

UKRAINIANS ABROAD: NEWS AND VIEWS #135

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*** Thanks to Peter Melnycky.

1. Canada. “History Blossoms in Welland Flower Beds,” *St. Catherines Standard*, 15 February 2017.

By Joe Barkovich, special to Postmedia Network

History lives in Welland.

This summer though, it will flower as never before.

Part of an initiative to take root in the Rose City over almost 40 years, five floral tribute beds will contribute to beautification of the community while shining a light on anniversaries with historic significance.

The five and their respective locations are:

- Canada’s 150th: Broadway and Prince Charles Drive;
- 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge: Ontario Road and Southworth Street;
- 100th anniversary of Welland Volunteer Fire Co. No. 2: First Avenue and Prince Charles Drive;
- 100th anniversary of Ukrainian Labour Temple: Niagara Street and Riverbank;
- 50th anniversary of Niagara College: Colbeck Drive and Prince Charles Drive.

Dave Steven, landscape technician and lead hand for horticulture and cemeteries, said it will be the first time five floral tribute beds will be on display in Welland.

The number most years has been three, he said.

“We’re excited,” Steven gushed about how city horticultural workers feel about the challenge ahead.

And homeowners — even those who may not dig gardening — should feel a sense of pride and community spirit over the floral masterpieces we are gifted with year after year.

From my newspaper days, I still recall reading occasional letters to the editor from visitors to Welland who were visually impressed by our tribute beds as they drove past.

After seeing a few of these letters come to the newsroom in addition to phone messages, I began thinking of our tribute beds as goodwill ambassadors for Welland. I still do.

Steven said horticulture staff have had comparable experiences, even while tending to the beds.

“Aside from emails and letters, people in vehicles honk and yell ‘nice job’ as they drive by. Sometimes people will even stop to take a photo while we are working, mentioning how much they enjoy these displays along with the tulips in the spring. It’s nice to know people appreciate them as much as we do.”

He said 11 applications were submitted by local groups for consideration as tribute beds in 2017, when the number has been “five or six” most years. He considers it proof Welland’s display beds are popular and have a growing following in the community.

Steven, who counts a Niagara College diploma as landscape technician in his professional background, said he has a flair for design work.

“I love what I do,” he said. “I have no issues getting up every day and coming to work.” It’s a passion shared with fellow co-workers “like Frank Reddon, who’s known wherever we go in Welland.”

Steven does the design work for each of the beds. Next carpenters are brought in to build templates, followed by a half dozen or so gardeners involved in planting and maintenance. The beds are planted in late May and remain until early fall.

And it’s a team effort in ways other than sweat and hands-on involvement. As Steven said: “Without support of council and management we wouldn’t have these floral tribute beds. It’s nice this vision has continued for around 40 years.”

Clara Babi, a decades-long member of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians and its Ukrainian Labour Temple hall, 342 Ontario Rd. at Beatrice Street, is “proud I have lived this long to see this anniversary happen.”

Plans call for the hall’s 100th anniversary to be celebrated in the fall, with an open house likely.

The floral bed will be a “beautiful tribute” to that milestone, Babiy said. “Thank you, city of Welland.”

— *Lifelong Welland resident Joe Barkovich has spent much of that time watching people. He continues to be amazed seeing the best and not so best in us, but that’s life. Get a glimpse of how Joe sees our part of the world in his weekly column.*

2. Canada. “Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Foreign Ministry of Canada Establish Canada Ukraine Stakeholder Advisory Council,” *Newsline News from Ukraine*, 10 February 2017.

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The Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs have established the Canada Ukraine Stakeholder Advisory Council (CUSAC), which will hold regular meetings between Canadian diplomats and the Ukrainian community representatives.

This was announced by Alison LeClaire, Senior Arctic Official and Director General, Circumpolar Affairs and Eastern Europe and Eurasia of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Canada, an Ukrinform correspondent reports.

“The Government of Canada remains committed to working with Ukraine, and there is no more important connection between our two countries than people-to-people ties. The opportunity provided by CUSAC to sit down and discuss such a wide array of issues is of great benefit to the government, and, I trust, our partners in the community,” LeClaire said.

As noted by UCC Director of Government Relations Paul Migus, this new forum CUSAC will become important occasion for the community to provide direct input, feedback and recommendations.

“We are thankful for the opportunity to meet with many high-level government officials who are responsible for implementing Canada’s many bilateral and multilateral programs in Ukraine,” Migus said.

3. Canada. “Bloor West Ukrainian Mural Project Looking for Artists,” *InsideToronto.com*, 3 February 2017.

Applications for artists are due by Feb. 17 at 4 p.m.
Bloor West Villager
By Aaron D’Andrea

A Toronto group is looking for artists to create a mural that will pay tribute to Bloor West Village’s Ukrainian-Canadian residents.

The Bloor West Ukrainian Mural project is looking for artists to create an original, collaborative mural located on the east side of the Ukrainian Canadian Social Services building near Bloor and Jane Streets.

“This is one of the more prominent walls in Bloor West Village, so as you’re exiting going west on Bloor Street there’s this massive wall that’s so blank,” said Oksana Hawrylak, the project’s co-ordinator. “We thought this would be a great canvas.”

The project has been in discussion for a year to celebrate Canada 150 and 125 years of Ukrainians in Canada, Hawrylak added.

“We would like to bring multiple Canadian artists together to create a long-term mural and landmark commemorating the neighbourhoods of Bloor West and its immigrant experience; specifically to create a current and creative physical Ukrainian-Canadian presence in the city,” a press release on the project’s website said.

Hawrylak said the project team is looking for three to five artists to contribute to the mural. The team will be looking at the artists’ concepts, stories and ideas before scheduling interviews and choosing the artists.

Selected artists will meet with a Mural Project team, which will include community members and mentors, to combine their original artwork and design elements to create the mural as one cohesive piece.

Materials and artist honorarium will be covered by fundraising efforts by the Bloor West Ukrainian Mural project, the press release said.

