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**Ukraine not holding
talks on joining
Customs Union of
Russia, Belarus and
Kazakhstan – Foreign
Ministry**

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry has said that Ukraine is not conducting negotiations on entering the Customs Union (CU) of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

“We are not in the process of negotiations with the CU,” Ukrainian Foreign Minister **Kostyantyn Hryshchenko** said in Parliament. He added that Ukraine had agreements on a free trade area (FTA) with each individual state member of the CU. The minister also noted that Ukraine was ready to launch negotiations on setting up an FTA with the CU of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. “With the goal of solving all potential problems, the Ukrainian party is ready to work on the issue of signing an agreement on an FTA between Ukraine and the CU, which envisages a mutual lifting or a gradual lowering of customs tariffs,” Hryshchenko stated.

The head of the Foreign Ministry also noted that integration into the EU remained a priority for Ukraine.

For his part, Ukrainian Prime Minister **Mykola Azarov** stated that Ukraine was ready to make certain concessions during the negotiations on an FTA with the EU. According to him, the parties have so far worked out approximately 90 percent of issues. At the same time, he listed several issues that remained pivotal for Ukraine. First of all, they concern agricultural produce, quotas for it and haulage. “We are ready to compromise. However, we need a transition period and compensation for our manufacturers,” Azarov said.

At the same time, Russian First Deputy Prime Minister **Igor Shuvalov** said that Ukraine was interested in joining the CU of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. “Russia is not proposing Ukraine to join the CU, in any case, more actively than Ukraine itself is interested in this format,” he said.

For his part, Ukrainian First Deputy Prime Minister **Andriy Klyuyev** also acknowledged Ukraine's interest in the CU. “For Ukraine to enter the CU, we would have to go through a serious domestic procedure. That is why I cannot give an unambiguous answer to this question. Nevertheless, we are greatly interested in the CU,” he explained.

It is worth noting that Klyuyev is the head of the negotiating group on setting up an FTA with the EU.

Just to remind you, the German ambassador to Ukraine, Hans-Jurgen Heimsoeth, stated earlier that the CU with Russia would make it impossible for Ukraine to set up an FTA with the EU.

According to the executive secretary of the CU commission, **Sergey Glazev**, the EU is blackmailing Ukraine by making statements that Kiev cannot simultaneously join the CU and set up an FTA with the EU.

**Ukraine intends to
revise gas contracts
with Russia**

Ukrainian Prime Minister Azarov has stated that Ukraine and Russia started discussing a possibility of revising the formula for the gas price.

“We held negotiations with Russian Deputy Prime Minister **Igor Sechin**. It is still too early to talk about the results but the process has started,” Azarov said. At the same time, the head of the Ukrainian government noted that Ukraine would fulfill in full existing agreement with Russia on the deliveries of gas, while actively seeking to revise the formula for the gas price. “We will fulfill it [the agreement] until we reach an agreement with Russia to revise this enslaving – and I would like to emphasize this – agreement for Ukraine,” he said. Azarov also noted that the gas contract has

been worded in such a way that Ukraine could not unilaterally break it.

According to Azarov, Ukraine pays an inflated price of Russian gas at present. "We compared the price of gas for Poland and Germany. Currently, the price of gas for Poland is 320 dollars per 1,000 cu.m. and 330 dollars for Germany. If we deduct the transportation component and other costs, then a fair price for Ukraine, which is in line with the contracts of Western partners, will be approximately 200 dollars per 1,000 cu.m.," Azarov noted.

Just to remind you, in the first quarter of 2011, the price of Russian gas for Ukraine was 264 dollars per 1,000 cu.m. It went up to 280 dollars in the second quarter of 2011.

For his part, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich said that Ukraine was ready to switch to roubles in gas transactions if Russia revises the formula for the gas price.

Commenting on the 2009 Ukrainian-Russian gas contract, a representative of the Gazprom board of directors, **Aleksey Miller**, noted that for the first time in their relationships, Ukraine and Russia have set up a long-term contractual foundation that fully corresponded to a multiyear international practice in gas business. "The price is now determined by a formula. It is a fair market price," he noted. At the same time, Miller said that rescinding the Ukrainian-Russian gas contracts in court was an absolutely unconstructive idea that had no prospects.

