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BORDER BLOCKADE**BLOCKADE OF AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS: PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE BALTIC STATES, POLAND AND UKRAINE WILL MEET IN WARSAW**

Members of parliament from the Baltic countries, Poland, and Ukraine are planning to hold a joint meeting in Warsaw in the near future to address the issue of Polish farmers blocking the export of Ukrainian agricultural products. This was announced by the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Estonian Parliament, Marko Mihkelson, during a press conference at Ukrinform on the topic of "Assistance of Estonian Parliamentary Diplomacy to Ukraine in Countering Russian Aggression: Key Initiatives, Achievements, and Lessons Learned."

"Let me provide a recent example of the work of Estonian parliamentary diplomacy in the context of the issue of Polish farmers blocking the export of Ukrainian grain and other agricultural products. Two days ago, we had a meeting in Warsaw with our Polish colleagues, and today in Kyiv, we reached an agreement with our Ukrainian colleagues to hold a joint meeting in Warsaw in the coming weeks between parliamentarians from Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and Ukraine on this issue," said Mihkelson.

He added that the parties are currently determining the date of this meeting.

As reported by Ukrinform, on Wednesday in Warsaw, there will be a meeting of the agriculture ministers of Ukraine and Poland in an expanded format, together with deputy ministers, advisors, and agricultural producers.

On Tuesday, March 26, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Estonian Parliament, Marko Mihkelson, arrived in Kyiv on a visit.

THE IMPORT OF RUSSIAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS TO THE EU LAST YEAR AMOUNTED TO 2.5 MILLION TONS - THE EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER

The European Union is taking further steps to restrict the import of Russian grain. This was stated in Brussels by the EU Commissioner for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, in response to a question from a Ukrinform correspondent regarding the amount of Russian grain imported into neighboring countries with Ukraine in 2022-2023.

"Regarding trade with Russia, recently the EU has been establishing certain barriers and imposing tariffs to reduce imports of grain from Russia. The total volume of such imports across the European Union was about 2.5 million tons in 2022 - 1 million tons of grain and 1.5 million tons of sunflower. In 2023, this volume remained almost unchanged. Italy was the largest importer of Russian grain with 478 thousand tons, followed by Latvia with 360 thousand tons, and Lithuania also received a certain amount, but now it is refusing to continue such imports," said the EU Commissioner.

According to him, a small share of Russian grain products was also imported by Estonia last year. Poland imported 3,500 tons of grain and 4,000 tons of sunflower, which overall is a "very small" volume of agricultural imports. Agricultural imports from Russia to countries such as Hungary and Slovakia, according to the EU Commissioner, also remained at a low level.

Wojciechowski reminded that trade in food products with Russia remains a sensitive issue for the EU. In June 2022, the European Council adopted a political decision to exclude food and agricultural products from the list of goods that may be subject to sectoral sanctions in order to avoid accusations against the EU of provoking food shortages and hunger in the world and to prevent speculation by Russian propaganda.

"Now we are open to imposing restrictions on agricultural imports from Russia. But we must remember that trade goes both ways. In 2023, the European Union exported agricultural products worth 7 billion euros to Russia and imported goods worth 2 billion euros from there. We must take this factor into account. This situation in trade with Russia differs from what we have with Ukraine. In 2023, our agricultural imports from Ukraine amounted to 11.5 billion euros, but we exported to Ukraine about 3 billion euros. Thus, the "minus" (for the EU) was 8.5 billion euros," the EU Commissioner noted.

He provided a comparative analysis of the total volume of trade between Ukraine and the EU in 2023 and its ratio to the volume of agricultural trade. Last year, the EU's total exports to Ukraine amounted to 39 billion euros, while European countries imported goods worth 23 billion euros from Ukraine, meaning the EU remained "in the black" by 16 billion euros. A different situation was observed in agricultural trade.

"This demonstrates that we have winners and losers from the liberalization of trade with Ukraine. The economy (of the EU) as a whole wins, but farmers lose. This is why we must compensate our farmers for these losses, including through state aid. This is an important political signal, and our farmers must receive such assistance," Wojciechowski added.

