higher court," it said in a statement.

The government of former prime minister Viktor Yanukovich gave its agreement last June to an increase in capital through a share issue worth 51.1 million hryvnias (\$10.1 million). Akmetov is a leading member of Yanukovich's Regions Party.

The new shares went to Investment Company Ltd., a unit of DTEK, a holding company controlled by Akhmetov in exchange for payment of 950 million hryvnias worth of Dniproenergo's debt. It diluted the state's interest to 50 percent from 76.04 percent.

Yulia Tymoshenko, who took over as premier from Yanukovich last week, criticised that decision in the September election campaign which returned her to office. She had expressed hope that the company's original make-up would be restored.

Yanukovich, addressing reporters on Monday, condemned the court ruling as amounting to "reprivatisation" of Dniproenergo.

"Dniproenergo is developing successfully now, so there should be no talk at all of reprivatisation," he said.

"I believe that any measure linked to this very unpopular word, reprivatisation, clearly hurts Ukraine's image and will clearly cause damage."

During her first term in 2005, Tymoshenko frightened investors with calls for a review of "dubious" privatisations.

She has since been more moderate in her statements, while saying she intends to investigate all business dealings linked with the previous government.

The latest court ruling was issued in response to legal proceedings by the Business-Invest company, which has a holding of less than one percent in Dniproenergo.

"With this decision, the appeal court has practically given a single shareholder the right...to decide all issues concerning the activities of the company against the opinion and decisions of the majority of shareholders," the company statement said.

The company controls three thermal power stations and ended the first half of 2007 with net profit of about 106.073 million hryvnias (\$21 million). (Reporting by Natalya Zinets, Writing by Ron Popeski, Editing by Rory Channing)

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/rbssIndustryMaterialsUtilitiesNews/idUSL2466937120071224>

19. Stores of "ATB" chain are working in 60 cities of Ukraine already Agricultural Marketing Project, 21 December 2007

Dnepropetrovsk company "ATB-Market" opened four new stores, so that the geography of the company's presence was extended to 60 cities of Ukraine, Anna Lichman, the Chief of PR and Press Department of "ATB" Corporation informed "Agrooglyad: Vegetables and Fruits" weekly.

Severodonetsk of Luganskaya region, Zmiyev of Kharkovskaya region, and Marganets of Dnepropetrovskaya region were the new cities on the map of the chain development. The representatives of the local authorities of these cities expect that "ATB" opening will become the positive factor for the trade development and for the increased quality of the service provided to local inhabitants.

"We expect that "ATB" entrance on market will make other entrepreneurs "pull together": to reconsider the price policy and to increase the service quality", Vladimir Shevchenko, the Deputy Mayor of Marganets observed, in particular.

According to Anna Lichman, as of today, "ATB" chain has reached the number of 212 stores. Forty seven new stores of the chain have been opened since the beginning of this year, including six stores opened in December. The next plans of the company are to open the second store in Severodonetsk and to launch new stores in Zaporozhye, Nikopol and Pervomaysk of Nikolayevskaya region.

Note: LLC "ATB-Market" (Dnepropetrovskaya region) is one of the leaders of retail trade of Ukraine. The company was founded in 1993. The stores of "ATB" chain are represented in 13 regions of Ukraine, including nine regional centers (Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporozhye, Donetsk, Kharkov, Poltava, Kirovograd, Cherkasy, Nikolayev, and Chernigov). Eight stores of the chain are working in Kyiv. The trade turnover of the company in 2006 amounted to around \$488 mln. (VAT inclusive). Around 13 thousands of persons are working in the company.

Topic materials:

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:
<http://www.lol.org.ua/eng/showart.php?id=53644>

20. Ukraine charges German PvT Capital with decontamination in Chernobyl region PR-Inside.com, 21 December 2007

Regensburg-based company PvT Capital GmbH and Helmholtz-scientists will establish a Bioenergy-Program BEConLa (BioEnergy from Contaminated Land) in the Chernobyl region. Up to 400.000 hectares are going to be designated for remediation.