Earlier Ukrainian First Deputy Prosecutor-General **Renat Kuzmin** said earlier that the 2009 gas contracts could be challenged and revoked by a court. In particular, he emphasized that all the actions of the Ukrainian party during the process of signing the contracts were unlawful.

Former Ukrainian Prime Minister **Yuliya Tymoshenko** believes that by launching a criminal case against her over abuse of power which presumably took place when she signed the gas contract in 2009, the government attempts to cover up its intention to drive the Ukrainian state-run oil and gas trader Naftohaz Ukrayiny to bankruptcy. "This is how they want to divert the attention from the fact that they returned 11bn cu.m. of gas to **Dmytro Firtash**. This will cost the budget of Naftohaz Ukrayiny up to 4bn dollars. Essentially, they are destroying this company at present, they want to make it bankrupt. They want to cover it all up by high-profile criminal cases," she said.

Naftohaz Ukrayiny pays off RosUkrEnergo in full

Naftohaz Ukrayiny has returned all the necessary volume of gas that it had to transfer to RosUkrEnergo following the ruling of the Stockholm Arbitration Court of the Chamber of Commerce.

According to a co-owner of RosUkrEnergo and Ukrainian businessman, Dmytro **Firtash**, Naftohaz Ukrayiny handed over all the required 12.1bn cu.m. of natural gas over to the Swiss-registered company RosUkrEnergo, as was ruled by the Stockholm Arbitration Court. At the same time, he also noted that back in 2010, RosUkrEnergo transferred 1.7bn dollars to Naftohaz Ukrayiny to pay its debt and 450m dollars for transit services and storage of gas.

Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc intends to revise the Kharkiv agreements

The opposition Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc (YTB) parliamentary faction has demanded that a temporary commission be set up to conduct an investigation into the signing of the Kharkiv agreements.

"If such a commission establishes during an investigation egregious violations of Ukrainian legislation in the ratification procedure and breaching the current

agreements, then the YTB faction will insist that a court rescind the current agreements," the YTB statement said.

The head of the pro-government Party of Regions parliamentary faction, **Oleksandr Yefemov**, said that revocation of the Kharkiv agreements would trigger an increase in the price of gas in Ukraine, which would have adverse consequences for the Ukrainian economy.

According to parliamentary speaker **Volodymyr Lytvyn**, the YTB's demand to annul the Kharkiv agreements is an attempt to seize the political initiative in the struggle between the opposition and the government. He noted that breach of the Kharkiv agreements was currently impossible without new negotiations with Russian on a new gas contract.

Commenting on the Kharkiv agreements, Foreign Minister **Hryshchenko** stated that extending the expiration date of the fundamental Ukrainian-Russian agreement on the status and terms of stationing of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine has enabled the legal regulation of the activity of the fleet.

According to President **Yanukovych**, Ukraine could have been left not only without its industry but also without its statehood, if the Kharkiv agreements regarding the regulation of the price of Russian gas were not signed.

At the same time, the majority of experts who were interviewed by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation believe that the Kharkiv agreements were a failure from the very onset and are an obvious loss for Ukraine.

It is worth mentioning that an activist of the civil movement Resistance, **Andriy Levus**, filed a lawsuit in the Supreme Administrative Court challenging the legality of the signing of the Kharkiv agreements by President Yanukovych.

Parliament adopts draft law on imposing grain export duties

The Ukrainian Parliament has adopted a draft law, which was drawn up by the Cabinet, proposing to impose grain export duties that range from 9 per cent to 14 per cent.

In particular, the document offers to impose a 9-per cent duty on the export of wheat, a 12-per cent duty on corn and a 14-per cent duty on barley until 1 January 2012. At the same time, according to the document, the government proposes to introduce a duty on wheat that is no less than 17 euros per 1 t, 20 euros per 1 t of corn and 23 euros per 1 t of barley. The duties will be imposed when the quotas for the export of grain will expire.

There were plans to adopt the document in its final reading. However, due to a discussion in the parliamentary chamber, the draft law was approved only in the first reading.

Earlier, the Ukrainian government extended the quotas for the export of grain until 1 July 2011. At the same time, on 8 April 2011, Parliament adopted a law on the sale of grain quotas at an auction.