As reported, a few days ago, the European Commission proposed the introduction of a restrictive tariff on the import of Russian and Belarusian grain in the amount of 95 euros per ton, which is expected to reduce the competitiveness of this product in the EU market.

On March 20, representatives of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU reached a preliminary agreement to extend trade liberalization measures for Ukraine amid the Russian war for another year, until June 5, 2025, with simultaneous introduction of protective measures for the import of certain types of food from Ukraine. Today, these proposals are formally being considered by the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the EU at the ambassadorial level.

TRADE

THE EU AMBASSADORS APPROVED THE EXTENSION OF THE "TRADE VISA-FREE" FOR UKRAINE WITH CLARIFICATION

Today, the permanent representatives of the EU adopted the extension of the so-called autonomous trade measures (trade preferences) for Ukraine for the next year, with the only clarification regarding the conditions for applying safeguard measures. This was reported to Ukrinform by the Belgian Presidency of the EU.

"The ambassadors have just adopted a new compromise text proposed by the Presidency. This compromise remains unchanged compared to the text adopted a week ago during trilateral negotiations, with one addition: the defined period (average trade volume between the EU and Ukraine) for activating the safeguard mechanism will be extended to the second half of 2021. The European Commission will also slightly strengthen the wording in its own declaration," said the Belgian Presidency of the EU.

As noted by a representative of the Belgian government, today's negotiations to find this very delicate balance between extending assistance to Ukraine and protecting the EU's internal market demonstrated an "excellent spirit of compromise" among EU member states.

According to the announcement, since the agreed text differs from what was adopted with the European Parliament last week, the Belgian Presidency of the EU will again submit the agreed text for additional approval by the European Parliament.

"We understand that we will be able to learn more from the European Parliament after the Easter break. However, we are confident that the compromise reached is a step in the direction envisaged by the negotiating mandate of the European Parliament. This work needs to progress very quickly so that we receive the green light from the European Parliament and ensure the timely extension of the autonomous trade measures (with Ukraine) from June 6," said the Belgian Presidency of the EU.

As reported, on March 20 of this year, representatives of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU reached a preliminary agreement to extend trade liberalization measures for Ukraine amid the Russian war for another year, until June 5, 2025, with simultaneous introduction of protective measures for the import of certain types of food from Ukraine.

EU MAY EXTEND "EXEMPTIONS" FROM TRADE LIBERALIZATIONS FOR UKRAINE TO OATS, CORN, GROATS, HONEY

The Committee of Permanent Representatives of the EU at the level of ambassadors (COREPER) has launched a formal discussion of the extension of the so-called autonomous trade measures regarding Ukraine for another year.

At the same time, on the initiative of several EU member states, the EU could extend "exemptions" as regards deliveries to the EU (besides wheat) to rapeseed and sunflower seeds, as well as corn, oats, groats, and honey. That's according to an official of the Belgian Presidency of the EU, who spoke with an Ukrinform correspondent.

The guiding principle of the Belgian Presidency of the EU in discussing the issue with the Council of the EU and with MEPS remains the desire to reach a balanced agreement that would maintain strong support for Ukraine and at the same time allow the EU to respond to the concerns of farming communities regarding the import of certain sensitive products from Ukraine, according to the official.

He recalled that such work continues in full compliance with the EU's political decision to extend the autonomous trade measures for Ukraine for another year, as well as the commitment to support Ukraine for as long as it takes and with the required intensity.

At the same time, the representative recalled that the European Commission had presented proposals to strengthen the existing protective wavers in relation to these measures to reduce the likely negative impact of large-scale imports from Ukraine and certain sectors of the European agricultural market. Such proposals became the subject of tripartite negotiations between the Belgian Presidency of the EU, the European Commission, and the European Parliament. As a result, it was possible to reach

balanced proposals that take into account the interests of Ukraine and at the same time protect European farmers, the interlocutor said.

In particular, it is proposed to include oats, corn, groats, and honey among the goods that may be subject to "automatic" protective measures.

At the same time, it is proposed to reduce the period for activating such protective measures from 21 to 14 days. Additional parameters that may activate such restrictions are expected to be adopted for wheat and other cereals. At the same time, member states are proposed to introduce stricter controls on the import of grain crops and sunflowers. The European Commission will be asked to strengthen control over the volume of supplies of these goods from Ukraine, and to take timely measures to prevent destabilization of the European agricultural market.