Hawrylak added they plan on unveiling the mural in September as part of the Bloor West Village Ukrainian Festival.

“The idea is not to create one image or one story, it’s to create a couple images and a couple stories to be told on this wall,” she said. “It is important for us to inspire multi-generational community members not only to create an inclusive art project, but to provide mentorship for our future organizers and community leaders.”

Applications are due by Feb. 17, at 4 p.m., and they can be found at www.bloorwestmural.com.

4. Canada. “Home Economist Savella Stechishin Was a Pillar of Canada’s Ukrainian Community,” *Saskatoon StarPhoenix*, 2 February 2017.

DAVID HUTTON, SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

Savella Stechishin was a champion of Ukrainian causes and an advocate of women’s rights across the country.

Born in Ukraine, Stechishin arrived in Canada in 1913 at age nine. She went on to finish high school, normal school and got her university degree as a young wife and mother during the 1920s.

Striving to preserve Ukrainian heritage, she taught in Saskatchewan schools, worked as a home economist for Women's Services at the University of Saskatchewan and lectured at the Department of Slavic Studies at the University of Saskatchewan. She also gave Ukrainian language courses at Saskatoon's Mohyla Institute, where she was dean of women.

Stechishin also wrote several books, and was a columnist for 25 years for the Winnipeg-based Ukrainian Voice.

Her well-known cookbook, *Traditional Ukrainian Cookery*, was first published in 1957 and is now into its 18th printing.

"But in addition to providing recipes, she also gave a little background, like sociological and a community background," friend Mary Cherneskey told the StarPhoenix after Stechishin died in 2002 at the age of 97.

"So you had a picture of a people, not just food, not just a recipe. This is what made it so very interesting.

"So, by this token, she was sharing the culture with a broader community."

A recipient of many awards and honours throughout her lifetime, Stechishin also co-founded the Ukrainian Museum of Canada located on the riverbank in Saskatoon and was appointed to the Order of Canada in 1989.

As we celebrate Canada's 150th birthday in 2017, the StarPhoenix and Leader-Post are telling the stories of 150 Saskatchewan people who helped shape the nation. Send your suggestions or feedback to sask150@postmedia.com.

5. Canada. "Sombre Farewell for Welland Church," *Niagara This Week* – Welland, 26 January 2017.

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PG 1

WELLAND - After decades of faith the last prayers were spoken, the last hymns have been sung at Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The First Street church, which officially closed its doors earlier this year, was officially de-sanctified by Bishop Andriy Peshko on Sunday, bringing to a close its prominence at the heart of Welland and south Niagara's Ukrainian community. There was no shortage of tears as parishioners walked out of the church for the last time.

"Now it's simply a building," said church trustee Dianna Kit Mete, explaining for years the church, first built to replace a former rented location on Fourth Street in 1969, was a symbol of the Ukrainian community's faith in Welland.

While post-war immigration in the 1940s and '50s drove the growth of the congregation, recent years saw a steady decline in attendance. At the time of the closure just 12 elderly parishioners attended regularly. With the decline in attendance came a decline in financial support and when the church reached out for help to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada the decision was made to close.

“These people don’t have anywhere to go now,” said Kit Mete, who was overcome with emotion as the final service ended. For her part she will go to her former Ukrainian Orthodox church in Niagara Falls. She had come from that church over a decade ago, joining the Welland church she often visited with relatives in the 1950s as a child.

Kit Mete explained there are many reasons for the decline in attendance. While churches across denominations have struggled with similar problems the Welland Ukrainian church faced other factors, such as the loss of Ukrainian language amongst the generations that followed those who immigrated from the Ukraine. On top of that many church members married into other denominations.

At its height however the parish had 129 families. It was those families that built the church that now sits empty, its ornate iconography and religious items bound for other parishes.

“The church was filled to the rafters,” said Kit Mete, recalling her childhood visits. She pointed out to fund the build George Katch and Fred Danyliuk mortgaged their houses. Community members gathered together to construct the building.

“They literally built that church themselves,” said Kit Mete, adding, “this is the commitment these people had.”

Even until recently the church served a wide area of south Niagara with members coming from as far as Dunnville to participate in Ukrainian-language services.

During the service Peshko urged the roughly 40 in attendance not to give up on their faith.

“Your mothers, fathers, your grandmothers, grandfathers came here to pray,” said Peshko, adding, “today there will be no more people ... never forget your church.”

“For the older generation it (the church) held a lot of memories,” said trustee Mary Ulisko, adding, “it’s heartbreaking.”

6. Czech Republic. “Social Status of Ukrainians Improving in Czech Republic – Press,”
CTK Daily News, 20 February 2017.

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Prague, Feb 20 (CTK) - The social status of Ukrainians in the Czech Republic has been undergoing a big change and they work not only as unskilled labourers at construction sites but also as doctors in hospitals and teachers at universities, weekly Tyden writes today.

Twenty years ago, Ukrainians were often considered a horde of uneducated and permanently drunk manual workers. “Dozens of tipsy Ukrainians are staggering in the neighbourhood every night. Excrements, urine and vomit in the house and its surroundings are becoming common,” Tyden quotes from a 1999 report of the Czech daily Vecernik Praha.

“The position of Ukrainians is changing a lot. Their social status is increasing, but not all are happy about it,” Ukrainian writer Alexei Sevruck, who now lives in Prague, said.

Sevruck has no problems since he lives in an intellectual environment, but he knows that people in a Czech village pub might strongly dislike him. Discussions under reports about Ukrainian manpower in the country on Czech news servers are full of radical statements against foreign workers, Tyden writes.

Though it is extremely difficult to be granted a Czech visa in Ukraine, many Ukrainians interested in highly qualified jobs undergo Czech language courses in the Czech Centre in Kiev. Czech is also taught in Kharkiv, Lviv and Vinnytsia. In Odesa and Zaporizhia, the courses will begin in April.