The American Chamber of Commerce (ACC) in Ukraine said that the law, which distributed quotas by selling them at an auction, went against the principles of free market, current legislation and Ukraine's commitments to the World Trade Organization (WTO). According to the ACC, it is a bad signal for the market that those companies, which received quotas in January 2011 but could not deliver grain

by 31 March 2011, received a free extension, while those companies that did not receive quotas were forced to buy them at an auction. "The quasi state company Khlib Investbud, which received almost 50 percent of all the quotas distributed in January 2011 and which did not fulfill its export commitments, was the chief winner of such a non-transparent process," the ACC said.

It is worth mentioning that according to the Ukrainian mass media, the Khlib Investbud company is controlled by Ukrainian Agriculture Minister **Mykola Prysyazhnyuk**.

The European Business Association (EBA) noted that there were no objective reasons for limiting the export of grain in Ukraine since there was enough grain in the country at present.

The International Grains Council (IGC) holds the same opinion. Its experts said that according to the Economics Ministry and the State Customs Service, the total supply of crops in the 2010-2011 marketing year was 45.4m t, domestic demand was estimated at 26m t, export reached 9m t as of March 2011 and the carryover remainder should be at 6m t. "Correspondingly, 5m t more could be and should be sold on external markets," the IGC concluded.

Grain crop harvest to rise 20 per cent in Ukraine

Forecasts of a grain crop harvest in Ukraine in the 2011-2012 marketing year suggest that it will rise by 20 per cent in comparison with last year.

"This will enable the domestic grain needs of the country to be met in full and ensure that significant volumes of Ukrainian grain will be delivered to external markets," the director-general of the state-run company State Food and Grain Corporation of Ukraine, **Oleksandr Lavrynychuk**, said.

Ukraine considers possibility of creating grain pool with Russia and Kazakhstan

Prime Minister Azarov has said that Ukraine, Russia and Kazakhstan are holding talks on setting up a grain pool.

"Such an idea is being considered and such a pool is logically reasoned since Ukraine, Russia and Kazakhstan together occupy nearly 30 per cent of the export market of grain crops in the world. That is why it is pointless for us to compete. It makes sense for us to agree on our actions in order to make the situation on the market easy to foresee and control. Within the pool, we can totally agree that when one of the participants experiences a lack of export volumes, other participants can compensate for these volumes, thus supporting stability on the market," he said. At the same time, he added that the establishment of such a pool would be a serious stabilizing factor for delivery volumes and prices.

Finance Ministry attracts 330m dollars to budget

The Ukrainian Finance Ministry has brought in 330m dollars to the state budget as a result of selling debenture bonds.

According to the mass media, the Finance Ministry will have to repay government bonds worth 600m dollars and spend an additional 160m dollars on coupon payments.

Parliament refuses to impose moratorium on checking small business

The Ukrainian parliament has refused to impose a moratorium on conducting tax checks for the owners of small business.

The author of the draft law, MP **Nataliya Korolevska**, proposed to introduce a ban until January 2012. She explained that the recently adopted Tax Code was extremely voluminous and complex and that accountants needed time to study it. Meanwhile, continued the argument, businessmen would definitely be confused and make mistakes and errors in their accounting sheets. Additionally, the MP drew attention to the fact that at present, the State Tax Service could not work under the conditions

of the new Tax Code. "The majority of questions that taxpayers have to the agencies of the State Tax Service remain unanswered since its employees are not ready and not capable of responding to them," Korolevska noted.

Just to remind you, the Tax Code entered into force in 1 January 2011. Its adoption was accompanied by mass protests staged by businessmen.

**Additional 180,000
Ukrainians move into
shadow economy in
2010**

The number of illegal employees increased in Ukraine in 2010.

According to the Ukrainian State Committee of Statistics, in comparison with 2009, the number of people employed in the underground sector of the Ukrainian economy increased by 179,300 in 2010 and is now estimated at 4.6m people, which constitutes 22.9 per cent of the total employed population aged 15-70.

A reminder that the Social Development Ministry earlier published a draft law on legalizing wages and employment that proposes to prison term of up to five years for those employers who pay wages unofficially.

**Tax Code fails to fulfill
chief function -
Ukrainian Union of
Industrialists and
Entrepreneurs**

Ukrainian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (UUIE) has criticized the Tax Code.

According to the participants in a meeting of the economic council of the UUIE, "Based on the results of the first quarter of 2011, it can be said that the implementation of the Ukrainian Tax Code on 1 January 2011 has not ensured the creation of favorable conditions for the development of business, new jobs, an opportunity for self-employment for people and a decent life for them."