As is understood, some of the delegations are still not fully satisfied with the proposals that were agreed upon during tripartite negotiations. Some of them would like to introduce even tougher protection, while others would like to maintain the scope of autonomous measures in trade with Ukraine, said the representative of the Belgian EU Presidency.

After discussions at the level of ambassadors, compromise solutions, if found, will be sent to European capitals for consultation. A final decision on the extension of autonomous trade measures with Ukraine for another year, as well as on possible protective "exemptions", is expected to be made public on Wednesday evening.

UK DEFENSE SECRETARY CALLS ON EUROPE NOT TO IMPOSE RESTRICTIONS ON TRADE WITH UKRAINE

UK Defense Secretary Grant Shapps has called on the European Union not to impose trade restrictions on Ukraine during the war.

He said this in a post on social platform [X](#), Ukrinform reports.

The head of the British Defense Ministry cited his country as an example.

"The UK has done the right thing by extending our tariff-free, quota-free imports from Ukraine for most goods for another 5 years. The UK calls on Europe to follow suit to defend freedom and democracy against the invasion of sovereign Ukraine by dictatorial Putin," Shapps noted.

He was commenting on the remarks by Minister of Agrarian Policy of Ukraine Mykola Solskyi, who in an interview with The Financial Times said that restrictions on Ukrainian agricultural products in Europe, which are supposed to calm farmers' protests, would hit Ukraine's revenues and prolong the war.

As reported by Ukrinform, the vote of EU ambassadors on the rules for importing Ukrainian agricultural products scheduled for Monday was postponed to Wednesday, March 27.

AGRICULTURE

MINISTER SOLSKYI: DAILY AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS VIA PORTS EQUAL TO THOSE VIA POLAND PER MONTH

Since early 2024, Ukraine has exported only 2 million tonnes of agricultural products through its western borders by land.

The relevant statement was made by Ukrainian Agrarian Policy and Food Minister Mykola Solskyi, an Ukrinform correspondent reports, referring to the ministry's [press service](#).

According to Solskyi, Ukraine's agricultural exports have reached 17 million tonnes since the beginning of 2024. About 12 million tonnes was shipped via the Odesa region's ports, 3 million tonnes via the Danube, and another 2 million tonnes by land, primarily by rail, through the neighboring EU countries.

Solskyi mentioned that the volume of monthly transit operations via Poland is equal to that shipped via Ukrainian sea ports per day.

"Now, the cost of exports from Ukraine by sea is much more competitive than by land," Solskyi noted during the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting, which took place in Brussels on March 26, 2024.

A reminder that grain shipments by rail reoriented from the western borders of Ukraine to the Odesa region's ports. As of March 18, 2024, the queue of railway cars loaded with grain in the direction of Izmil Port increased by 30.56%, totaling 705 wagons.

MOLDOVA'S LARGEST OIL PRODUCER SUSPENDS OPERATIONS DUE TO UKRAINIAN SEED SHORTAGE

The largest oil producer in Moldova, Floarea Soarelui, has suspended work due to a pressing shortage of Ukrainian sunflower seeds.

This was reported by [ESP](#), Ukrinform saw.

"The Bălți-based plant, Floarea Soarelui, which produces sunflower oil, has stopped operations. The reason was the shortage of sunflower seed on the local market, as well as difficulties with their imports," the report says.

The administration of the Floarea Soarelui plant reported that the reason for the suspension of production was the situation on the local sunflower seed market, as well as on the global oil market.

According to the Floarea Soarelui, the company is unable to buy enough sunflower seeds.

"We suspended work for 20 days in January 2024, now the plant in Bălți is stopped again, as well as the Danube Oil plant in Giurgiulesti. We cannot buy enough sunflower seeds on the Moldovan market. We tried in January 2024 to get the right to import seeds from Ukraine, but the specialized commission at the Ministry of Agriculture did not issue us a license," the CEO said.

The daily processing capacity is more than 1,000 tons. Accordingly, in order to continue functioning, large volumes are needed, which the company is unable to purchase in Moldova.

