

NEWS FROM UKRAINE

Travels from Ukraine to Norway simplified

A visa simplification agreement between Ukraine and Norway, signed in Oslo in February, 2008, has taken effect on 1 September, 2011.

“The agreement on visa facilitation provides for the introduction by the Norwegian side of a simplified and standardized procedure for processing applications and making decisions on visa applications for our compatriots,” said Ukrainian Foreign Ministry’s spokesman Oleksandr Dykusharov in September, 2011.

In particular, multiple entry visas valid for up to five years will be issued to: parents and children of citizens of Ukraine who have a residence permit in Norway; businessmen; journalists; officials of central and local government; permanent members of official delegations.

Multiple entry visas for one year will be issued to: figures of science and culture; sportsmen; professional carriers; train crews; participants of exchange programs between sister cities.

The following categories may apply for free visa procedure: wife/husband, parents and children of citizens of Ukraine who have a residence permit in Norway; pupils and students and citizens who travel with a humanitarian purpose; disabled people and accompanying persons; athletes and accompanying persons; journalists; professional carriers; train crews; children under the age of 18 and dependent under the age of 21 years; members of official delegations, representatives of central and local authorities, participants of exchange programs between sister cities.

Read more: The National News Agency of Ukraine, 1 September, 2011
<http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/order/?id=230461>

Ukraine has moved closer to a safe level by the number of visa refusals

Ukrainians have been receiving more visas in year 2010 than even before, while reducing the level of visa refusals. However, the progress of the country is quite modest in comparison with Russia, China and Turkey. Among the Eastern Partnership countries the best case of “friendly” visa policy with the European Union (EU) is Belarus while the worst case is definitely Georgia.

The EU issued 1,227,001 visas in Ukraine among all categories of visas. It is about 9.13% of their total number in the world. It was recalled that in year 2009 the EU and Schengen states had issued 9.3% of the total number of visas in Ukraine. So, Ukrainian share is slightly shortened on the EU visa map, but the absolute number of visas has risen on about 100,000 visas (11% of visas issued).

Ukraine continues to hold steadily the second position in the world by the number of the EU visas. About 30% of the visas issued in Ukraine are the multiple entry visas, but the official statistics doesn’t reveal the term of validity of such visas.

Read more: Europe without Barriers, 2 September, 2011
<http://novisa.com.ua/analytic/The-official-EU-data-Ukraine-has-moved-closer-to-a-safe-level-by-the-number-of-visa-refusals/en>

Child rights issue becomes matter of national importance

As was disclosed in September, 2011 by Commissioner for Children's rights under the President of Ukraine Yurii Pavlenko, the national database on children's rights will be created in Ukraine.

"This will help keep under constant control each case of violation of child rights, monitor what was done to improve the situation, and what was the result of measures taken," Mr. Pavlenko said. According to Mr. Pavlenko, the national database will contain together with complex data about children, their age, gender and social status.

Source: National Radio Company of Ukraine, 5 September, 2011
<http://www.nrcu.gov.ua/index.php?id=148&listid=152038>

Ukraine signs declaration on customs cooperation with Moldova and Romania

Chairman of the State Customs Service of Ukraine Ihor Kaletnik, Director General of the Moldovan Customs Service Tudor Balitchi and Head of the Romanian National Customs Authority Viorel Comanita signed a Joint Declaration about tripartite customs cooperation.

A meeting of heads of customs agencies, during which the document was signed, was held on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of creation of the Moldovan customs system.

New tripartite partnership in the customs sector concerns different spheres of customs cooperation and raising efficiency of fighting against violations, simplification of freightage and exchange of experience, including within the framework of European programs.

Read more: The National News Agency of Ukraine, 5 September, 2011
<http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/order/?id=230701>

Hungary started to issue the biometric permits to Ukrainians on border crossing

Hungary starts to issue biometric permits to citizens of Ukraine on border crossing in local border traffic regime. The Consul General of Hungary in Uzhhorod Jozsef Bochkai said about the technical readiness to issue such permits. "During the agreements' signing on facilitated border crossing between Ukraine and Hungary it was provided that Hungary will issue permits to cross the border using the local border traffic regime without international passports, in case of technical capabilities" – the diplomat said.

The new permit will actually be a plastic card that contains data fingerprint, signature and photo of the person who is eligible for facilitated border crossing.

The cost of the permits' manufacturing with the biometric data will not exceed EUR 20.

Read more: Europe without Barriers, 5 September, 2011
http://novisa.com.ua/en/news/?news_id=169

Ukraine ratifies agreement with Georgia on air services

Ukraine has ratified an agreement with Georgia on air services. A total of 299 deputies voted for the law ratifying the agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the Georgian Government on air services.

