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Ukrainian authorities resume counterterrorism operation in eastern regions

In response, Russia starts an army drill on the Ukrainian border.

Read more in [SEPARATIST ACTS OF PROVOCATION IN SOUTHEASTERN UKRAINE](#).

Separatists kidnap journalists, OSCE military inspectors, representatives of armed forces

The Horlivka city councillor from the Fatherland party and a Kiev student found dead in Slovyansk.

Read more in [SEPARATIST ACTS OF PROVOCATION IN SOUTHEASTERN UKRAINE](#).

SEPARATIST ACTS OF PROVOCATION IN SOUTHEASTERN UKRAINE

Counterterrorism operation under way in eastern Ukraine

On 23 April, Ukrainian authorities resumed the counterterrorism operation in eastern Ukraine.

According to the Interior Ministry, up to five terrorists were killed in the combat confrontation. In the course of an operation, special units of the Interior Ministry of Ukraine, the army and the Security Service of Ukraine undertake measures to prevent movements of militants and supplies for their reinforcement to Slovyansk, Donetsk Region.

According to the Interior Ministry, up to five terrorists were killed in the combat confrontation.

Defence Ministry stressed that the Ukrainian army used weapons against criminals, not peaceful civilians.

Separatist unrest continues in eastern Ukraine. Pro-Russian activists proclaimed the establishment of Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv people's republics. Terrorists kidnap journalists, kill peaceful citizens, and seize administrative buildings, radio and television broadcasting facilities.

On 26 April, the so-called united army of the southeast put forward an ultimatum to the central authorities of Ukraine. "If by 1400 [local time] on Tuesday, 29 April, all our demands backed by the Geneva agreements, are not fulfilled, we declare all bodies of authority based in Kiev as anti-people and illegal, and we shift to active actions," separatists said.

Putin threatens with "consequences" of counterterrorism operation in Ukraine

Russian President **Vladimir Putin** has said that the use of the armed forces by the Ukrainian authorities in Donetsk Region is a "crime against the nation". He added that these actions would have earnest consequences at the international arena.

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Russian Foreign Minister **Sergey Lavrov** has said that Russia may act the way it did in South Ossetia if the situation in Ukraine puts the interests of its compatriots in danger.

Russia's representative to the UN, **Vitaliy Churkin**, named Article 51 of the UN Charter as a legal ground for Russia to send its peacekeepers to Ukraine. This idea was supported by a number of Russian senators.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry has said that Russia has neither legal, nor moral right to describe the counterterrorism operation in the eastern regions as a crime, "given disproportionate brutality of counterterrorism operations in the Russian Federation itself." The ministry described as enormously cynical Russia's threat to deploy the peacekeepers. It added that Lavrov's statement carried a threat of an armed aggression.

According to interim Ukrainian President and speaker **Oleksandr Turchynov**, the goal of the Russian president is to completely destabilize the situation in Ukraine and destroy its independence. In his words, "Putin is deeply afraid of Ukraine because Ukraine gives an example to many post-Soviet states of how people can decide on their own which authorities they like and which not".

Ukrainian Prime Minister **Arseniy Yatsenyuk** has suggested Russia seeks to start World War III. He also reminded that Russia was controlling the terrorists in the territory of eastern Ukraine.

According to the editor in chief of the news and analysis website LB.ua, **Sonya Koshkina**, Russia developed a plan of aggression against Ukraine by the end of 2013. Russian troops had been planned to be deployed to suppress the pro-EU, anti-government protests known as Maydan in response to a "call for peacekeepers" by then President **Viktor Yanukovich**. The journalist said that an indirect evidence of this was revealed during a recent meeting between Belarusian President **Alyaksandr Lukashenka** and Turchynov, during which the former displayed some military maps.

The intervention plan was suspended after Yanukovich had fled the country, but it was not fully discarded. According to it, simultaneously with annexing Crimea, Russian troops should have amassed along the land border with Ukraine. An especially high-risk zone for Ukraine according to the plan includes Kharkiv and Odessa regions, Koshkina said.

Russia starts army drill on Ukrainian border

Acting in response to the situation in southeastern Ukraine, the Russian army has started military exercises on the Ukrainian border, Russian Defence Minister **Sergey Shoygu** said on 24 April.

In his words, Russia is forced to respond to Kiev's decision to use force against its own people.

Shoygu said that battalion tactical groups of general military formations of the Southern and Western military districts are engaged in manoeuvres on the Russian territory. Combat aviation is practising near the state border with Ukraine.

According to Ukraine's envoy to the UN Security Council, **Yuriy Serheyev**, Russia has amassed artillery, Grad multiple rocket launchers and around 200 tanks along the border.

According to the US Department of Defence's reports, on 25 April 2014 Russian aircraft repeatedly violated Ukraine's air space. However, Ukrainian Defence Minister **Mykhaylo Koval** dismissed this information.

On 27 April, Admiral **Ihor Kabanenko** reported that three powerful groups of Russian military are on top combat alert next to the Ukrainian border.