The UUIE believes that the Tax Code did not demonstrate that Ukraine has switched to civilized tax standards, which were adopted worldwide. The union is especially alarmed about the fact that the task of the Ukrainian president to draw up and adopt draft laws on the improvement of entrepreneurial activity on the basis of a simplified tax system has not been carried out yet.

**Government intends
to revoke all
progressive norms of
law on public
information access -
Stop Censorship
movement**

Members of the Stop Censorship movement are concerned about an attempt by the government to amend the law "On access to public information."

According to the director of the Institute of Mass Information, **Viktoriya Syumar**, Parliament already intends to amend the law "On access to public information" although it will come into force only on 9 May 2011. "We have a document signed by [Ukrainian parliamentary speaker] **Lytvyn** at our disposal, which lays out proposals regarding this law. As far as we are aware, it was Lytvyn who initiated this process before it [the law] is enforced. It is interesting that it is proposed to drop a number of provisions which should, in fact, ensure the openness of government," she said.

Syumar noted that these amendments have not yet been submitted for discussion by MPs but the emergence of such information attested to the fact that the government did not react positively to any new methods of making it more transparent and accountable to society and granting society access to information.

**Ukraine to continue
debating new electoral
legislation**

Ukrainian President Yanukovich has said that the draft of a new electoral law will be submitted for public discussion in the near future.

According to him, representatives of all the parliamentary factions, experts and public organizations are taking part in the drawing up of a draft electoral law. Besides, he gave assurances that the draft electoral bill will be sent to the Venice Commission for analysis and recommendations.

We would like to note that the provision of the new draft law, which envisions an

increase in the electoral threshold for parties from 3 per cent to 5 per cent, sparked the most controversy.

According to the deputy head of the Central Electoral Commission, **Andriy Mahera**, it is pointless to increase the electoral threshold for parties from 3 per cent to 5 per cent. "This is a very big leap which will discriminate against political forces. It is not right because half of the country will not be able to have their people in Parliament," he said.

For his part, Ukrainian Justice Minister **Oleksandr Lavrynovych** said that the 5-per-cent electoral threshold, which was proposed by the president, was not discriminatory. "With a mixed electoral system in place, even the proposed 50-per cent threshold for political parties is not exactly a discriminatory threshold since the notion of discrimination is applied to larger numbers," he said. Lavrynovych also noted that President Yanukovich would make the ultimate decision regarding the final draft of the law on elections in Ukraine.

We would like to note that the head of the Opora (Reliance) public network, **Olha Ayvazovska**, stated that an increase in the electoral threshold to 5 per cent for the next parliamentary election was not an initiative of the working group, which was working on the new electoral legislation. "We, Opora, the Committee of Voters of Ukraine, the Laboratory of Legislative Initiatives, the Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research, are against an increase in the electoral threshold since it will make the turnover of Parliament impossible," the expert emphasized.

A reminder that PACE co-rapporteur for Ukraine **Marietta de Pourbaix-Lundin** said that the Ukrainian government was unwilling to discuss a draft Electoral Code with all the political forces. The National Democratic Institute (USA) said that it has withdrawn from the working group on improving Ukrainian electoral legislation. It will not participate in the process until work on the draft law becomes more transparent and takes into account diverse opinions.

Former interior minister, whose detention was prolonged, goes on hunger strike

The former Ukrainian interior minister and the leader of the People's Self-Defense party, Yuriy Lutsenko, who is currently detained, announced that he has gone on hunger strike.

The hunger strike announcement is attributed to the fact that on 21 April 2011, a Kiev court of appeals extended Lutsenko's detention to 27 May 2011. "Lutsenko insists that a hunger strike is the last chance to move the case forward because legal means have been exhausted," a statement by the People's Self-Defense party said.

Just to remind you, Lutsenko was detained and brought to a remand center on 26 December 2010. As a former law-enforcement employee, he is accused of power abuse.

We would like to note that after Yanukovich was elected president, law-enforcement agencies detained a number of high-profile politicians, who were members of the former government. While the opposition says that the criminal cases are politically motivated, the current government denies such accusations.

Press service of Ukrainian presidential administration misquotes American senator

The press service of the Ukrainian presidential administration has published the following quotation of U.S. Senator Jeff Sessions: "I would like to stress significant progress in the development of Ukraine and in implementing reforms."