(Berlin) Ukraine's Government has commissioned an international german-dutch-ukrainian joint venture headed by Germany's PvT Capital GmbH from Regensburg with the remediation of soils in the Chernobyl region. Together with renowned scientists from the Leipziger Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research UFZ the BEConLa-project 'BioEnergy from Contaminated Land' shall be executed in the following decades to accelerate the decontamination of the soils by tillage operations and at the same time produce harmless and clean fuels like Biodiesel and Bioethanol. For the time being up to 400.000 hectares are going to be designated for remediation.

The responsible 'Ministry Of Ukraine Of Emergencies And Affairs Of Population Protection From The Consequences Of Chernobyl Catastrophe- therefore had established a commission ('Interagency Council-) with experts in November, which is now headed by Deputy-Minister Vitaly Romanchenko, and consisting of responsible Ukraine representatives (ministries, local authorities, scientists) and of PvT's representatives and of Prof. Frank-Dieter Kopinke and Prof. Holger Weiss from UFZ. (www.ufz.de)

Dr. Christiaan Verbakel, President and Chief Operating Officer of PvT Capital GmbH: 'Through decades of professional and worldwide experience in the business fields of 'fine chemicals', redevelopment of industrial facilities, decontamination of soils and Bioenergy-Technologies we are able to present a tailor made concept and thus new perspectives to the people of the Chernobyl region by the BEConLa-programme. It is our declared goal to invest several hundred millions of Euros and to create thousands of jobs during the next decades. I am convinced that we will succeed in developing clean and eco-friendly fuels from contaminated and previously worthless soils, while revitalizing them. In doing so we are gravely sanifying the infrastructure - in a region which has lain idle for over 20 years- and establishing sustainable employment and training programmes for the people of Chernobyl. Worldwide vanguard scientists of the Helmholtz-UFZ will accompany and supervise the corresponding programmes, measures and arrangements. These arrangements will include: The supervision of the tillage programme and its impacts on the decontamination, the implementation and further developments of innovative technologies for the conditioning of biomass and its transformation into safe fuels, the storage of the decontaminated by-products as well as the working conditions during the revitalization of the soils. We are very glad about this long-term humanitarian and social project, our co-operation with the Government of the Ukraine and the environment-specialists of the Helmholtz-Institute.'

The tillage operations shall be executed by experts from The Netherlands which will provide their long and worldwide experience in the business of agriculture, infrastructure, transportation and logistics. Regional farmers should be integrated.

During the next weeks a task-force is going to identify and inspect the affected estate. Furthermore the work plan for 2008 will be defined until end of January. The focus in 2008 will be placed on the preparation of the farming programme and of the infrastructural preconditions.

With the implementation of the BEConLa-Program the government of the Ukraine follows an alteration of strategy. Lately the United Nations have decided to focus their activities in Chernobyl in the future on the construction of a sustainable social and economical infrastructure.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:

<http://www.pr-inside.com/ukraine-charges-german-pvt-capital-with-r359500.htm>

21. Ukraine president family members to be recognized as Righteous by Yad Vashem ? EJP, 21 December 2007

Ukraine's President, Viktor Yuschenko, has presented Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, with a file of archival documents relating to the actions of family members in rescuing Jews during the Holocaust.

The documents were presented by Yuschenko during a meeting in Kiev last week with Yad Vashem chairman Avner Shalev.

The meeting, initiated by the Ukrainian President, was a follow-up of Yuschenko's visit last month at Yad Vashem.

Shalev assured the Ukrainian leader that he would present the documents for consideration to the commission for the designation of the Righteous Among the Nations.

The Righteous Among the Nations designation is awarded by an independent Commission made up of Holocaust survivors, researchers and historians to people who helped save Jews during WWII.

Some 22,000 individuals have been recognized thus far.

During the two-hour meeting, Shalev and Yuschenko also agreed to cooperate in the area of historical research.

Text available on World Wide Web, URL:

<http://www.ejpress.org/article/22729>