Ukraine demanded that Russia pull back its troops from the border.

Interim Ukrainian President and speaker **Oleksandr Turchynov** said that with its actions Russia has fully crossed the Geneva agreements off.

On 25 April, the G7 leaders agreed on a quick introduction of additional sanctions against Russia.

Security Service of Ukraine reports detention of Russian career officers

Ukrainian law enforcers have detained around 30 saboteurs, including Russian career officers, the first deputy head of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) and head of the Anti-Terrorism Centre under the SBU, **Vasyl Krutov**, said on 25 April 2014.

According to the Prosecutor-General's Office, 240 criminal proceedings have been opened over manifestations of separatism by 25 April, in which 177 people were exposed.

The SBU has also exposed criminal activities of the extremist terrorist group known as the Rapid Response Brigade which has been working in Odessa Region since April. According to the SBU, the criminals had planned to hold acts of provocation in Odessa on 9 May, the day post-Soviet countries celebrate the victory in World War II.

It is also to note that Russian sabotage specialist, officer of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Russian Defence Ministry who commands the self-defence of Slovyansk, **Igor Strelkov** told in his interview with the Russian newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda that his militants had arrived to Donbas from Crimea, and were ready to kill Ukrainian soldiers if the authorities do not refrain from the anti-terrorist operation.

Separatists threaten to disrupt presidential election

The self-proclaimed mayor of Slovyansk, Donetsk Region, **Vyacheslav Ponomaryov**, has promised to disrupt the presidential election in Ukraine at any price. He made this statement in an interview with the Russian news website Gazeta.ru.

Russian State Duma MP **Konstantin Zatulin** also predicted that the 25 May election in the eastern regions of Ukraine would not take place. According to Zatulin, the current situation does not allow the election to be representative because it will be blocked at many polling stations, in particular in Donetsk and Luhansk.

The head of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), **Mykhaylo Okhendovskyy**, said access to the database of the state voter register was closed for six offices in

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Donetsk Region. He explained that the decision was taken to avoid unauthorized access to Ukrainian voters' personal data.

The CEC head insists that the early presidential election may not be postponed. He emphasized that the situation in the east would not challenge the legality of the election because the law on presidential elections says that even if voting fails to be held at a polling station, this result will be accepted as is.

According to the editor in chief of the news and analysis website LB.ua, **Sonya Koshkina**, Russia will try to delay the election of a new Ukrainian president for as long as possible to increase the chances of "its" candidate. She quoted her sources as saying that Moscow is going to continue escalation in the southeast of Ukraine and to increase the number of saboteurs to prevent the election from being held in the near time. Koshkina predicts most acts of provocation by Russians to take place around the runoff.

Military observers captured in Slovyansk

Unidentified individuals on 25 April 2014 stopped a bus carrying 13 passengers entering Slovyansk, Donetsk Region. Among the passengers were seven members of a military verification mission working in Ukraine in accordance with the OSCE Vienna Document, five representatives of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the driver.

The terrorists took the bus with the passengers to the occupied premises of the Security Service of Ukraine's directorate in Slovyansk. The captured group is currently kept there.

The Security Service of Ukraine reported that the kidnapping had been organized by Russia.

On 27 April, one of the military inspectors was freed.

Leader of the "Slovyansk people's militia" **Vyacheslav Ponomaryov** said the seized men were prisoners of war and that he would be willing to exchange them for his disappeared deputy **Ihor Perepechayenko** and other "comrades".

Earlier armed activists took Ukrainian police Col **Vitaliy Kolupay** hostage.

Also, two more people disappeared in Slovyansk: stage director **Pavlo Yurov** and curator **Denys Hryshchuk**.

Separatists kidnap journalists

On 25 April 2014, the armed separatists in Slovyansk, Donetsk Region captured a correspondent of the Lviv-based TV channel ZiK, **Yuriy Lelyavskyy**, the programme director of the Telekrytyka media website, **Viktor Halkin**, has said.

On 26 April, connection got lost with the journalist of Volyn Post publication **Serhiy Shapoval** who also was in Slovyansk.

On 16 April, some unidentified attackers in Slovyansk kidnapped iPress.ua journalist **Serhiy Lefter**. His whereabouts are still unknown.

A photo correspondent from Ivano-Frankivsk Region, **Yevhen Hapych**, and his

brother, US journalist **Simon Ostrovsky**, Italian journalists **Paul Gogo** and **Kossimo Attanasio**, and Belarusian journalist **Dzmitryy Halko** managed to get free from the separatists' captivity.

Ukrainian and western journalists reported many facts of impeding their work by separatists in Donetsk Region.

Militants in Horlivka seized three Security Service officers

On 26 April, militants seized three officers of the Alfa special unit of the Security Service of Ukraine who had arrived from Kiev, in Horlivka, Donetsk Region, and then, brought them to Slovyansk.