“The agreement introduces a gradual liberalization of international air travel. The agreement allows each party to increase the number of enterprises identified for regular transportation between Ukraine and Georgia,” Deputy Head of the Ukrainian Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee Taras Chornovil said.

Mr. Chornovil said that the agreement would help set new conditions for granting permits for the operation of air routes, flights and their cancellation.

Read more: The National News Agency of Ukraine, 7 September, 2011
<http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/order/?id=230850>

Council of Europe vows to enhance international legal framework for combating terrorism

Ukraine’s Foreign Minister, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Kostiantyn Hryshchenko, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjorn Jagland, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Mevlut Cavusoglu, have pledged to strengthen the international legal framework to combat terrorism in all its forms, reads a joint statement on the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

“We reiterate our firm determination to continue fighting international terrorism, through strengthening the international legal framework, addressing the causes of terrorism and safeguarding the respect for fundamental values shared by the member states of the Council of Europe,” reads the statement posted on the official website of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE).

Mr. Hryshchenko, Mr. Jagland and Mr. Cavusoglu stressed that terrorism in all its forms is a violation of the most fundamental human right: the right to life. Regardless of where, by whom and against whom terrorist offences are perpetrated, these crimes affect us all and target humanity as a whole.

Source: National Radio Company of Ukraine, 9 September, 2011
<http://www.nrcu.gov.ua/index.php?id=148&listid=152364>

Council of Europe grants EUR 22 million for democratic reforms in Ukraine

The Council of Europe has granted EUR 22 million to Ukraine for the implementation of democratic reforms in a three-year action plan for 2011-2014, Ukrainian Foreign Ministry has reported. “The action plan of the Council of Europe for Ukraine envisages the implementation of projects in three main areas: strengthening the protection of human rights, actions in the sphere of the supremacy of law aimed at the development of democratic institutions and procedures at the national, regional and local levels, and measures in the sphere of democracy aimed at strengthening democratic institutions, developing social unity, increasing tolerance and expanding the participation of key social and social partners in the process of decision taking,” Ukrainian Foreign Ministry’s spokesman Oleksandr Dykusharov said.

Read more: Kyivpost, 13 September, 2011
<http://www.kyivpost.com/news/nation/detail/112726/>

Poland simplifies procedure for issuing Schengen visas to Ukrainians

Following Ukraine's talks with Poland, Polish consular institutions have simplified the procedure for issuing Schengen visas to Ukrainian citizens, spokesman for the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry Oleksandr Dykusharov has informed in September, 2011.

According to Mr. Dykusharov, the consular services have reduced the list of documents needed to apply for Schengen visas for certain categories of citizens, leaving out a confirmation of employment, a copy of employment records, and a bank statement.

Read more: Kyivpost, 15 September, 2011 - <http://www.kyivpost.com/news/nation/detail/112889/>

Ukraine, Qatar to sign air transport agreement

The Ukrainian Government has approved of a decree to sign an air service agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the State of Qatar. The instrument envisages the establishment of a regular air service between the two countries, the Ministry of Infrastructure said in a statement.

The agreement will define the order of regulation of international flights during the operation of the agreed services between Ukraine and the State of Qatar and the order of assignment of an airline. The document will set conditions under which airlines are granted and revoked permissions to operate regular flights. The agreement on air services between Ukraine and Qatar will provide for mutual recognition of certificates of crew members and provide an opportunity for airlines to enter into commercial contracts for transportation services with a common use of codes, etc.

Source: National Radio Company of Ukraine, 15 September, 2011
<http://www.nrcu.gov.ua/index.php?id=148&listid=152742>

Parliament passes law on fight against human trafficking

A law on fighting against human trafficking was passed by the Ukraine's Parliament, on 20 September, 2011, with a total of 290 deputies voting for the bill.

The explanatory note to the law reads that activity in the fight against human trafficking in Ukraine is based on the principle of securing the rights and freedoms of a person and a citizen, in particular, the right of respect for dignity and a private life, the right to legal aid, and the right to confidential information of the victims.

Read more: Kyivpost, 20 September, 2011
<http://www.kyivpost.com/news/nation/detail/113160/>

Ukraine and United States of America signed cooperation protocol in law enforcement sphere

Ukrainian Interior Minister Anatolii Mohylov and U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine John Tefft have signed protocol No. 9 to the memorandum of understanding in the sphere of law enforcement between the Governments of the two states.

Under the protocol, the U.S. Government will fund the improvement of work of Ukraine's law enforcement agencies, in particular, strengthening the fight against cyber crime and human trafficking, according to the Interior Ministry's press service.