“Last year, about one thousand people underwent the courses. And the number of middle-aged Ukrainian university graduates who wish to do their jobs in the Czech Republic keeps growing. My colleague in Vinnytsia taught four doctors from the Donetsk Oblast,” Czech Centre in Kiev head Lucie Rehorikova said.

Rehorikova said she is aware that a lot of Ukrainian teachers still work as cleaning women at Czech schools and Ukrainian engineers as bricklayers at construction sites.

However, highly educated Ukrainians more and more often work in their own professions. They moved from unskilled jobs to respected posts and from dormitories to nice rented flats.

Miroslav Prochazka, board director of a holding operating a hospital in the Hradec Kralove Region in eastern Bohemia, said the hospital employs 60 foreign doctors, including 32 from Slovakia and 15 from Ukraine. Most of the Ukrainian doctors arrived in the last four years, he said.

Czech and Slovak doctors go to work abroad, mainly to West Europe, and Ukrainian doctors take their positions in hospitals. Unfortunately, this further worsens the bad health care in Ukraine. “Ukraine is a corrupt state, Maidan changed little about this. Only doctors who are not very capable remain in (Ukrainian) hospitals, often with diplomas they bought,” Sevruck said.

“Doctors with bought diplomas can spoil even a banal operation,” Rehorikova said. She said doctors often only treat patients who give them a bribe.

Rehorikova said in Kiev she came across a rather high number of children who became deaf because bad doctors prescribed them antibiotics for common illnesses too often.

It is estimated that there are 150,000 vacancies on the Czech labour market, which Czechs cannot or do not want to do, and these jobs could be legally done by foreigners.

Officially, about 55,000 Ukrainians have legal employment in the Czech Republic, other Ukrainians run businesses and, along with their families, they form a community of about 100,000 people in the country with 10.5 million inhabitants. Up to thousands of Ukrainians are employed illegally, Tyden writes.

Czech hospitals, car factories and hotel operators would like to hire staff from Ukraine, but only a limited number of Czech visas are granted to Ukrainians.

Magda Faltova, head of the Czech Centre for Integration and Migration, said Ukrainians have to wait months only to be allowed to submit their visa application in Kiev or Lviv. "If they don't pay a thousand dollars to mediators, they actually have no chance (to get a visa)," she said.

"The barriers that the Czech side makes for Ukrainians are bigger and bigger. When I arrived in the Czech Republic in 2001, the situation was much better," said Ukrainian surgeon Oleg Khrolenko, who works in the Hradec Kralove municipal hospital.

Khrolenko first worked in the Czech Republic as a digger and waiter. He has been working as a doctor since 2004.

In the early 2000s, a Ukrainian doctor was an exception in the country, while now Ukrainian doctors and nurses are more common and hospitals still need more. The Hradec Kralove hospital tries to hire staff in Ukraine, but even if it finds a doctor, the person may not be allowed to apply for a visa for months.

Both Czech Confederation of Industry head Jaroslav Hanak and Czech Chamber of Commerce head Vladimir Dlouhy are critical of the system, due to which only a small part of Ukrainians who would like to work in the country are allowed entry, Tyden says.

Volodya Kis, who does gardening work in Prague parks, said nearly all men from his village, Rastoka in the Carpathian Mountains, would like to work in the Czech Republic, but it is impossible for his neighbours to get a work visa.

Czechs do not want to do the gardening work in Prague parks because the job is inferior and badly paid for them. Ukrainians often receive salaries that are markedly below the Czech average wage, yet they are about ten times higher than the pay they would get at home.

"They come with a vision of a better future," Rehorikova said about those Ukrainians who leave their homeland affected by poverty and violence. Ukrainians realise more than Czechs that the two nations are geographically, linguistically and mentally close to each other, she said.

Young Ukrainians consider Czechs a kind of elves among Slavs who are doing well in Central Europe, Rehorikova said.

7. Czech Republic. “Republic Doubles Employment Quota for Ukrainians,” *Gorshenin Weekly: Polls & Reviews*, 13 February 2017.

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Foreign Minister Lubomír Zaorálek has said that the Czech authorities have doubled an employment quota for Ukrainian nationals. In his words, the Czech Republic will thus be able to issue employment permits to 7,600 Ukrainian citizens.

According to the Czech statistics agency, Ukrainians are the largest foreign community in the Czech Republic. Out of 500,000 foreigners with temporary or permanent residence permits, 105,000 represent the Ukrainian community.

According to the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry, 5 million Ukrainians are employed abroad.

8. Estonia. “President Met with the Ukrainian Community of Estonia: Your Efforts in Support of Ukraine Are Vitrally Important,” *Ukrainian Government News*, 23 January 2017.

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President Petro Poroshenko met with representatives of the Ukrainian community of Estonia.

The meeting was held in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church of the Ukrainian Culture Center in Tallinn.

“Thank you for the things Ukrainian Diaspora does all over the world. It is impossible to underestimate this work,” the President said. He expressed gratitude to the Ukrainian community for hospitality, warm welcome and assistance. The President emphasized that the efforts of Ukrainians abroad in support of Ukraine were extremely important – they help Ukrainians in the Homeland defend from the external aggression, strengthen ties between Ukraine and Estonia and bring our country closer to Europe.

The Head of State emphasized that Ukrainian government officials, diplomats and MPs did everything possible to ensure global coalition in support of Ukraine and called those actions one of the most efficient instruments for ensuring Ukraine’s territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty.

“Despite the 25th anniversary of our independence, true birth of a nation is taking place only today. Now, Ukrainians make a deliberate choice in favor of the EU and NATO, in favor of building their own independent European state. This wouldn’t be possible if it wasn’t for the Ukrainian Diaspora,” the President said. He emphasized that Ukraine had clearly chosen a European path of development and followed it consistently.

Petro Poroshenko stressed that Ukraine was gradually implementing reforms and the best European standards, inter alia, with the assistance from Estonia.