Security Service of Ukraine expels Russian journalists

Yuliya Shustraya and **Mikhail Pudovkin**, a correspondent and a cameraman of the Russian TV channel LifeNews respectively, have been expelled from Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) said on 25 April.

According to the journalists, they were told that their activities posed a threat to the territorial integrity of the country.

Separatists beat children making photos of roadblock

The separatists in Slovyansk District, Donetsk Region have beaten children who were taking photos of their roadblock, the press service of the Donetsk regional state administration said on 25 April 2014.

OSCE can expand monitoring mission in Ukraine

On 21 March 2014, all 57 participating states of the OSCE took a consensus decision to put in place a 100-strong monitoring mission to be deployed in Ukraine; the number can be expanded up to 500 people, director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre **Adam Kobieracki** has said.

The number can be increased to ensure the implementation of the Geneva agreements reached by the foreign ministers of Ukraine, the USA, the EU and Russia on 17 April. The Special Monitoring Mission is deployed for a period of six months.

Additionally, on 26 April, OSCE sent to Ukraine a team of negotiators to free the observers seized in Slovyansk.

Two bodies with signs of torture found near Slovyansk

Two bodies bearing the signs of torture were found in a river outside Slovyansk, Donetsk Region on 19 April 2014. One of them is the Horlivka city councillor from the Fatherland party, **Volodymyr Rybak**, who was abducted on 17 April 2014. The second was later identified as Kiev student and activist **Yuriy Popravka**.

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The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) said that Russian nationals **Igor Bezler** and **Igor Strelko**, who both worked for the Russian Main Intelligence Directorate, were involved in Rybak's murder. Both are now wanted.

The SBU made public an audio recording of a conversation between the separatists in Slovyansk who discuss the murder of councillor Rybak.

The leader of the Fatherland party, **Yuliya Tymoshenko**, said that Russian **President Vladimir Putin**, who, in her words, "has waged an unannounced war against Ukraine", is responsible for Rybak's murder.

Volodymyr Rybak was kidnapped following his attempt to take down the flag of the Donetsk people's republic from the building of the town council building and establish the Ukrainian flag instead.

Media: Slovyansk targeted by Russian sabotage groups because of the shale gas deposits

Slovyansk is situated in the heart of the territory of the "Yuzivka Project" where the deposits of the most up-to-date energy resource of the 21st century are concentrated: the natural gas from strong sands, the so-called shale gas. This was reported by the News Service of One Plus One TV channel.

The gigantic bed encompasses part of the territory of Donetsk and Kharkiv regions.

Experts stress that the deposits of the gas in this area may dramatically change the energy production and consumption not only in Ukraine, but also in Europe.

CRIMEAN ISSUE

Crimean authorities said to start repressions against Tatars

The illegal Crimean authorities have launched a repression campaign against the Crimean Tatar population, a statement of the presidium of the Crimean Tatar self-styled government Majlis, which was circulated on 22 April, reads.

In particular, the statement mentioned cases of banditry and lawlessness, the orders issued by the Crimean authorities to introduce censorship in the mass media when covering the activity of the Crimean Tatars, and the absence of results in the investigation into the abduction and killing of Crimean Tatar **Reshat Ametov**.

The former Majlis leader and an MP of the Ukrainian party Fatherland, **Mustafa Dzhemilev**, said that the Russian Federal Security Service was spying on the Crimean Tatars even in mosques.

We would like to point out that the building of the Crimean Tatar Majlis was attacked on 21 April. The director-general of the Krym foundation and a Majlis member, **Rizu Shevkiyeva**, said that unidentified individuals in camouflage broke into the building. As a result, three women who were in the building at the time were injured. Furthermore, they removed a Ukrainian flag from the building and hoisted a Crimean Tatar national flag instead.

Several days later, Crimean prosecutor **Nataliya Poklonskaya** issued an official

warning to Shevkiyev with regard to the Ukrainian flag hoisted on the Majlis building, BBC reported. He is accused of the infringement of the federal law of the Russian Federation "On countering extremist activities".

Additionally, Dzhemilev noted that he had been banned from entering Crimea until 2019. The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry sent a note to the Russian Foreign Ministry to express its concern with the actions of the Russian side. The Russian Federal Migration Service denied reports that Dzhemilev had been banned from entering Crimea.

At the same time, the Majlis demanded that the Crimean authorities took measures to de-escalate lawlessness on the peninsula and, in particular, that they disband "the Crimean self-defence units", which they believe to be the main source of lawlessness and provocation.

For its part, the Turkish Foreign Ministry expressed concern with the security of the Crimean Tatars on the peninsula.

Russian President **Vladimir Putin** said on 21 April that he had signed a decree on the rehabilitation of the Crimean Tatars and other Crimean peoples who had suffered from repression.

In the opinion of the former head of the Crimean Tatar self-styled government Majlis, MP of the Ukrainian party Fatherland **Mustafa Dzhemilev**, "Russia is flirting with the Crimean Tatar people, trying to secure their support for the [Crimean] annexation". He also stressed that the Russian press had recently expressed support for deporting the Crimean Tatars.