The memorandum between Ukraine and the United States has been in effect since 9 December, 2002.

Read more: Kyivpost, 21 September, 2011
<http://www.kyivpost.com/news/nation/detail/113241/>

Amount of private remittances from abroad reaches USD 3.28 billion

In the first half of year 2011, the amount of private money transfers to Ukraine from abroad reached USD 3.28 billion, which is 22.5% more than during the same period of year 2010. The relevant data was published by the National Bank on its website in September, 2011.

In particular, USD 1.86 billion came to Ukraine in two quarters as payments to the Ukrainians working abroad. 13.6% of these funds were imported into the country by illegal channels. The remaining amount came through bank correspondent accounts and international payment systems.

The volume of remittances from the Ukrainians working abroad for more than a year totaled USD 0.89 billion in January-June, 2011. Every fifth dollar of this amount was imported into Ukraine illegally.

Thus, a minimum of USD 2.75 billion of money revenues from abroad were provided by the Ukrainians working outside the country.

The remaining USD 0.52 billion was referred by the National Bank to the article Other Private Transfers, i.e. private transfers to Ukraine that can not be attributed to the first two articles (for example, Transfer of the Ukrainian Diaspora).

Read more: The National News Agency of Ukraine, 21 September, 2011
<http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/order/?id=232106>

Ukrainian Parliament adopts law on legal status of foreigners and stateless persons

The Ukrainian Parliament adopted the law on a legal status of foreigners and stateless persons, by which a legal status is set for foreigners and stateless persons, who stay in Ukraine, the issues are regulated concerning their entry and leaving the Ukrainian territory, as well as the basis and procedure is also set for their detaining and forced deportation from the Ukrainian territory.

The law, in particular, establishes responsibility for violations committed by foreigners or stateless persons on the Ukrainian territory.

Read more: The National News Agency of Ukraine, 22 September, 2011
<http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/order/?id=232250>

United States of America immigration enforces new visa rule

The U.S. immigration agency is enforcing a new set of rules that can make life harder for Americans and their non-citizen spouses living overseas. The new process of obtaining an immigrant visa increased from three months to a minimum of five. Sometimes it may take as long as three years, The New York Times reported on 14 August, 2011.

Ukraine is no exception. Americans married to Ukrainians residing in their home country will have to go through a long and complicated visa process if they decide to leave. The U.S. Embassy in Ukraine estimates that the rule will affect approximately 5,000 Americans internationally. In an effort to centralize the process, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security now requires applicants abroad to mail the visa document called I-130 to a central immigration office in Chicago, whereas before it was enough to contact a local consulate.

After I-130 is processed, the applicant will have to submit an application to the U.S. State Department for the actual visa. So, the entire process of bringing the family to the U.S. might take from one to three years.

Read more: Kyivpost, 22 September, 2011
<http://www.kyivpost.com/news/nation/detail/113312/>

European Union evaluates Ukraine's implementation of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan

Ukraine reached progress in implementing a number of key parameters of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan, but in majority of the fields implementation is still under way. This is a conclusion of a Joint Staff Working Paper prepared by the European Commission and the office of the European Union (EU) High Representative for foreign affairs and security policy and published on 16 September, 2011.

The EU admits that "Ukraine has made very good progress in adopting the legislative framework in the area of border management". At the same time, "with regard to migration management, several elements of the relevant legislative and institutional framework are in place". "The State Migration Service had been set up but has not yet reached its full capacities", the report says.

Read more: EU Delegation to Ukraine, 23 September, 2011
http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/press_corner/all_news/news/2011/2011_23_09_01_en.htm

Ukrainian Parliament supports introduction of biometric passports

The Ukrainian Parliament of Ukraine has adopted the law on the documents, which certify the identity and confirm the citizenship of Ukraine. Biometric data is included in the documents only in the cases prescribed by this law. The volume of such data, as well as technical requirements for the form of the biometric information carrier, is determined by the Ukrainian Government in accordance with the documents of the International Civil Aviation Organization. The law relates to identification documents the passport card (identifies and confirms citizenship of Ukraine), the Ukrainian passport for travel abroad, the diplomatic passport of Ukraine, Ukraine's service passport, seafarer's identity card, crew member's certificate, identity card for return to Ukraine. Certifying the identity are also documents such as pension certificate, driver's license, ID card without citizenship to travel abroad, permanent residence permit, temporary residence permit, migrant's card, refugee certificate, etc.

Read more: The National News Agency of Ukraine, 23 September, 2011
<http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/order/?id=232360>