



Ukraine's visa-free bid gets EU backing

20 April 2016 – The Wall Street Journal

The European Commission said that Ukraine's Government, which has made visa-free access a key political goal, has now carried out all the necessary reforms to win Brussels' backing. "This is the result of the success of the Ukrainian Government in achieving far-reaching and difficult reforms... impacting on areas such as the rule of law and justice reform," said European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos. If the measure wins final approval, Ukraine's 42 million citizens would have the right to travel visa-free for up to 90 days in Europe's border-free Schengen areas. The European Commission proposal will now need backing from all member states and the European Parliament.

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Low turnout gives euroscepticism a victory in Dutch vote on Ukraine

6 April 2016 – Foreign Policy

Eurosceptics in the Netherlands narrowly defeated a referendum on the fate of a European Union pact with Ukraine, a major blow to the sitting Dutch Government, Brussels, and Kyiv. The vote was widely seen as a test of anti-EU sentiment in the Netherlands and across Europe. At least 30 per cent of eligible Dutch voters needed to turn out for the referendum to be valid; the final results show that 32.1 per cent cast a ballot. But their decision was clear: 61 per cent voted against the pact with Ukraine, compared to 37 per cent who supported it.

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European Commission spokesperson reacts to Dutch referendum on EU-Ukraine Association Agreement

7 April 2016 – EU Neighbourhood Info Centre

"The European Commission takes note of the outcome of the referendum held in the Netherlands on the ratification of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement," said the Chief Spokesperson of the European Commission, Margaritis Schinas. The Spokesperson added that under the Dutch national law the referendum has a consultative nature, and noted that the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement had been signed, and that 27 EU Member States, as well as the European Parliament, have ratified it so far.

"The Agreement is being provisionally applied by virtue of the unanimous decision of the Council with the backing of 28 Member States. There is no impact on this. The Commission remains strongly committed to the development of its relations with Ukraine," highlighted the EC Spokesperson.

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Foreign Ministers of 12 European countries offer to grant Ukraine visa-free regime immediately

23 April 2016 – Ukrinform

The foreign ministers of the Baltic States, Nordic countries and Visegrad Group countries declared their readiness to continue supporting the implementation of the association agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

This has been stated in the statement of the press service of the Foreign Ministry of Latvia.

"The ministers stressed the need to urgently provide Georgia and Ukraine with a visa-free regime," reads a statement after the meeting, which was held in Jurmala on 21-22 April.

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Ukraine–EU summit rescheduled for September

27 April 2016 – Interfax

The European Union has confirmed that the Ukraine–EU summit, which was scheduled for May 19, will be postponed until September by mutual agreement.

Updates on the summit will be coordinated at a meeting of the senior leaders in Brussels ahead of the European Council's meeting in June.

According to the report, the new Ukrainian Government will meanwhile move forward with reforms, and the decision to postpone the summit will make it possible for Kyiv to wait for a review of the IMF cooperation programme, as well as to assess the provisional application of Association Agreement, including the Ukraine–EU Free Trade Area Agreement.

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Displaced Ukrainians confused, frustrated over suspension of benefits: U.N.

6 April 2016 – Reuters

Ukraine has suspended benefits to more than 600,000 people on the suspicion that some are falsely claiming allowances meant for internally displaced people (IDPs), the United Nations said, raising concerns that some IDPs are now unable to pay for food or rent. The United Nations estimates that more than 1.7 million people in Ukraine have been forced from their home with more than 3 million in need of humanitarian assistance.

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Germany funds IOM cash aid to vulnerable displaced in Ukraine

10 April 2016 – NewsHour

IOM reported that 4,350 internally displaced Ukrainians will benefit from a new IOM cash assistance project funded by the German government.

Elderly people aged 70 and over, families with three or more children, disabled people and single-headed IDP families, newly arrived from the conflict zone, in 13 regions of government-controlled Ukraine, will receive UAH 1,980 (USD 70) per person in two rounds of payments, the first of which will be distributed from May through July.