Crimean parliament bans more Ukrainian politicians from entering peninsula

The Crimean state council has added 12 members of the Ukrainian parliament to its list of personae non-gratae, the press service of the Crimean parliament reported on 22 April.

The decision was explained by the support by these politicians of a law on Crimea's occupation.

Hence, more than 300 Ukrainian politicians and officials have been banned from entering Crimea.

Russia starts setting up border between Crimea, Ukraine

The state border of the Russian Federation has been established between Ukraine and Crimea and rules for its crossing will be enacted on 25 April, the acting head of the Russian Federal Migration Service for the Republic of Crimea, **Pyotr Yarosh**, has said.

Earlier, Russian Prime Minister **Dmitriy Medvedev** tasked the head of the Russian Border Service, **Konstantin Busygin**, with the immediate establishment of a state border between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, which would take into account the annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, Medvedev's press secretary **Natalya Timakova** has said.

An agreement between Russia and Crimea on the peninsula's joining the Russian Federation stipulates that the border between Russia and Ukraine should be drawn between Crimea and Kherson Region.

Russia planting mines on Ukrainian-Crimean border

Russia has been planting mines around the territory where the occupation forces are stationed in Crimea, the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry's spokesperson, **Yevhen Perebyynis**, has said.

Crimea might become gaming area

Russian President **Vladimir Putin** has introduced in parliament a draft law on the setting up of a gaming zone in the Republic of Crimea.

Earlier, the acting Crimean prime minister, **Sergey Aksenov**, said that the issue of the gaming zone operation on the territory of the republic will be resolved by 1 May.

The first Crimean deputy prime minister, **Rustam Temirgaliyev**, said that the peninsula's authorities had already attracted private investments worth 1.5bn dollars to construct a gaming zone.

Chechen airline becomes primary in Simferopol airport

The Chechen airline Grozny Avia has reached an agreement on stationing its fleet in Simferopol airport, the airline's director-general, **Khasan Salgiryev**, was quoted by the Russian daily Izvestiya as saying.

He added that the company had received guaranteed lots in Simferopol airport for stationing of its aircraft and office space to accommodate the airline's representatives and its means of communication and connectivity.

Ex-Ukrainian Navy chief appointed as Russia's Black Sea Fleet deputy commander

Russian President **Vladimir Putin** has issued an order confirming the appointment of Rear-Adm **Denys Berezovskyy** as deputy commander of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, the Kremlin press service has reported.

We shall remind you that on 1 March Ukraine's interim president, speaker **Oleksandr Turchynov**, appointed Berezovskyy as commander in chief of the Ukrainian Navy. Yet, Berezovskyy announced on 2 March that he would pledge allegiance to the illegitimate Crimean government.

The Ukrainian Prosecutor-General's Office put Berezovskyy on its list of wanted persons.

Russia's central bank bans work of four Ukrainian banks in Crimea

The Russian Central Bank has banned the activity of branches of four Ukrainian banks (Pryvatbank, All-Ukrainian Joint Stock Bank, the Kyivska Rus bank, and Imeksbank) on the territory of Crimea and Sevastopol starting from 21 April.

The vice-president of the Bank of Russia, Mikhail Sukhov, said that this decision

was motivated by complaints of clients that the banks had refused to meet their obligations to them.

He added that the rest of the Ukrainian banks would be able to continue their operation in Crimea until 1 January 2015 without having to register anew under the condition that they fulfil the obligations to their clients.

Pryvatbank, which belongs to a Ukrainian businessman and Dnipropetrovsk Region's governor, **Ihor Kolomoyskyy**, and which has the largest network in Crimea among the Ukrainian banks, said that the actions of the Crimean authorities represented a corporate raid.

Three employees of Ukraine's private oil company kidnapped in Crimea

The Crimean regional office of the Ukrnafta company, which belongs to a Ukrainian businessman and Dnipropetrovsk Region's governor, **Ihor Kolomoyskyy**, was attacked on 22 April.

The company said that nearly 20 people in military uniform had seized its documents and servers and that they had also driven away in an unidentified direction three people - the head of Ukrnafta's Crimean branch, **Andriy Khabarov**, his deputy, and an office employee.

Ukrnafta's representatives said that the situation looked like a corporate raid.

Crimea's deadline for submitting refusals from Russian citizenship expires

On 18 April, the deadline for submitting refusals from Russian citizenship in Crimea expired.

The Russian Federal Migration Service said that it had received 3,400 refusals. As of 22 April, it accepted 390,000 applications for Russian passports. As many as 280,000 of them have been already processed.

As previously reported, the Crimean residents who have refused to adopt Russian citizenship will be able to receive Russian residence permits and could stay on the peninsula for an indefinite period of time.

Crimea's total population is around 2 million people.

