

EU-Ukraine: Responding to challenges together

Media Digest, January 2024

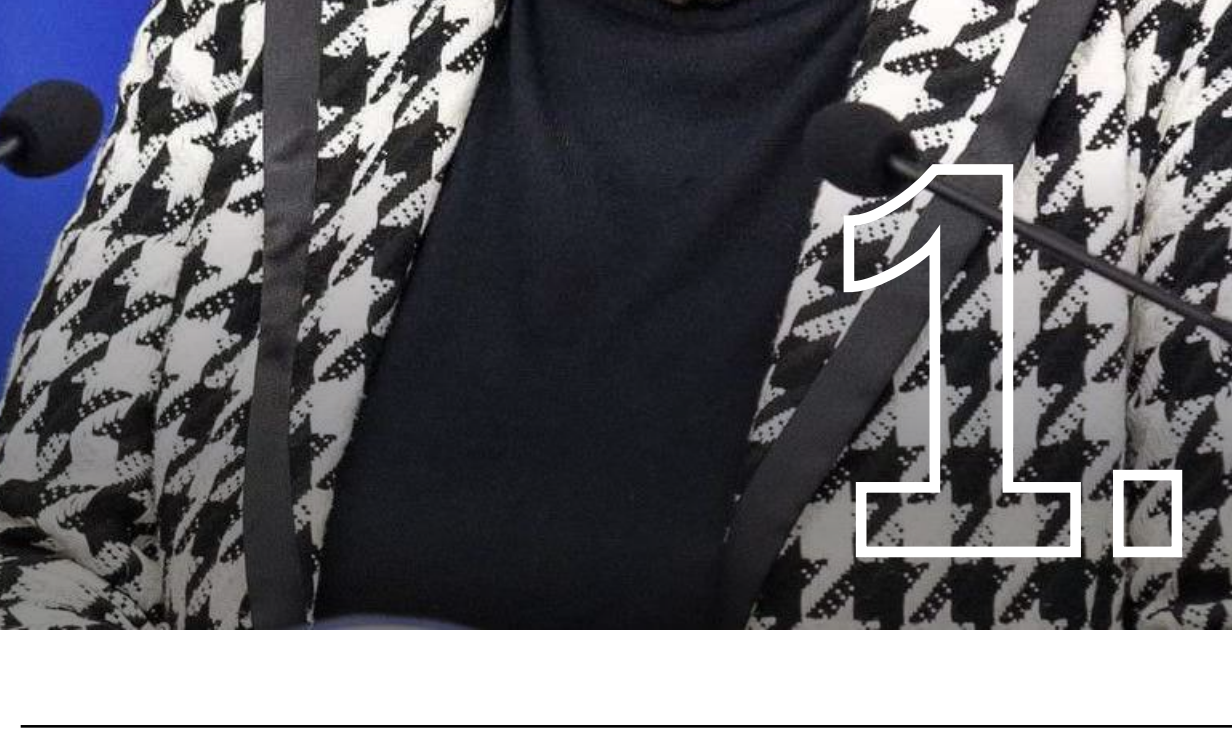


The latest issue of the Media Digest features publications on the key events of January manifesting the condition and prospects of EU-Ukraine relations.

An eventful start to 2024 has proven that the world is facing new challenges that can only be overcome by joint efforts, united around the idea of ensuring peace and decisive changes for the future. The European Union does not stand aside of global trends, and is preparing reforms that will strengthen its role in world politics.

Find more information in the latest issue of the Media Digest.

TOP 3



EU Ambassador to Ukraine Katarina Mathernová: 'A new chapter in EU-Ukraine relations will be written in 2024'

At the end of December 2023, in an article for European Pravda, EU Ambassador to Ukraine Katarina Mathernová wrote that the war in Ukraine is forcing us to look at the upcoming new year with fear, 'but also, a determination to fight on until Ukraine's victor. At the same time, we are entering the new year with hope and anticipation, as a new chapter in EU-Ukraine relations will be written in 2024'. Joining the EU, which is supported by the absolute majority of Ukrainians, is not a task only for the government. 'It is a whole-of-society effort,' stressed Mathernová.