Later, the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine said that "the press service of the presidential

Former deputy prime minister questioned in Tymoshenko case

administration and some mass media outlets, have circulated the quotations from the statements by Senator Sessions without checking them with him." The embassy added: "There are inaccuracies in the quotations. The senator strongly encouraged democratic reforms and the growth of economy on the basis of the solid supremacy of law in Ukraine."

The former Ukrainian deputy prime minister and the deputy head of the Fatherland party, Hryhoriy Nemyrya, has been questioned over the 2009 Ukrainian-Russian gas contracts.

His press secretary, **Nataliya Lysova**, said that the Prosecutor-General's Office (PGO) of Ukraine had questioned Nemyrya for approximately six hours. The questioning was held regarding the criminal case which was launched against former Ukrainian Prime Minister **Tymoshenko** over suspected abuse of power that presumably took place when she signed the 2009 gas contracts with Russia.

According to the YTB press service, during a break in the questioning, Nemyrya said that the criminal case against Tymoshenko was not launched to establish the truth but to put pressure on the opposition. "After I testified about the position of European Commission President **José Manuel Barroso**, EU Energy Commissioner **Andris Piebalgs** and other leading European experts in the gas sector on these gas agreements and the role of RosUkrEnergo, the investigator said that Ukraine was not interested in the EU's stance on this issue," he said. On the basis of this, Nemyrya came to the conclusion that the criminal case against Tymoshenko was politically motivated. According to him, the current government attempts to restrict the activity of the opposition both in the domestic and international arena through pressure and intimidation.

A reminder that the Fatherland party said earlier that the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) made an attempt to break into Nemyrya's apartment on 20 April 2011. "Nemyrya's three-year-old daughter and his elderly mother were at home at that time. A person who introduced himself as a member of the SBU attempted to enter the apartment. After he found out that the owners of the apartment were not home, the SBU employee threatened the elderly woman with calling in a police patrol, while demanding that she immediately obey the authorities," the Fatherland statement said.

The SBU explained that its operative went to the apartment of the former deputy prime minister in order to hand in a summons. "He did not make any threats or attempts to break into the apartment or to intimidate the woman or the child," the SBU said.

We would like to note that this is the first time that Nemyrya has been summoned to the PGO for questioning. In addition to him, several other officials from the former cabinet of Tymoshenko such as former minister **Petro Krupko** and the former head of the apparatus of the Cabinet of Ministers, **Mykhaylo Levynskyy**, have also been questioned.

Naftohaz Ukrayiny Ready to Rise Gas Transit with no Grid Upgrade

Ukraine could increase the capacity of its gas transit network by an additional 50 billion m.cu. per year without modernizing the gas transit system, Naftohaz Ukrayiny Chairman Yevhen Bakulin has said.

Bakulin said that the Ukrainian gas transit system's capacity for transporting gas to the West is 142 billion .cu.m., while the actual flow amounts only 95 billion cu.m. per year. "So, the additional capacity of the Ukrainian gas transit system without modernization is 50 billion cu.m.," Bakulin explained.

According to Bakulin, in the mid-term perspective Europe will increase consumption of Russian gas while the price of gas will grow steadily.

A reminder that, Russian Prime Minister **Vladimir Putin** said earlier that the construction of the marine section of "Nord Stream" pipeline will be finished in July 2011 while supply of gas to consumers in Europe will start in October-November 2011. "The work is nearly complete," Putin said. Putin also said that it is complicated for Russia to supply energy resources through transit countries. "It is important for us to have direct access to the markets to sell traditional products," Putin said adding that Russia will not undermine the interests of transit countries.

Ukrainian Energy and Coal Mining Minister: Naftohaz Ukrayiny's IPO to be Long Process

The Ukrainian Minister of Energy and Coal Mining Industry Yuriy Boyko has said that he sees no prospect in selling part of Naftohaz Ukrayiny's shares on IPO in the near future.

"The oil and gas sector requires a significant amount of investors' money to come from privatization. There is a principle solution to this issue proposed by President Viktor Yanukovych to partially sell Naftohaz Ukrayiny, to sell part of the company's shares through international fund institutions, stock exchanges. I believe this is going to be quite a long process, but we have taken this path, we are demonstrating transparency of our privatization process to investors," Boyko said.