We would like to point out that on 21 April Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law, which simplifies the procedure of receiving Russian citizenship for residents of the Russian Federation, who speak fluent Russian and either lived on the territory of the former USSR or in the Russian empire within the borders of the modern Russian Federation.

Crimea might be cut off from electricity due to million-dollar debt

The electricity payments of Crimean companies and organizations became record low in March, the press service of the DTEK energy company owned by Ukrainian tycoon Rinat Akhmetov reported on 25 April. It added that water

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utility companies paid only 18 percent of their debts, organizations funded from the budget - 32 percent, and household utility companies - 63 percent.

Crimean consumers owe DTEK Krymenerho the total of 741m hryvnyas (67.36m dollars), or approximately 65m dollars.

The company stressed that it had neither the right nor the possibility to supply Crimean consumers with electricity without payment, that it posed a threat to energy deliveries to Crimea and urged consumers to pay off their debts.

Energy supplies to Crimea are at present almost completely dependent on continental Ukraine. The peninsula's existing power stations can supply only 10-30 percent of the 1,400 megawatts of energy needed by the region.

Russian Energy Minister **Aleksandr Novak** said that switching Crimea from the Ukrainian energy system will cost Russia 3.6bn dollars.

Ukrainian Orthodox Church loses churches in Crimea

The Crimean authorities have been taking away temples from the Crimean Diocese of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchate, Archbishop of Simferopol and Crimea **Klyment** has said in an open letter.

INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL

UKRAINE-RUSSIA

Russia's Gazprom demands 11bn dollars from Ukraine for purchasing less gas than contracted

On 23 April, the Russian company Gazprom sent Ukraine an 11.39bn-dollar bill for purchasing less gas in 2013 than is contracted under the take-or-pay provision, which means that a customer should pay in full for the previously contracted volumes of gas even if they have not been purchased.

Under the conditions of Gazprom's contract with the Ukrainian state-run energy company Naftohaz Ukrayiny, the latter should have purchased 41.6bn cu.m. of gas, while it purchased only 12.9bn cu.m., Gazprom pointed out.

In its turn, Naftohaz noted that under the contract, the Ukrainian side should have purchased 33bn cu.m. of gas. At the same time, Ukrainian Energy and Coal Industry Minister **Yuriy Prodan** stressed that the Ukrainian gas company had asked its Russian partners to amend the contracted volumes. He also mentioned that Gazprom could try to take Ukraine to court over the claimed debt.

We shall remind you that on 10 April Russian President **Vladimir Putin** sent a letter to European leaders, in which he told them that Ukraine's fines for purchasing less than contracted volumes of gas in 2012-13 amounted to 18.4bn dollars.

The former Ukrainian presidential representative for international energy security, **Bohdan Sokolovskyy**, said that over the past five years, Ukraine had paid Russia almost twice more than it should have. As a result, it overpaid 20bn dollars, he wrote in an article for the Lb.ua news and analysis website.

Russian Prime Minister **Dmitriy Medvedev** has estimated that over the years of its

independence, Russia has provided assistance to Ukraine worth 250bn dollars "thanks to all kinds of preferences, including non-market conditions for gas trade".

We would like to point out that the International Monetary Fund allowed Ukraine to pay the debts of its state-run energy company Naftohaz Ukrayiny to Russia's Gazprom with the loans which the organization might allocate to Ukraine in the nearest future.

Ukraine's trade with Russia drops by 25 percent

Ukraine's trade with the Russian Federation dropped by 25 percent in January-February of 2014, Ukrainian Economic Development Minister **Pavlo Sheremeta** has said.

Sales of Ukrainian metal to Russia down by 30 percent

Sales of Ukrainian metal products to Russia fell by over 30 percent, according to information supplied by the Ukrainian association Metalurhprom.

Russian president against suspending military, technical cooperation with Ukraine

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that he opposes a suspension of military and technical cooperation between Moscow and Kiev.

At the same time, he stressed that the Ukrainian companies of the military and industrial complex would be harmed if bilateral ties were cut in this sector.

We shall remind you that at the beginning of April 2014 Ukrainian First Deputy Prime Minister **Vitaliy Yarema** announced the country's intention to suspend military and technical cooperation with Russia.

The Gorshenin Institute's experts noted that the Russian military and industrial complex depended a lot on the Ukrainian military and industrial complex in a strategic context. However, in the situation when Ukraine can potentially establish closer ties with the EU and NATO, the tasks of the Russian military and industrial companies might not be fulfilled, which means that Russia needs to preserve its access to Ukrainian companies at any cost.

Furthermore, experts stressed that "the geography of the companies of the Ukrainian military and industrial complex, to which Russia links its strategic doctrine, strikingly coincides with the geography of instability sites in Ukraine".

UKRAINE-EU

EU enacts decision on lowering customs duties for Ukraine

On 23 April, the EU implemented its decision to unilaterally cut 98 percent of customs duties on Ukrainian products that are delivered to the EU market.

These preferences will remain in effect until 1 November. Economic terms of the Ukrainian-EU association agreement should be signed by then.