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Josep Borrell: 'Our security is at stake'

Following the meeting of the EU Council, in an article for the Italian publication la Repubblica, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell stressed that Europe cannot allow the Russian president to win in Ukraine: 'Our security is at stake'. Europe must provide Ukraine with all the necessary assistance to win, and do so as quickly as possible, he said.

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EU approves its priorities for 2024 in the field of human rights

On 22 January, the Council of the European Union approved key priorities of the European Union in United Nations Human Rights fora in 2024, reaffirming the EU's commitment to the rule of law and an international system built on fairness and justice. In particular, the EU strongly opposes the death penalty in all circumstances, and condemns the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

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UKRAINE-EU: JOINING ALGORITHM

Ukraine's legislation screening is on the agenda

During a meeting of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, the key priorities of the agenda for EU-Ukraine relations in the near future were discussed, primarily in the context of Ukraine moving closer to the actual start of the negotiation process on Ukraine's accession to the EU.

The parties agreed to conduct a pre-accession screening of Ukrainian legislation, which is another step towards the start of the negotiations.

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EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

Russia's war activated Eastern Partnership

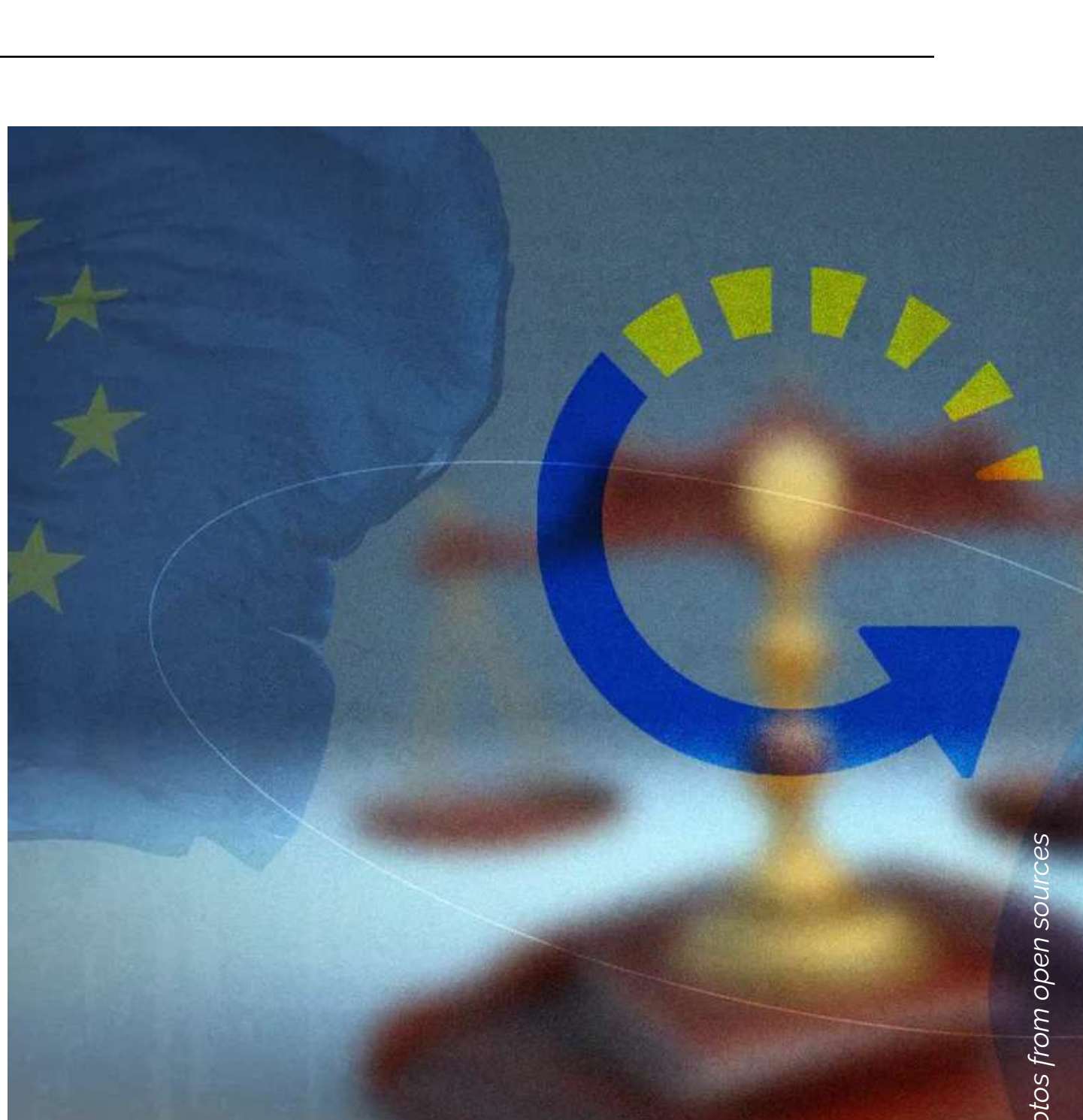
Russia's invasion of Ukraine has increased integration between individual countries in the region and the EU, according to the latest Eastern Partnership Index. The Eastern Partnership Index, developed by the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, evaluates progress of the participating countries in the following areas: democracy, good governance, and the rule of law; approximation of the policies of the Eastern Partnership countries with the EU; and the sustainable development goals. The Index also takes into account different types of changes, such as progress in reforms, retreat from democracy, or deviation from the political course, as well as stagnation or lack of change. Furthermore, the index integrates cross-cutting issues across its evaluation, with a keen focus on gender equality and human rights.

