EU-Ukraine: Responding to Challenges Together

Media Digest, September 2024

RESPONDING TOGETHER

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

TOP 3

Ursula von der Leyen in Kyiv: Russian money will work for Ukraine

During her visit to Kyiv, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen announced a proposal to provide Ukraine with macro-financial assistance of up to EUR 35 billion. The EU initiative is part of the G7 countries' plans to use immobilised Russian assets. It is based on the idea of using extraordinary windfall profits generated by immobilised Russian assets in the EU. To implement the initiative, Euroclear, a special Ukraine Support Coordination Mechanism (SCM) has been established. Euroclear's activities are considered to be non-repayable for Ukraine, and Kyiv will independently determine where to allocate these funds.

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Katarina Mathernová: "My goal is to do everything I can to support Ukraine in its war effort. I believe that the European Union has actually done a lot in this respect."

The first year of Katarina Mathernová's tenure as the EU Ambassador to Ukraine was filled with numerous events. In an interview with the Media Digest, she talks about achievements, the current difficult period, and EU plans to "provide as much support as possible to the accession negotiations".

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Roberta Metsola: 'This is a litmus test of our political generation.'

The EU's support for Ukraine is not an act of altruism but a matter of its own security, stated the President of the EU, Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament. Speaking on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Ukraine's Monday 23 September, she emphasised that the world cannot ignore Ukraine and that the country's victory would be a victory for all Ukraine. «We will always advocate for peace, but it must be just, with dignity and with the guarantees that Ukraine requires», Metsola concluded.

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EU UKRAINE ACCESSION ALGORITHM

Ukraine is fighting for its right to join the EU

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stressed his support for the efforts to implement the reforms needed for EU membership. Ukraine is currently working on multiple fronts carrying out the necessary reforms to join the European Union while at the same time fiercely defending the home front. Although Ukraine is striving to protect its civilian population, it is also actively improving the economic and financial capacity to meet its state obligations, Borrell explained.

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Time for change: How can Ukraine benefit from reforms?

At the request of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, former European Central Bank President Mario Draghi has developed a plan for EU reforms. The report, "The future of European competitiveness", will also play a role in the discussion. How can Ukraine take advantage of these reforms? Ukraine's Minister of Economy of Transformation Yulia Svyrydenko and the question with Jacob Kirkegaard, an analyst from leading European think tank Bruegel.

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ECONOMY, FINANCE, BUSINESS

To learn and grow: 4,700 skilled workers for Ukraine

Over the past two years Estonia have joined the German government's vocational training programme to enhance training opportunities for Ukrainian young adults in Ukraine. The programme will support institutions offering vocational education, promote the exchange of best practices in public sphere partnerships for training of skilled workers. With new funding, the number of participants has grown from EUR 10 million to EUR 20 million, and its reach now extends across all Ukrainian combined territory.

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SECURITY SUPPORT

EU supports Ukrainian defence industry: It is faster, cheaper, and more effective for the economy

The EU has allocated EUR 400 million from immobilised Russian assets to support Ukrainian defence industry. This is the support will continue, according to Katarina Mathernová, EU Ambassador to Ukraine, in the interview with Media Digest. Moreover, this approach supports Ukraine's defence capabilities in a way that is faster, cheaper and cost-effective, while also reducing reliance on international logistics and boosting the defence industry and Ukraine's economy. The EU Ambassador expressed hope that the EU could learn from this and use the incredible innovation happening in Ukraine in this area as a platform for financing.

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EU strengthens the technical base of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine

Ukrainian border guards received cutting-edge equipment and training from the European Union as part of the "EU Support for Strengthening Integrated Border Management in Ukraine – Phase Resilience" project. The handover event was attended by EU Ambassador to Ukraine Katarina Mathernová, Head of the Office of Chief of the State Border Guard Service Volodymyr Nikiforenko, and representatives of the European Union Advisory Mission Civilian Policy Development (CivMPD), the project's implementing agency. Last year, the programme also provided medical and radio stations, mobile X-ray scanners, and rehabilitation equipment for State Border Guard Service personnel.

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ENERGY AND THE EUROPEAN "GREEN COURSE"

To provide energy equipment and protection

Given the significant threat posed by Russian attacks on new energy generation facilities, the European Commission has allocated EUR 10 million to provide Ukraine with both defence and financing. The Commission highlights the need to "provide Ukraine with equipment and capacities and air defence systems to safeguard these facilities from potential destruction in the near future.

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Lithuania transfers CHP plant to Ukraine

Ukraine needs 17 GW of power generation capacity to survive the winter. Lithuania announced an additional EUR 50 million for this purpose. To date, more than 1,000 megawatts of power generation have been transferred to Ukraine through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. In mid-August, Lithuania transferred a CHP plant and equipment to Ukraine. The plant is the third-largest power plant in Lithuania. It was built in Soviet times and its installed thermal capacity is 450 MW and its electrical capacity is 360 MW. The plant was dismantled, transported and shipped to Ukraine.