UKRAINE-USA

Ukraine to receive 58m dollars from USA for reforms, military support

The USA is ready to allocate 50m dollars to Ukraine for the implementation of political and economic reforms, US Vice-President Joe Biden said on 22 April during his visit to Kiev.

It is planned that nearly 11m dollars from this amount will go towards preparing and holding a presidential election in Ukraine, which is slated for 25 May.

Furthermore, the Reuters news agency quoted its source in the White House as saying that Washington would also provide Kiev with support in the military sector and would supply it with communication equipment and transportation worth 8m dollars.

Editor in chief of LB.ua **Sonya Koshkina**, quoting her own sources, reported that during his recent visit to Kiev, the CIA chief **John Brennan** said that the USA would not help Ukraine in a case of a massive aggression by the Russian Federation.

Ukrainians can now apply for 10-year US visas

On 25 April, the US Department of State amended the terms of issuing visas to Ukrainian citizens, who are now allowed to apply for 10-year US visas.

Previously, Ukrainians could receive visas which remained valid up to five years.

DOMESTIC POLICY

Ukraine continues debating referendum

Protesters in Donetsk region continue to press for holding a referendum on the federalization of Ukraine and the status of the Russian language.

Donetsk Region governor **Serhiy Taruta** has called for holding a nationwide referendum on 25 May on the status of the Russian language and the decentralization of power in Ukraine.

Earlier, deposed Ukrainian President **Viktor Yanukovych**, Donetsk mayor **Oleksandr Lukyanchenko**, and Donetsk regional council deputies also favoured the idea of holding a referendum on the federalization.

However, chairman of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) **Mykhaylo Okhendovskyy** noted that the question of the status of certain territories in Ukraine cannot be a subject of a local referendum.

Deputy chairman of the Central Electoral Commission **Andriy Mahera** did not rule out that an advisory or consultative poll on the topical questions can be held in Ukraine on 25 May. However, according to Mahera, it would require certain changes to the legislation.

Ex-interior minister campaigning for Poroshenko

Former Interior Minister **Yuriy Lutsenko** has called on Ukrainians to vote for **Petro Poroshenko** at the 25 May presidential election.

In his opinion, Poroshenko's victory in the first round would strengthen the country and would help "beat the Kremlin".

In March, Lutsenko supported former Prime Minister **Yuliya Tymoshenko** as a presidential candidate.

Kiev begins registration of mayoral candidates

The official registration of candidates in the Kiev mayoral election is held from 23 to 30 April.

On 25 April, the Kiev election commission registered leader of the UDAR party **Vitaliy Klitschko** as a candidate for Kiev's mayor post.

Also, acting chairman of the Kiev City State Administration **Volodymyr Bondarenko** has been nominated as a mayoral candidate by the Fatherland party, while the Freedom party supported the candidacy of MP **Andriy Ilyenko**.

Previously, intentions to run for mayor were also heard from MPs **Lesya Orobets**, **Mykola Katerynychuk**, ex-mayor of Kiev **Oleksandr Omelchenko**, and others.

At the same time, as was reported, the Party of Regions will not nominate any candidates for mayor of Kiev.

However, MP **Nestor Shufrych**, the newly elected head of the Party of Regions' branch in Kiev, will top the party's list of deputies for the city council election.

The elections of Kiev's mayor and deputies of the city council will be held on 25 May.

Government allocates 455m hryvnias for army

The government on 17 April allocated 5bn hryvnias (454.55m dollars) from the reserve fund of the state budget for raising Ukraine's defence capacity.

On 23 March, the government allocated 87bn hryvnias (170m dollars) for the same purpose.

In addition, as of 24 April, the Defence Ministry received more than 111.7m hryvnias (10.15m dollars) to its account in donations from businesses and citizens.

Emergency service subordinated to Interior Ministry

The government on 25 April issued a decree placing the State Emergency Service under control of the Interior Ministry. Previously, the emergency agency was part of the Defence Ministry.

According to Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers **Ostap Semerak**, the cabinet's move is due to the tense situation in Ukraine's eastern regions, and in case of emergency it will allow making decisions more quickly.

Serhiy Bochkovskyy has been appointed the chairman of the State Emergencies Service.

General affairs department gets new head

Interim president of Ukraine **Oleksandr Turchynov** on 25 April appointed first deputy head of the General Affairs Directorate **Oleh Chernetskyy** as the agency's interim head.

Prosecutors find no evidence of intentional killing of Muzychko

The materials of the criminal proceedings concerning the death of **Oleksandr Muzychko** (also known as Sashko Bilyy), one of the leaders of the far-right organization Right Sector, contain no witness testimony that it was a premeditated murder, Deputy Prosecutor-General **Oleksiy Bahanets** has said.

At the same time, Bahanets noted that three civilians who publicly declared that Muzychko's murder was planned in advance have not been questioned, although the investigators called them in for questioning.