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Judicial reform: How to overcome staff shortage

Ukraine has started judicial reform and has a strategic vision of its implementation. In the context of negotiations on EU accession, the European Commission outlined a list of priority areas: legislative guarantees of the independence and impartiality of judges; open selection of judges based on objective criteria of candidate quality; and codes of ethics and automatic assignment of cases to judges. How can these goals be reached when there is a staff shortage?

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ECONOMY, FINANCE, BUSINESS

Routes to Ukraine on updated indicative road and railway maps of the EU

Ukraine and the European Union have agreed on the acceptability of updated indicative road and railway maps of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). They will be finalised by the EU in April 2024. The European Commission has already excluded Russian and Belarusian routes from the TEN-T network, and also downgraded the status of routes in the EU at the junctions with these countries.

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EIB to provide EUR 3 million for energy-efficient upgrades in three Ukrainian cities

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has delivered EUR 3 million to improve energy efficiency in public buildings in Zaporizhzhia, Kamianske and Lutsk. The funding will be directed at thermal modernisation and energy-saving measures in healthcare and educational facilities. These upgrades are expected to reduce energy costs in the long term and help create a greener urban environment.

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EU supports women empowerment

The first participants of the EU-funded 'We Act II: Women Empowerment Action' project have successfully completed vocational training in ten applied professions at employment support centres in the Suny, Poltava, Dnipro, and Mykolaiv regions of Ukraine. The project is implemented by the United Nations Population Fund in Ukraine (UNFPA), with financial support from the European Union in partnership with the NGO 'Innovative Social Solutions'. A total of 300 women participated in a one-month training course and received starter kits with tools and materials to help them start their own business or find employment.