The President thanked the Estonian Ukrainians for their active assistance to Ukraine, organization of public rallies in support of Ukrainian citizens illegally detained in Russia, participation in protests against the Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Petro Poroshenko also thanked for the efforts of the Ukrainian Congress of Estonia aimed to remove anti-Ukrainian materials from sale in major bookstores of Estonia. He noted the activity of the Ukrainian Culture Center in Tallinn and the Estonian Council of Refugees that take part in Ukraina Heaks Campaign. He also expressed gratitude for the organization of fundraising to help the wounded and their families, as well as IDPs - victims of the Russian aggression in Donbas.

The Head of State expressed gratefulness to Head of the Ukrainian Congress of Estonia Vira Konyk and Head of the Association of Ukrainian Organizations in Estonia Volodymyr Palamar for the organization of important measures in support of Ukraine and their cultural and educational work aimed to preserve parents' culture and language.

9. Finland. "President Met with the Ukrainian Community in Finland: You Work for the Expansion of Global Solidarity with Our State," *Ukrainian Government News*, 24 January 2017.

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In the course of the official visit to Finland, President Petro Poroshenko laid flowers to the building of the first diplomatic mission of Ukraine to Finland of 1918-1921 and met with representatives of the Ukrainian local community.

The President emphasized that Finland provided unprecedented support for Ukraine in many directions: sanctions against Russia, visa-free regime with the EU for Ukrainians, ratification of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement etc.

"This is a very powerful format of support for Ukrainians," he said adding that the President of Finland defends Ukraine's positions and we are grateful for such solidarity.

The Head of State noted that Finland helped in rehabilitation of heroes-warriors who defend Ukraine.

According to him, this has become possible due to significant efforts of the Ukrainian Diaspora. "Ukraine and Finland wouldn't have such relations without you," Petro Poroshenko said and emphasized that the Diaspora had become a powerful factor of influence on the decisions of Governments and Presidents of the countries – international partners of Ukraine.

"This is what cements our global solidarity in these difficult times," Petro Poroshenko noted.

The Head of State is confident that Ukraine will achieve victory by political and diplomatic means. He informed that Ukraine had submitted disputes against Russia to the UN ICJ regarding the funding of terrorism and violation of human rights in Crimea.

10. Lithuania. “Shortage of High-Skilled Employees Is Often Filled by Ukrainians - Lithuanian PM,” *Lithuanian News Agency – ELTA*, 9 February 2017.

(c) 2017 Lithuanian News Agency - ELTA

Vilnius, February 9 (ELTA) - According to Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis, recent tendencies suggest that the lack of high-skilled employees in Lithuania is often filled by Ukrainians and the situation in Poland is similar.

Skvernelis told the Ziniu Radijas radio that there are several dozens of thousands of Ukrainians in Poland who have successfully integrated in the labour market and create added value thus helping with business development.

On Wednesday, the Lithuanian Government approved the List of Occupations in Short Supply which will enable non-EU nationals to find employment in Lithuania more easily. The prime minister says that the new regulations will not distort the situation in the labour market or wages because third country employees will have to be paid wages at least one and a half times higher than the average wage.

The head of Government emphasised that Lithuanians of certain professions have unrealistic remuneration demands for employers who are thus forced to look for workforce abroad.

Karolis Broga

11. Luxembourg. “Interview Ukrainian Ambassador: ‘We Will Not Be Forgotten, If We Don’t Forget Ourselves,’” *Luxemburger Wort*, 26 January 2017.

By Steve Hoscheit

Ukraine and Luxembourg established diplomatic relations 25 years ago. The large eastern European country has been slipping into a full-scale war with its powerful neighbour Russia over the past three years. Ambassador Mykola Tochytskyi is Ukraine’s top diplomat in Brussels. He is accredited to Belgium, the European Union, Euratom and, since October 2016, also to Luxembourg.

On Wednesday, January 25, the Ambassador presented his credentials to Grand Duke Henri, completing the formalisation of his accreditation to Luxembourg. Ambassador Tochytskyi spoke to *Luxemburger Wort* ahead of this, covering subjects ranging from his country’s relations with Luxembourg and the EU to the ongoing war with Russia.

LW: Mr Ambassador, you are currently in Luxembourg to present your letter of credence to Grand Duke Henri and our two countries are celebrating 25 years of diplomatic relations. How do you see the relationship between Ukraine and Luxembourg?

MT: We are indeed celebrating 25 years of diplomatic relations this year. In June 1992, Luxembourg and Ukraine established these relations after Luxembourg had recognised Ukraine

as an independent state in December 1991. There has been a very close cooperation between our two countries ever since, especially in international institutions.

The most recent example of this was in the context of Russia's occupation of Crimea. Luxembourg was presiding the Security Council (UNSC) at that time, and thanks to the Luxembourg Presidency there were a lot of different meetings to discuss the situation and to get resolutions adopted by the United Nations, affirming that the Crimea referendum and Russia's annexation of Crimea will not be recognised or accepted. This cooperation is ongoing. A resolution, co-sponsored by Luxembourg in December 2016, deplores the bad situation when it comes to human rights in Crimea and reaffirms that Crimea is to be viewed as occupied territory.

Luxembourg has been voluntarily financing humanitarian projects in the East of Ukraine. There are almost two million internally displaced persons in the country. Most of them now find themselves in the non-occupied areas close to their regions of origin. Together with our European partners and Luxembourg, we are building houses and we look for work for these people. They suffer from a big misfortune, but we are not going to let go of them, we are convinced that we will win this war.

Economically, the biggest investor in Ukraine is Arcelor Mittal. It is one of the biggest tax payers. Other exchanges are rare at the moment, but we are hoping to deepen these economic relations.

What about Ukrainians in Luxembourg?