Parliament Allows Transit of Nuclear Materials through Ukraine

Russia and Slovakia now can transport nuclear fuel on Ukraine's territory.

The Ukrainian Parliament has ratified the agreement between the governments of Ukraine, Russia and Slovakia on the transit of nuclear materials between Russia and Slovakia through Ukraine. The agreement's duration is 10 years. Later the agreement can be automatically extended for subsequent ten-year-periods if neither of the parties notifies its intention to terminate the agreement one year before the completion of a ten-year-period.

The main provisions of the agreement say that the members of the agreement shall ensure confidentiality of information regarding transportation of the special cargos and shall take measures to prevent disclosure of the information. The special cargos will be transported by rail directly, and there will be no transshipment.

Russia Starts Building Nuclear Reactors for Ukraine

Russia starts preparatory works to build reactors for construction of Khmelnytsky Units 3 and 4.

Russia's Atomstroyexport First Vice President **Aleksandr Dybov** said that following a request from the Ukrainian side, Russian machine building companies Izhorskiye Zavody and Gidropress started endorsing detailed design documents and manufacturing the components of reactor vessels in February 2011.

A reminder that on 12 January 2011 the Ukrainian Parliament ratified the agreement on completion of construction of Khmelnytsky Units 3 and 4. According to the agreement, Sberbank of Russia will provide a commercial loan to finance the construction of the units.

The head of the parliamentary faction For Ukraine **Vyacheslav Kyrylenko** thinks this intergovernmental Ukraine-Russian agreement to be revoked. According to him, the aforementioned agreement is not transparent and beneficial to Ukraine from the perspective of its economic interests and energy security. Kyrylenko said that the agreement specified no financial conditions for receiving Russian loans for the construction of generating units. At the same time, he noted that the document contained unjustified and excessive responsibilities for the Ukrainian party, which

envisaged, in particular, purchasing 100 percent of nuclear fuel exclusively from Russia. Kyrylenko believes that the funds required for the construction of the generating units can be spent more effectively on lowering the consumption of energy by the Ukrainian industry, including the implementation of energy-saving technologies and the development of renewable energy.

Ukrainian Tanks Enter Service in Iraq

Ukraine starts supplying military hardware to Iraq.

The state-owned company Malyshev Plant has dispatched 26 BTR-4 armoured personnel carriers to send to Iraq's military forces. The Malyshev plant's acting director general, **Volodymyr Mazin**, said that the military hardware is supplied within the framework of the contract signed between Ukraine and Iraq in 2009. He also said that the plant has started making the second batch of 62 armoured personnel carriers. The deadlines for supply will be agreed at negotiations with the Customer.

A reminder that Ukraine signed the contract with Iraq in 2009 to supply a total of 420 BTR-4 armoured personnel carriers by March 2012.

Saudi Arabia Wants Training of Servicemen in Ukraine

Saudi Arabia is interested in the possibility of training specialists for the country's armed forces in Ukrainian military institutions of higher education.

According to the information from the Ukrainian Defence Ministry, the above subject was discussed at the meeting between the Ukrainian Defence Minister, **Mykhaylo Yezhel**, and the head of the delegation of Saudi Arabia, HRH Prince **Khaled bin Sultan al-Saud**.

The negotiations resulted in an agreement between the two parties to set up expert groups to look at promising areas for bilateral cooperation in the sphere of defence and also to develop the respective regulatory frameworks.

A reminder that, earlier Ukrainian Defence Minister Yezhel said that Ukrainian servicemen will be trained at the Russian Academy of General Staff and a number of other Russian military institutions of higher education.

Russia to Buy Ukrainian Aircraft

Russian Defence Minister Anatoliy Seryukov and Ukrainian Defence Minister Yezhel have visited the Ukrainian Antonov state aircraft building company.

In the course of the visit Seryukov said that from 2015-16, the Russian Defence Ministry plans to buy the new serial short takeoff military transport aircraft An-124-100 Ruslan. Seryukov also said that the An-70 programme has already been included in the Russian arms programme till 2020. The scope of supply of the new An-70 comes to 60 aircraft.

Just to remind you that Seryukov arrived in Ukraine on 18 April to discuss issues of military and military technical cooperation.

Ukraine to Take Part in Russia-Belarus Drills

Ukrainian Defence Yezhel has said that Ukraine intends to join the Russian-Belarusian military exercise Union Shield-2011.