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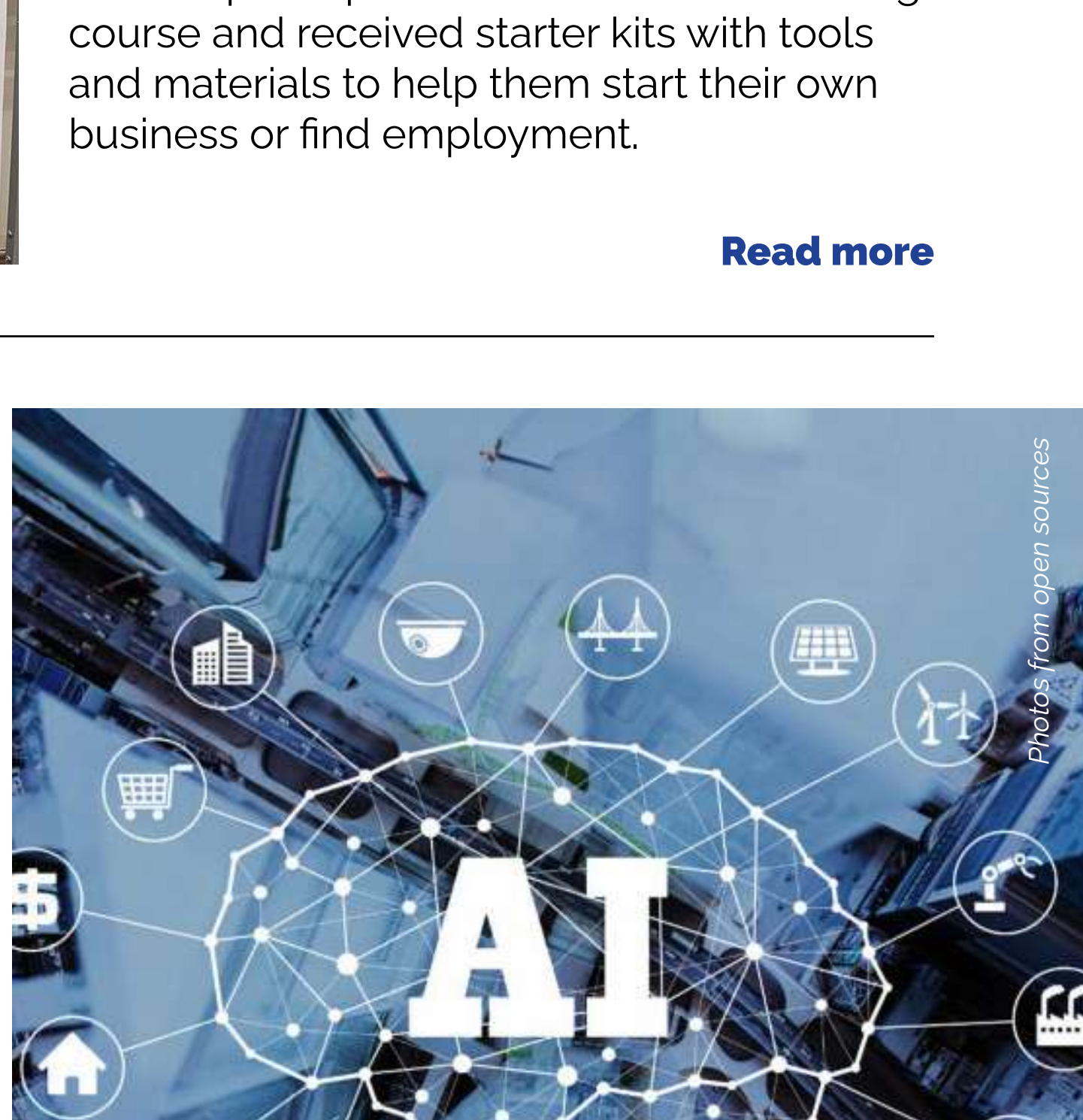
SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

EU to establish European Artificial Intelligence Office

The European Parliament, leaders of EU countries, and experts from the European Commission plan to regulate the use of AI in EU territory.

The EU's proposals, based on the AI Act, provide a set of rules that apply only to systems that are considered 'high-risk' and are used critically in sensitive areas such as critical infrastructure, education, human resources and law enforcement.

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Erasmus+ programme: Ukrainian universities won over 2 400 new International Mobility projects

Based on the results of this year's call, Ukraine will receive the biggest number of mobility projects among 144 Partner Countries all over the world. International Credit Mobility Act provides an opportunity for higher learning institutions to send students and staff abroad (in other Programme or Partner countries) to study, teach or train at participating institutions.

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GOOD GOVERNANCE

EU, Sweden and UNDP launch ten Recovery and Development Offices to support sustainable post-war restoration in Ukraine

The offices, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and backed by methodological and expert support, have a crucial mission — to bolster local communities and territories in their efforts towards recovery and development. Moreover, they play a vital role in promoting regional and international cooperation and streamlining coordination among all stakeholders involved in tackling the complex challenges posed by the war.

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The media digest was prepared by the EU project 'Communicating EU for Ukrainians CEU4U'.

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