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Ukrainians can now enjoy visa-free travel to Indonesia

27 April 2016 – Embassy of Ukraine to Indonesia

Ukrainian citizens can travel to the Republic of Indonesia without visas for a short-term stay (up to 30 days) with ordinary, service or diplomatic passports.

According to the Indonesian Foreign Ministry's official report, visas are required only for journalists travelling to Indonesia for business matters.

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Simplified visa regime between Ukraine and China could come soon

27 April 2016 – Ukraine Today

Ukraine and China are going to ease their mutual visa regime. This was discussed during the meeting between Ukraine's Foreign Affairs Minister Pavlo Klimkin and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, stated Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

China's Foreign Affairs Minister stressed that Beijing is willing to improve diplomatic ties with Kyiv.

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Ukraine and Japan to continue dialogue on simplifying visa procedures

6 April 2016 – Ukrinform

Ukraine and Japan have agreed to continue a dialogue on the mutual simplification of visa procedures, President Poroshenko announced at a joint press conference with Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe. "I'm pleased to inform that we've achieved an agreement to continue the dialogue on gradual simplification of the visa regime between Ukraine and Japan," Mr Poroshenko said.

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Canadian Government resists calls to end Ukraine visa requirements

26 April 2016 – National Post (Canada)

The Federal Government of Canada is resisting calls to follow the European Union's lead and begin lifting visa requirements for Ukraine.

Representatives from Canada's largest and most influential Ukrainian lobby group made the request during a meeting with Immigration Minister John McCallum this month, arguing that visa-free travel for Ukrainian travellers would help the country's economic and political development. But Canada's immigration department says Ukraine is not ready for visa-free travel to Canada.

Visa-free travel between Canada and Ukraine would be a huge development for the 1.2 million Canadians of Ukrainian descent, many of whom are politically active and maintain close ties to their ancestral homeland. For that reason, the Liberal government could face political pressure to revisit the issue.

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Russian lawmakers ease rules of obtaining permanent residence permits for refugees from Ukraine

27 April 2016 – TASS

The Russian Federation Council passed a law facilitating the process of obtaining permanent residence permits for refugees from Ukraine. The amendments introduced to the law "On the Legal Status of

Foreign Citizens in Russia" make it easier for foreigners with an official refugee status or those participating in a state programme of voluntary resettlement to Russia and their families to obtain permanent residence permits in Russia.

Yekaterina Yegorova, the acting head of the Federal Migration Service, said that under the new regulations, foreigners seeking permanent residence permits are no longer required to stay in Russia for a year on a temporary permit prior to getting the right to apply for permanent residence.

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Ukraine, Romania agree on joint border patrolling

21 April 2016 – Interfax

The Ukrainian and Romanian foreign ministers have signed an agreement on the joint patrolling of the common border during Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko's visit to Romania.

"Ukraine and Romania have signed an agreement on jointly patrolling the border, which should enable both parties to oppose corruption, smuggling, and irregular migration more efficiently," Poroshenko said at a joint press conference with Romanian President Klaus Iohannis in Bucharest.

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How Ukraine is dealing with the European refugee crisis

23 April 2016 – Global Voices

From "health hazards" to "an opportunity to boost the national economy"—this is the broad range of speculations Ukrainian politicians are using to explain what can happen when Ukraine opens its doors to refugees from countries such as Syria. Not everyone is happy about the possible newcomers. Members of local right-wing parties and radical civic groups have been the most active in spreading misinformation about refugees in Ukraine.

In theory, Ukraine can accept thousands of refugees. While some members of the Ukrainian parliament see in this a potential threat to the health and well-being of Ukrainians, others are already counting the financial benefits promised by the West. Both supporters and opponents of the idea to accept refugees from the Middle East are missing an important detail. Refugees aren't exactly eager to come to or settle in Ukraine

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Compiled by IOM Ukraine Communications team