We have a honorary consul that has been working with us since 1995. He is a legal expert and member of the municipal council of the city of Luxembourg. He helps us a lot when it comes to questions of the protection of our citizens' rights. Officially, there are 653 Ukrainians here. There is even a Ukrainian weekend school. Ukrainians don't simply try to be useful to the Luxembourgish society, they also want to present Ukrainian culture a little bit. This can be done through our language, but also through exhibitions. We are planning for example, to have an exhibition of a famous Ukrainian painter in the coming months to celebrate our 25 years of diplomatic relationship.

You mentioned that the relations between our countries are mainly taking place on the level of international institutions. How do you judge your country's relationship with the European Union, especially in light of the association agreement that has been somewhat blocked through a referendum in the Netherlands last year?

The Maidan revolution has been triggered, as you know, because the former (Ukrainian) President was opposed to the association agreement with the EU. 100 people gave their lives during this revolution in order to move closer to Europe. In the East, 10,000 people already gave their lives for the values that were protected at the Maidan. The agreement has been signed. Of course, the Netherlands' ratification is still missing, but we're optimistic and hoping that we'll get it soon.

Speaking about cooperation itself. Today, 43% of our exchanges are with the EU, and this is thanks to the association agreement with the EU, even though it's not fully implemented yet. Thanks to this cooperation, we started doing dramatic reforms, in a positive sense, in our economic system. We adopted something close to 140 different laws and decrees based on the association agreement, which are moving us closer to the standards demanded by the agreement. These reforms go from questions related to human rights to necessary rights for the development of small and medium enterprises (SME).

We put the necessary structures in place to fight corruption. We established an electronic declarations system, allowing each and everyone to see all the assets and funds of different politicians, including myself as Ambassador. It's completely transparent.

Thanks to our cooperation with the EU, we were also able to stabilise our financial system and we avoided an economic collapse. Last year, we had a GDP growth of 1.6% according to statistics by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and they forecast a 3%-growth for 2017.

Which would be a remarkable growth considering that the country is currently suffering from a war...

Absolutely! And we are using around 5% of our budget for our army. But one always has to mention the financial aid and, let's call it friendly and professional help, of our European and American partners. This concerns training of our troops, exchange of information and building houses for internally displaced persons for example. Doing reforms in different areas and waging war at the same time is not easy, but our government is determined to go on, we have no other choice. It's a war against the values that the Ukrainian society has chosen.

We, as a nation, understand that the war in the East of Ukraine is not simply a war against Ukraine. It's a war against the values that the Ukrainian society has chosen. Human rights, rule of law, free speech and the respect of different cultures and ethnicities. We are dedicated to win this war.

Speaking of this war that doesn't seem to end any time soon. What is the situation in Ukraine like today, especially with the occupation of Crimea and the ongoing fights?

The fights indeed don't seem to end. I can give you some of the statistics of our intelligence services. In the occupied territory, there are between 3,000 and 4,000 Russian soldiers who are training and waging war. On the border between Ukraine and Russia, according to our information and that of NATO, there are between 30,000 and 40,000 Russian troops. Every time a convoy is sent from Russia to these so-called "Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk", they bring munitions. There are some 300 tanks and more than 500 artillery weapons in these regions. I could go on. These numbers show us that Mr Putin is not planning on stopping. This war is the only way he can explain Russia's bad economic situation to his own population and why there are no reforms.

So you believe it's not only a question of expansion for Russia, but also a way of diverting the attention from domestic problems?

Absolutely! You can see for example that after the Maidan revolution, our former President ran off to Russia. The Russian government was afraid that the next Maidan or Ukraine's example would be supported in Russia as well. They were afraid that the Russian people will rise up against this autocratic or totalitarian system, I am not afraid to call it like that, in their country. That was the first element that provoked Russia's reaction and drove them towards Crimea. Later on, a lot of Russian historians, fake ones if you ask me, and propagandists claimed that parts of Ukraine that belonged to the Russian empire after the revolution in 1917 had to become Russian again. They convinced Putin that these parts of Ukraine would be very thankful to him if he came and liberated them. He was convinced it would be just as easy as taking Crimea.

You're not only speaking about Crimea but other parts of Ukraine that are not currently occupied by Russia?

Yes, in these mainly industrial regions such as Donbass, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, Kherson, Odessa, there are many people that speak Russian, mainly in the cities. It's an archetype of the USSR, because many people were obliged to learn Russian if they wanted to have career chances. Even myself, who was born in a small village in Ukraine, if I wanted to have a career after my studies, which I did in Ukrainian by the way, I had to learn Russian.

Mr Putin considers every republic of the former USSR as an influence zone. The main idea by occupying Ukraine was to keep it from moving closer to Europe. We share more than 2,200km of borders with Russia, a democratic country right next to you can be dangerous. It has always been like that, it's not the first time in history. When the independent Ukraine was forced to sign an agreement with the USSR after the 1917 revolution, the Ukrainian population was opposing collectivisation. Because in his head, every Ukrainian is a peasant and the land is something essential to him. Most of Ukraine was agricultural back then. In 1932/33, Stalin organised a genocide by famine. In a period of one year, some 7 to 9 million Ukrainians starved to death. And this in a country that was called "the bread basket of Europe"! I recall the stories from my grandfather who told me that he brought wheat to Belgium by horse carriage before the revolution. There are a lot of examples illustrating this, let's call it "misunderstanding" between two nations.

Ukraine and Russia are very close geographically and historically. Today, like you mentioned, a lot of people in Ukraine speak Russian and there is a certain Russian ethnic minority. Certain parts of the population might therefore prefer moving closer to Russia to moving closer to the EU. Is there a certain division in the population?

If you go onto the battle fields in eastern Ukraine, you'll see soldiers of the Ukrainian army speaking all sorts of different languages. Historically, we are a multi-ethnic country, a multinational state. There are people speaking Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, Moldavian, Bulgarian, even Greek. On the battle fields, you'll see that "thanks" to the war, Ukraine has become united. There is no question of language or culture. Even those speaking Russian, Polish, Bulgarian or Greek consider themselves to be Ukrainian. It's a question of will, to want to understand one another. You, as Luxembourgers, you know this. You have at least two or three

languages and English which is spoken by almost everybody. Is there a problem for the educated population to communicate if there is a will to do it? I don't think so.