Muzychko died when the police attempted to detain him in Rivne Region in the night of 25 March.

According to the Interior Ministry's version, Muzychko accidentally shot himself with a gun when attempting to escape from the police.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hague tribunal opens initial probe on Ukraine

Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (The Hague tribunal) **Fatou Bensouda** has opened a preliminary investigation into the alleged crimes committed before and during the events surrounding the deposition of President **Viktor Yanukovych** from power, the Hague court said in a statement on 25 April.

The preliminary investigation, as noted, has been initiated in order to establish whether the Rome Statute criteria are met for the court's launching a full investigation of the events in Ukraine.

Former head of the presidential administration **Andriy Klyuyev**, former Deputy Prime Minister **Serhiy Arbuzov**, and former Prosecutor-General **Viktor Pshonka** were put on the international wanted list last week.

ECONOMY

IMF to give Ukraine 17bn dollars - media

The Board of Governors of the International Monetary Fund on 30 April is going to approve a new loan programme for Ukraine worth 17bn dollars, Bloomberg reported, citing a source in the Ukrainian government.

Government in talks with World Bank on 350m-dollar loan

The Ukrainian government is starting negotiations with the World Bank regarding the Second Urban Infrastructure Project targeting priority energy-efficient investments in water and sanitation infrastructure for a total amount of 350m dollars, Deputy Prime Minister **Volodymyr Hroysman** said on 23 April.

On 23 April, the government also passed a decree on preparing documents for a 750m-dollar loan from the World Bank to be received in May. The loan will be spent on financing the state budget deficit and fulfilling the government's reforms.

General fund revenues up by 9%

Receipts to the general fund of the national budget in the first quarter of 2014 amounted to 78.39bn hryvnyas (7.13bn dollars), which is 9 percent more than during the same period last year, the State Treasury Service reported.

Finance Ministry sells bonds for 363m dollars

The Finance Ministry at a regular auction on 22 April sold domestic government loan bonds for a total of 4bn hryvnyas (363m dollars). The funds will be channelled into the state budget.

The ministry placed bonds in national currency maturing in 3 years at 15 percent per annum, satisfying four bids.

Finance Ministry expects public debt to grow to 52.7 percent of GDP

The Finance Ministry forecasts that the national debt of Ukraine in 2014 will increase by 37.6 percent to 804bn hryvnyas (73.09bn dollars), from 40.2 to 52.7 percent of GDP.

The ministry noted that about 43.3 percent of Ukraine's government debt as of the end of 2013 was denominated in the Ukrainian hryvnya, 43,9 percent in the U.S. dollar, 9.1 percent in SDR, 3.4 percent in the euro, and 0.3 percent in the Japanese yen.

The ministry said that in addition to a 129.3bn-hryvnya increase (11.75bn-dollars increase) in Ukraine's obligations due to the local currency devaluation, the country's public debt should grow this year because of capitalization of state-run energy company Naftohaz Ukrayiny (+33.3bn hryvnyas or 3.03bn dollars), debt financing of the budget deficit (+68bn hryvnyas or 6.18bn dollars) and capitalization of banks (+5.2bn hryvnyas or 472.73m dollars).

It is expected that public debt payments this year will increase by 39.2 percent compared with the previous year, to 155.2bn hryvnias or 14.11bn dollars (from 27.6 to 35.5 percent of budget expenditures). Public debt servicing costs will rise by 45.1 percent to 46bn hryvnias (4.18bn dollars).

National Bank expects current account deficit at 4.5 percent of GDP

The deficit of the current account of the balance of payments in 2014 is expected to fall to 4-4.5 percent of GDP against 9 percent in 2013, the National Bank reported.

National Bank reports net inflow of foreign currency in March-April

Ukraine saw an inflow of foreign currency in March-April 2014, National Bank official **Serhiy Korablin** said.

According to Korablin, a net outflow of currency was recorded in February, but already in March there was a foreign currency inflow of 750m dollars. The same trend was observed in April - a net currency inflow to accounts of companies and banks was 434m dollars.

Average salary grows to 309 dollars

The average salary in Ukraine in March increased by almost 7 percent to 3,400 hryvnias (309.1 dollars), according to the State Statistics Service.

Ukraine to liquidate Land Bank

The government has decided to liquidate the State Land Bank. The decision to this effect was taken on 25 April.

The bill on liquidation will have to pass a vote in parliament.

The State Land Bank received banking license in 2013. It was expected that the institution would issue loans to farmers against security of land and manage state-owned land plots.

The former opposition said that the Land Bank was a scheme developed by **Viktor Yanukovich's** team to seize chernozem (fertile black soil) lands.

Miners striking at Akhmetov's coal mine in Luhansk region

Workers of five mines in Krasnodon belonging to **Rinat Akhmetov's** Metinvest in the night of 22 April began a strike to demand higher wages, which led to a halt in the production process.

The company stated that the miners' strike was provoked by several "heavy-built people", while the management started negotiations with the protesters.

On 27 April, the mines restarted their operation.