"We will certainly look into details of the plan of the exercise and take part in it," Yezhel said.

Just a reminder that the Russian-Belarusian military exercise Union Shield-2011 will take place in September 2011 at the same time at two Russian military training fields: Gorokhovetskiy in Nizhniy Novgorod Region and Ashluk in Astrakhan Region. It is planned to involve about 12,000 servicemen, over 50 aircraft and helicopters and 200 items of military hardware in the exercise.

Ukrainians fear accidents at NPPs, – poll

A telephone poll was conducted by Gorshenin Institute on April 18 – 20, 2011, on the subject: "25 years after the Chernobyl NPP accident". Overall 1000 respondents 18 years old and older were interviewed, based on a random sample, in all regional capitals of Ukraine, in Kyiv and Sevastopol. Regions of residence, gender and age of the respondents were used as quotas. The representation error of the poll does not exceed +/-3.2%.

Based on the findings of the all-Ukrainian survey, the Gorshenin institute experts concluded the following:

Majority of Ukrainians (78.3%) consider the Chernobyl NPP as dangerous.

Among them, 45.6% chose the answer "definitely dangerous", and 32.7% - "rather dangerous". At the same time, every sixth of those polled (15.3%) think that the Chernobyl NPP does not bear danger today. Out of them, 9.1% gave the answer "rather safe" and 6.2% - "definitely safe". 6.4% respondents found it difficult to answer the question.

More than one-third of Ukrainian citizens (37.9%) think that the Chernobyl area should be the exclusion zone. At the same time, almost the same number of people questioned (36.3%) think that the Chernobyl zone should be used in future as an area for experimental research. Every sixth respondent (15.4%) think that this area should be a preserved area, and 6.1% - a tourist zone. Those who said the Chernobyl zone should become a place for disposal of radioactive waste were 4.8% polled. 2.2% Ukrainians answered "other", and 4.6% found it difficult to answer the question.

Most Ukrainian citizens (66.3%) think that new NPPs or new units at the NPPs operating in our country should not be built. At the same time, every fifth interviewed (20.3%) hold the opposite opinion, and 13.4% found it difficult to answer the question.

Vast majority of the Ukrainians (87.3%) fear that the consequences of the Chernobyl accident may negatively impact their health or health of their relatives. Among them, 50.2% answered "definitely yes", and 37.1% of the polled said "rather yes". At the same time, every tenth Ukrainian (9.5%) do not have such fears. Out of these, 5.3% chose the answer "definitely no", and 4.2% - "rather no". 3.2% respondents found it difficult to answer.

Most citizens of Ukraine (70.0%) fear that a serious accident might occur at Ukrainian NPPs in the future. Among them, 41.5% answered "definitely yes" to this question, and 28.5% said "rather yes". Every fifth of the respondents (21.4%) do not feel such fears. Among them, 13.5% gave the answer "rather no", and 7.9% - "definitely no". 8.6% of those polled found it difficult to answer the question.

Appendix**How do you think safe is the Chernobyl NPP today?**

1. Definitely dangerous – 45.6%
2. Rather dangerous – 32.7%
3. Rather safe – 9.1%
4. Definitely safe – 6.2%
5. Difficult to answer – 6.4%

**What do you think, how should the Chernobyl zone used in the future?
(multiple answers are possible)**

1. As an exclusion zone – 37.9%
2. As a centre for scientific research – 36.3%
3. As a preserved zone – 15.4%
4. As a tourist site – 6.1%
5. Place of radioactive waist disposal – 4.8%
6. Other – 2.2%
7. Difficult to answer – 4.6%

**Do you think new NPPs or new units at the NPPs operating in Ukraine should
be built?**

1. Yes – 20.3%
2. No – 66.3%
3. Difficult to answer – 13.4%

**Are you afraid that the consequences of the Chernobyl accident might
negatively impact your health and health of your relatives?**

1. Definitely yes – 50.2%
2. Rather yes – 37.1%
3. Rather no – 4.2%
4. Definitely no – 5.3%
5. Difficult to answer – 3.2%

Are you afraid that a serious accident might occur at Ukrainian NPPs?

1. Definitely yes – 41.5%
2. Rather yes – 28.5%
3. Rather no – 13.5%
4. Definitely no – 7.9%
5. Difficult to answer – 8.6%.

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