You mentioned the problem of corruption earlier, which is often cited as one of the obstacles to the stabilisation and reconstruction of Ukraine. How does the Ukrainian government react to this?

We have three different agencies that fight against corruption. We have created a Special Anti-corruption Prosecution body, then we have the agency called "agency for the fight against corruption" and the National Bureau for the fight against corruption. Criminal cases are treated by the Special Anti-corruption Prosecution body, economic fraud by the National bureau which is assisted by the agency. It's also thanks to our cooperation with the EU and their expertise that we were able to create the necessary legislative conditions to set up these agencies.

We also introduced an electronic system that aims at total transparency. Every tender by the state passes through this system, where every institution or company can participate. For example, if one public institution wants to buy computers, the tender is published and companies that want to sell can announce their intention of participating officially and transparently through this system. Everybody can monitor this online, it's completely transparent. What's the proposed price, who won the tender, why and so on.

One inevitable last question. Mr Trump became the President of the United States on January 20, 2017. What do you think this could mean for the future of the region and Ukraine?

We are convinced that if we continue building a prosperous democratic state on the basis of European values, the Republicans, Mr Trump and the United States will continue to support our country. Traditionally, Republicans have always supported Ukraine, even more so than Democrats. Speaking about the cooperation between Ukraine and the United States, we are convinced that this largely depends on Ukraine as well. We have to keep moving towards our reforms, the fight against corruption and create the necessary economic conditions for SMEs. We are convinced that we will not be forgotten, if we don't forget ourselves.

12. Poland. "Ukrainian Migrants Face Abuse at Work," *Polish News Bulletin*, 15 February 2017.

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Dziennik Gazeta Prawna established that Polish employers tend to abuse employees from Ukraine. Ukrainian workers are usually employed on the basis of contracts of specific work which do not include social insurance premiums. What is more, employees are forced to cover all costs associated with employment. The contracts include provisions concerning restrictions and penalties which may leave Ukrainian employees without any remuneration. For example, fines of PLN100 are enforced for failing to notify the employer about absence at work with two days' notice; theft or any other offence committed against the employer is penalised with a fine of PLN3000. Fines of PLN5000 are enforced for failing to keep information concerning the employer and the employer's clients confidential.

13. “Poland More Open to Immigrants,” *Polish News Bulletin*, 25 January 2017.

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Major changes are expected in Poland’s immigration policy. Migrants arriving from the East will be able to find jobs and obtain permanent residence permits more easily, provided that they meet the conditions specified by the government. A government team, consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Development, Family and Interior Affairs, has commenced the work on the new regulations. The new immigration policy would form part of the economic development strategy and help compensate for the shortage of workforce on the job market. Its main targets would be immigrants from. The current policy is based on declarations which allow Ukrainian migrants to stay for up to six months. Poland may grant long term visas on less restrictive terms to selected groups of immigrants, including young people and people with high professional qualifications. A map of demand for immigrant workforce would make it easier for Ukrainian immigrants to find jobs.

14. United Kingdom. “Ukrainian Demo Calls on Theresa May to Oppose Putin’s War,” *Leftfootforward.org*, 6 February 2017.

Activists say PM must not ‘betray’ Ukraine

Ukrainian activists are calling on Theresa May to support Ukraine in its ongoing war with Russia, warning Vladimir Putin is a threat to ‘the whole of Europe’ and the United Kingdom.

At a demonstration outside the Prime Minister’s home in Downing Street yesterday, Londoners of Ukrainian heritage demanded tougher sanctions on Russia and more military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

Protesters waved Ukrainian flags and homemade anti-Putin signs and chanted slogans: ‘Defend Ukraine, defend UK!’ ‘Don’t betray, Theresa May!’ ‘1-2-3-4, stop Putin, stop the war!’

It comes amid renewed fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces in the town of Avdiivka, where shelling last week has left residents with no water, heat or electricity.

Stephan Shakhno, spokesman for Euromaidan London, which organised the protest, said the Minsk ceasefire deal Theresa May cited in her press conference with US President Donald Trump has been violated by Russia.

Speaking to Left Foot Forward, he said:

“The Minsk agreement is in shatters. The Russians have never really upheld it. There should have been a ceasefire two years ago, and the Russians keep on shooting, and they always blame it on us. If the Russians stop shooting, the war will end. If Ukraine stops shooting, Ukraine will cease to exist.”

He said the UK is a guarantor of Ukraine's security under the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, signed by Britain, Russia, the United States in 1994, which saw Ukraine give up its nuclear weapons in exchange for protection against the 'threat or use of force'. Shakhno said current sanctions have 'failed to stop Russia' and called for assets held by Putin-linked oligarchs in Britain to be frozen.

"We know there are all these Russian oligarchs here who are Putin's cronies," he said. "They keep their billions in London. A very effective way would simply be to freeze their assets until Russia pulls out their troops from Ukraine."

Russia should be kicked out of the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Transactions (SWIFT), he said, and Ukraine's border should be monitored 24/7 by an international peacekeeping mission.

Shakhno said activists were also calling the UK to provide more humanitarian and military aid to Ukraine. He said:

"Ukrainian soldiers, of which already 10,000 have lost their lives, they are protecting not only Ukraine but the whole of Europe, and the UK as well. Because it's not Ukraine that is the primary target of Putin. As we have seen now, with him meddling in the United States, and France now in the elections, his main enemy is the west – the democratic nations. He tries to destabilise all democratic societies. He killed democracy in Russia [...] and he tries to export his model to the other countries."

Activists are also calling for RT, formerly Russia Today, the Kremlin-controlled English language TV station, to be investigated.