Metinvest is one of Ukraine's largest coking coal companies.

ENERGY

EU offers Ukraine and Russia holding “gas meeting”

EU Energy Commissioner **Guenther Oettinger** has sent letters to energy ministers of the Russian Federation and Ukraine **Aleksander Novak** and **Yuriy Prodan** respectively, suggesting holding a trilateral meeting on gas issues.

Aide to the Russian President **Yuriy Ushakov** said that President **Vladimir Putin** and German Chancellor **Angela Merkel** on 25 April had a telephone conversation during which the parties emphasized the importance of holding such consultations at the earliest possible time.

Russia refuses to sell gas to Europe at Russia-Ukraine border

Russia has no intentions to sell natural gas to Europe at the border of Ukraine and Russia, as the latter has long-term contacts with EU countries, Russian Prime Minister **Dmitry Medvedev** said.

“These contracts are economically advantageous to us, and we are not interested in breaking them, we are interested in their fulfilment,” he said.

First stage of Ukrainian gas pipeline upgrade to cost 3-4bn dollars

The first stage of the modernization of the Ukrainian gas transport system (GTS) will require investments of at least 3-4bn dollars, Ukrainian Energy Minister **Yuriy Prodan** has said.

According to Prodan, Ukraine is ready to modernize and transfer its GTS for joint operation.

Prime Minister **Arseniy Yatsenyuk** said that Ukraine is ready to consider the joint operation and modernization of the Ukrainian GTS with the United States and the European Union.

Slovakia ready to sign agreement on gas supplies to Ukraine

A memorandum on gas supplies to Ukraine from Slovakia is expected to be signed on 28 April. The statement was made by Economy Minister of Slovakia **Tomas Malatinsky** after a meeting with Energy Minister of Ukraine **Yuriy Prodan** and EU Commissioner for Energy **Gunther Oettinger**, according to BBC Ukrainian Service.

As the Slovak minister noted, larger gas supplies from Slovakia would require negotiations with Russia.

Oettinger believes that Ukraine may receive from Slovakia up to 10bn cu.m. of gas per year.

Earlier, the European Commission expressed confidence that reverse gas supplies to Ukraine are absolutely legal.

Ukraine applies for gas supplies from Poland

Ukraine in May will pump from Poland up to 4m cu.m. of gas per day, which follows from the application filed by state-run energy company Naftohaz Ukrayiny with the dispatch office of Ukrtransgaz, the operator of Ukraine's gas transport system, according to ITAR-TASS.

The supplies are made under a contract with German company RWE. In 2013, it exported to Ukraine about 1bn cu.m. of gas.

According to news and analysis website LB.ua, every day Ukraine pumps from Russia 40-60m cu.m. of gas.

Naftohaz publishes list of debtors

State-run energy company Naftohaz Ukrayiny has published data on enterprises' debts for consumed natural gas.

As of 22 April, the overall debt of enterprises to Naftohaz totalled 22.4bn hryvnias (2bn dollars). Debt for natural gas used for heat production makes 92 percent of the amount, debt for natural gas used in electricity production accounts for 7 percent, while debt of direct industrial consumers is about 1 percent.

NPPs' electricity tariff to rise again

The National Electricity Regulatory Commission has raised the tariff for electricity production by nuclear power plants (NPPs) for the second time this month, according to state-run energy company Enerhoatom.

Since the start of April the tariff has grown by 20 percent, and in May will be increased by another 10 percent to 30.2 kopecks per kWh.

Court arrests Odessa refinery assets

A Ukrainian court has seized the property and land of the Odessa oil refinery, which formerly belonged to businessman **Serhiy Kurchenko** and later was transferred to VTB Bank (Russia) as collateral for a loan, the press service of the Interior Ministry reported on 22 April.

According to the agency, the enterprise has been arrested under an investigation into smuggling of petroleum products.

Americans to build coal-to-fuel plans in Ukraine

U.S. company TransGas Development Systems is planning to build in Ukraine three plants to produce motor fuels from coal; the project is worth about 10bn dollars, company president **Adam Victor** said in an interview with newspaper Business.

Government allocates 45 hectares for nuclear repository

The Ukrainian government on 23 April allocated 45 hectares of land in the Chernobyl exclusion zone for a spent nuclear fuel repository, as reported by **Yuriy Nedashkovskyy**, head of state-run company Enerhoatom.

According to Nedashkovskyy, this decision will make it possible to complete the construction of the launch facility in 2017. This will allow Ukraine to store about 20 percent of spent nuclear fuel, which now goes to Russia. In the future, Ukraine plans to completely abandon sending spent fuel for storage to Russia.

Ukraine needs another 500m euros to complete Chernobyl confinement

Ukraine needs to raise about 0.5bn euros to complete the construction of the New Safe Confinement (NSC) over the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. This amount is in addition to 1.54bn euros already provided by donors to the Chernobyl Shelter Fund, as reported by the EBRD (manager of the fund).

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