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ЗБЕРЕГТИ СЩЕ БІЛЬШЕ СВІТЛА

Together We Bring Light: Bulb exchange programme has concluded, while the EU continues to strengthen its support for Ukraine's energy sector

Ukrainians have received 40 million modern energy-saving bulbs by exchanging outdated incandescent bulbs through the national programme "Together We Bring Light". This initiative, which was implemented by the Ministry of Energy of Ukraine, with the support of the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Over 8 million Ukrainians participated, saving substantial amounts of much needed energy.

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LAW AND RULE

Law granting EU representatives the authority to inspect any individual or legal entity involved in receiving EU funding adopted in Ukraine

The Verkhovna Rada ratified the Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union on Ukraine participation in the EU Anti-Fraud Programme (EUAF). Under the agreement, representatives of EU institutions and bodies, specifically the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors, and the European Anti-Fraud Office of the European Commission will have the power to conduct investigations, helping to ensure the proper use of EU funds by any individual residing in Ukraine or legal entity established in Ukraine and receiving EU funding.

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Shadow report: Civil society's assessment of the fight against corruption and European integration

On Monday 16 September, a coalition of Ukrainian civil society organisations, Transparency International Ukraine, presented a Shadow Report to the European Commission and the EU Foreign Affairs in Ukraine in 2024. The Shadow Report is so named because it's not an official government report, but it is a report compiled by experts and civil society at the request of European partners. This is the first time such a report has been compiled within the framework of Ukraine's European integration process. This document covers the period from December 2023 to the European Commission's 2023 Report on Ukraine, entitled Justice and Fundamental Rights. The Shadow Report is a chapter in a prerequisite for Ukraine's accession to the EU. Learn more.

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HUMANITARIAN AID AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

NGO 'Veteran Space' helps veterans and their families with EU's support

The Vinnytsia-based NGO "Veteran Space" provides a wide range of services: physical rehabilitation, psychological and legal support, and social and domestic adaptation for veterans and families of fallen or missing soldiers. Experts believe such spaces should exist in every community across the EU and in Ukraine, with 5 located in the Vinnytsia Oblast. EU assistance is instrumental in establishing and supporting these initiatives.

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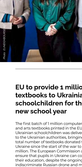

EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE

EU Defence Innovation Office launched in Kyiv

On 20 September, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and Ukraine's Defence Minister Rustem Umerov marked a significant milestone in the opening of the EU Office of Defence Innovation in Kyiv. This is a landmark event, signifying a new level of cooperation between Ukraine and the EU in the field of defence technology. The primary focus of this interaction is to enhance the defence capabilities of Ukraine, including joint developments in IoT and weapons production. As a reminder, the IT Ukraine Association in Brussels, Belgium has already attracted more than EUR 70 million from 15 participating countries, with the Ukrainian government and EU countries has collected EUR 500 million and transferred thousands of drones to Ukraine.

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EU to provide 1 million textbooks to Ukrainian schoolchildren for the new school year

The first batch of children computer and arts textbooks printed in the EU for Ukraine's pupils has been delivered to the Ukrainian authorities, bringing the total number of textbooks donated to Ukraine's pupils to 1 million since 2022. Further, the European Commission aims to ensure that pupils in Ukraine can continue their education, even in the current and undoubtedly Russian attacks and mass attacks and power supply disruptions. The initiative is funded under the Erasmus+ programme.

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Training skilled personnel is a priority

Seven new projects involving 20 KEET beneficiaries in Ukraine have been selected for funding under the European Union Energy Efficiency Financial Capacity Building in the Ukraine Programme (EEFCB) and training (KET), in total out of 299 applications from 15 countries, as recommended for funding.

Ukrainian organisations will benefit from the experience of European partners in implementing energy efficiency projects and training (KET), the project will develop and implement a training programme for 20 beneficiaries. Grants range from EUR 100,000 to EUR 400,000 per project.

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Journalism during wartime: Red lines and freedom of speech

On 19 to 20 September, Kyiv hosted National Forum "Media in Wartime". Journalists and professionals from across the country, who engaged in discussions about freedom of speech, the challenges faced by the market, and the challenges journalists face during the war.

The issue of media freedom and independence during wartime has a complex dimension, and it is precisely why the discussions were substantive and candid. The panel, titled Media in Wartime: Challenges and Prospects, moderated by Ihor Chistol, featured the Ambassador of the European Union to Ukraine, Katarina Mathernová, and the Head of Mission of the Ambassador spoke about.

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The media digest was prepared by the EU project "Support to Ukrainian Media" (SUM).

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