Shakhno said RT is 'a mouthpiece of Russian propaganda. They are spreading fake news.[...] They are brainwashing people.' Ofcom found in September 2015 that RT had breached impartiality rules but the channel still has a broadcasting licence.

Vlodko Pawluk runs a community centre, the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain's branch in Holland Park, west London, and spoke at the protest. He told Left Foot Forward, of the three-year conflict:

"It's called the forgotten war, but it should not be forgotten. It's in the centre of Europe."

British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson told reporters at an EU foreign affairs council meeting in Brussels today there is 'no case for relaxation' of sanctions on Russia.

Adam Barnett is staff writer for Left Foot Forward.

15. United Kingdom. "Exhibition Uncovers the History of Famous Carlisle Club," *News and Star* (Carlisle), 3 February 2017.

For more than 50 years, Carlisle's Ukrainian Club stood at the heart of a community.

Thousands passed through the doors of the venue on Silloth Street, off Wigton Road.

But last April, it shut its doors for the final time and the building was put up for sale – although a buyer is yet to be found.

For many people who stepped foot inside the club since it opened in 1965, memories are precious.

At the time of its closure people spoke of how key family moments - wedding receptions, Christenings and funeral wakes - were held inside.

But regulars – and those who never visited the venue – will now be able to take one last glimpse inside thanks to an exhibition being held at Carlisle Library.

Titled “The Ukrainians’ Last Dance”, the exhibition features photographs and items that were an integral part of the Northern Soul movement, which called the club home during its latter years.

The club was initially set up to cater for Carlisle’s Ukrainian population who had stayed in Britain after World War Two.

Vincent, who wrote a book called Carlisle and Its Villages, told The Cumberland News that he was approached by Eric, who wanted to document the last night of the club.

“He asked me if I wanted to work on a project with him,” he said.

“At the time, I was working on my second book but that got put on hold because of the floods.

“We wanted to try and recreate what the club was like in the seventies, which is why all the photos have been displayed in black and white.”

Vincent said he expects the exhibition will bring back a lot of fond memories for people across the city.

When we were setting up, one woman asked us why everyone was dancing separately, which I found rather amusing,” he said.

“We’ve also got some baby powder in a cabinet and someone asked why we’d included that.

“I had to explain that it was put on the floor for the benefit of the dancers.”

Eric, who admits he had no previous experience of taking photographs in a low-lit nightclub, said the experience was a learning curve.

He said: “The way I went about it was to mix everything up and hope for the best.

“Some worked and some didn’t, but I was trying to avoid using any flash – the theory being that I didn’t want to kill the mood or the atmosphere in the club.

“In the end, I partially resorted to my camera’s built-in flash unit – the only flash I have and it helped.

“For what it’s worth I got a result which works, though if I ever do anything like this again I will seek out photographers who specialise in nightclub work and ask their advice on the best way to go about such an endeavour.”

Stephen White, at Carlisle Library, said: “I think a lot of people will be interested in the exhibition.

“The Northern Soul movement has quite a following and there are a lot of aficionados out there.

“I’ve already spoken to someone from Whitehaven who said he’ll be coming across to see it.

“As well as the photographs we’ve got memorabilia including patches and vinyl records.”

The exhibition will be open to visitors at Carlisle Library until March 5.

**16. United Kingdom. “Ukraine Aspires to Be Member of the EU, When We’re Ready,”
Western Mail, 30 January 2017.**

PG 21

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Natalia Galibarenko, Ukraine’s Ambassador to the UK, has just spent three days in Cardiff. Chief Reporter Martin Shipton sought her views on Brexit, Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin...

AS the UK prepares to leave the EU, there are other countries queuing up to take our place.

Among them is Ukraine, a former Soviet state that in terms of geographical area is actually the largest country entirely in Europe.

In fact, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine - which has included military action in the eastern Donbass region with the displacement of thousands from their homes and the downing of a Malaysian Airlines passenger plane - is between those who look to the EU as a beacon of freedom and democracy, and those who support Russia and reject closer Western links.

Natalia Galibarenko is Ukraine’s first woman Ambassador to the UK, a 38-year-old career diplomat who has just spent three days in Cardiff meeting AMs, officials and members of the small Ukrainian community in Wales, which includes Counsel General Mick Antoniwi, the Labour AM for Pontypridd.

As a diplomat who has worked closely with EU institutions, what did she think of the Brexit vote? “I was surprised,” she said. “I watched the results as they came in on the BBC.

“I realised that I, like many of my colleagues, had been mistaken. We had assumed that the campaign to stay would be successful. But the past is the past, and facts are facts. I think what is more important now is to see what the steps forward will be - what sort of deal will be struck? The goal put forward by the Prime Minister herself to do everything in two years is very ambitious.”

Asked whether, coming from a country where membership of the EU was something to be aspired towards, she found it odd being Ambassador in a country that wants to leave, Ms Galibarenko said: “I’ve been joking to my British colleagues that with a vacancy coming up, Ukraine is ready to fill it. You’re right - in my country the EU seems like a final goal, and we aspire to becoming a member. Even though we’re aware of some problems that the EU is undergoing, that doesn’t mean that we in Ukraine will be changing our foreign policy objective.

“However, the point is that we are not ready at this moment to meet the requirements of the EU, so in this context the goal is to build a European state in Ukraine, and then at some point - perhaps in 10 years time – we’ll be asking for membership.”

One of the main problems, says Ms Galibarenko, is that her country still has a fair way to go before endemic corruption is eliminated. The government has been taking steps aimed at ousting the shadow - or black - economy, where taxes are not paid, to limit the influence of oligarchs and to create equal opportunities for all enterprises. She said: “In the last two years the government has done more than in the previous 23. However, let me say that the situation is far from perfect, although things are going in the right direction.

“The problem is that corruption was very deep-rooted. You can’t eliminate it in just two or three years. We’ve established an independent, anti-corruption body which is investigating top officials. Last year we introduced an electronic declaration system, where all top officials, ministers and MPs have to declare electronically all their assets and all their revenue. Then the anti-corruption body looks at whether the source of income for the assets declared - expensive yachts etc - are appropriate and justified. Politicians and senior officials have been taking bribes.

If you’ve been a civil servant for 20 years and own some big property, you have to explain from what sources the money to buy it came.”

Corruption has been at different levels, says the ambassador - from corporate bribes for government contracts down to the low-ranking official who expects a bribe to speed up an application for a passport.

Ukraine has lost part of its territory - the Crimean peninsula has been annexed by Vladimir Putin and pro-Russian rebels hold the Donbass region. Does the West have reason to fear Putin and his Russia? Ms Galibarenko said: “It was a miscalculation to believe that Putin would [create] a market economy in the Russian Federation. He would like to see some kind of restoration of the Soviet Union. That is why he launched an aggression against Ukraine. It’s not about territory – it’s about creating a permanent conflict on our territory and embarrassing us from entering the

EU and co-operating with Nato. I don't think the West is frightened by Putin, but it's not prepared for dealing with him."

Asked whether Donald Trump would be able to command the level of respect as leader of the free world that previous US presidents had, the Ambassador said: "I think it's too premature to speculate whether he will be that leader. His deeds will show us.

"I think that in negotiations there can be some shifting of the policies of Mr Trump. He's a very sensible man - he was a successful businessman. We can expect he would be making the same rational approach to international relations. But at this moment we're all in a 'wait and see mode' still."

During her visit to Wales, Ms Galibarenko was shown archive material on John Hughes, the Merthyr Tydfil industrialist who established Ukraine's biggest ironworks in what became Donetsk, capital of the Donbass region. She is also a great admirer of Gareth Jones, the Welsh journalist whose reports exposed the 1930s man-made famine known as the Holodomor that killed millions during the Stalin era.

"We are trying to get the Holodomor recognised as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people. Gareth Jones, who was so brave to tell people the truth, set an example, and several years ago we established a special award in his name for the most profound and professional journalists who are brave enough to speak the truth to people."

17. USA. "UGCC Parish in Chicago Collects Half a Million Dollars for Wounded Soldiers," *RISU*, 23 February 2017.

The program "Open Church" tells a story of the Ukrainian Church of St. Joseph the Betrothed, Chicago. This relatively new Ukrainian parish has a church, which has been repeatedly noted as an outstanding architectural construction.

Once a year up to ten thousand people come together at its yard for the annual Ukrainian Festival 'Uktoberfest'. This is a parish where the largest number of Ukrainian organizations and communities operate. Its moto is 'Welcoming parish'.

The program guest – the church rector, Father Mykola Buryadnyk – told via Skype how one of the "most vibrant" congregations in America was started and what it is now like, as well as about the assistance they send to Ukraine. From the beginning of the war in eastern Ukraine, the laity gathered half a million dollars as humanitarian aid to our wounded warriors.

"Just at this time we have the fifth soldier who undergoes rehabilitation treatment in America. This is Leonid Khmelkov, paratrooper of the 95th brigade, who was wounded in the airport of Donetsk. He underwent 43 surgeries and we accepted him here with our doctors of Ukrainian origin who help him with rehabilitation," Fr Mykola said.

According to the church rector, this charity not only helps soldiers and their families, but also allows to unite our community overseas. "We provide them with financial assistance, but these

guys are helping us as well,” said Fr. Mykola Buryadnyk. “As we see, heroism and such acts educates us and encourage us to unite and be ambassadors of Ukraine in the world.”

[Religious Information Service of Ukraine]

18. USA. “Students Connect with Ukraine,” *Setonian*, 1 February 2017.

Posted By Staff Writer The Setonian, on Feb 1, 2017

Dr. James Daly and his students in the EDST Social Education Program are working eye-to-eye, literally, with Ukrainian students via Skype on the Visualization of the Ukrainian Diaspora project.

The objective of this project is to create a website containing an abundant amount of information pertaining to the Ukrainian Diaspora. Daly’s definition of Ukrainian Diaspora is, “the spread of Ukrainians around the world.” Four waves occurred during Ukrainian immigration to the U.S., beginning with the first wave in 1877 and the last wave starting in the 1990s. The four waves, alongside other facts, are displayed on the website the students are creating.

With the help of the Ukrainian students at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, the Seton Hall team was able to obtain enough information to create a website using the technology in the Digital Humanities Program. Daly became aware of this program over the summer and then began his mid-summer training for his students in the fall.

“I am truly amazed at the work ethic of my students,” Daly said. “They took their own personal time to work with the Ukrainian students, teaching them this new technology on how to store images, pictures and texts on the template as well as creating an interactive map for the website.”

The students helped transcribe audiotapes using Google Translate for the Ukrainian students. This helped them understand and then replicate their findings onto the website in their personal language and writing. The website portrays an informational dual aspect for both the English and Ukrainian languages.

“What I found most valuable about this project was getting to work with Ukrainian students and learn from them as we researched the Ukrainian Diaspora,” said Alison McCarthy, one of Daly’s students. “Through creating this site and tracking the immigration of Ukrainians, I learned much more about Ukrainian history and immigration as a whole. Being able to produce a web-based document and then go onto share it with Ukrainian students was interesting and fun to do. It was very rewarding to see my hard work come together on a website that others can use to learn about Ukrainian immigration.”

Although this new technology had a positive outcome and benefitted the project, the students faced some difficulties.

“The challenge we first faced was learning the Visual Eyes software,” said Jake Etienne, another student of Daly’s. “None of us were familiar to it at all and we had to create a project off of it,

plus show foreign students how to use it. Luckily, Veronica from Space 154 helped us immensely in addition to us helping each other.”

The Ukrainians lacked connection to and comfort in their heritage after dispersion. The students saw that, when groups move to a new country, they like to keep their old heritage. Through the efforts of this website and the communication with the Ukrainian university, the students have created a foundation for educating and bringing awareness to this historic event.

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