"According to our estimates, there are only about 100,000 tons of sunflower seeds left on the market. Some farmers are unwilling to sell now at the market price, hoping that prices will rise this summer. We cannot force them to sell," added the CEO.

The Forța Fermierilor Association, in turn, claims that there are enough sunflower seeds on the Moldovan market. Farmers accuse processors, especially Trans-Oil, which includes Floarea Soarelui, of being unwilling to offer realistic prices and trying to dictate their own terms.

As reported, on March 20, representatives of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU reached a provisional agreement on the extension of trade liberalization measures for Ukraine in the conditions of the Russian war for another year, until June 5, 2025, with the simultaneous introduction of safeguards for the import of certain types of food from Ukraine.

FINANCES

WORLD BANK APPROVES \$1.5B LOAN TO UKRAINE UNDER JAPANESE AND UK GUARANTEES

On Tuesday, the World Bank's Board of Directors approved a \$1.5 billion Growth Foundations Development Policy Loan (DPL) for Ukraine to support its development policy.

This is said in an official [statement](#) by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, according to Ukrinform.

"The funds will be provided under the guarantee of the Government of Japan through the World Bank Trust Fund (ADVANCE Ukraine) in the amount of \$984 million, as well as under the guarantee of the United Kingdom in the amount of \$516 million," the statement says.

At the same time, to reduce the cost of servicing Ukraine's credit obligations under the DPL2024 loan in the coming years, the DPL loan agreement provides for the capitalization of interest in the amount of \$99.54 million from Japanese funds.

As reported, the DPL project aims to support reforms in Ukraine, and the funds will be credited to the state budget's general fund in a single tranche based on the results of tasks completed before the agreement was signed. The reforms include improving corporate governance, promoting renewable energy and introducing agricultural bonds, a new instrument for financing farmers. In addition, the reforms aim to strengthen the financial sector by improving access to finance for businesses, transposing EU customs and tax practices into Ukrainian legislation, and improving fiscal policy and capital market regulation. Separate measures are envisaged to ensure transparency and accountability of procuring entities in the e-procurement system.

As Ukrinform reported, Ukraine may receive about \$9 billion in aid from foreign partners in the near future.

FINANCE MINISTRY RAISES UAH 12.5B IN STATE BUDGET FROM SALE OF GOVERNMENT BONDS

On March 26, 2024, the Ukrainian Finance Ministry raised UAH 12.502 billion in the state budget from the sale of domestic government bonds.

The relevant statement was made by the Ukrainian Finance Ministry on [Facebook](#), an Ukrinform correspondent reports.

"Today [March 26 - Ed.], the Finance Ministry has placed domestic government bonds worth more than UAH 12.5 billion in the equivalent currency," the report states.

In particular, the Ukrainian Finance Ministry offered investors hryvnia-denominated bonds with a maturity period of one year at the rate of 16.24% (UAH 4.26 billion), 2 years at the rate of 17.2% (UAH 4.13 billion), and 3.3 years at the rate of 18.26% (UAH 1.219 billion).

Additionally, investors were offered U.S. dollar-denominated bonds with a maturity period of one year at the rate of 4.63% (USD 74 million).

A reminder that, on March 19, 2024, the Ukrainian Finance Ministry raised UAH 16.333 billion in the state budget from the sale of domestic government bonds.

DEFENSE

ARMoured VEHICLE COALITION IN SUPPORT OF UKRAINE LAUNCHED IN WARSAW

The Polish capital hosted the first meeting of the member countries of the armoured vehicle coalition in support of Ukraine.

The event was held in Warsaw on March 26, Ukrinform reports, citing the [website](#) of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine.

"During the first meeting, representatives of the participating countries developed a consolidated position on strengthening the technical park of the Armed Forces of Ukraine with certain types of armoured vehicles and organizing a system for their repair," the ministry said.

It is noted that four syndicates have been created within the armoured vehicle coalition. Each syndicate has specific tasks: supplying weapons and ammunition for Western armoured vehicles; maintenance and repair; training crews and technicians; and developing effective tactics for using armoured vehicles on the battlefield.

"The armoured vehicle coalition aims to strengthen the armoured shield of the Ukrainian Defence Forces, to jointly enhance the capabilities of our army in the fight against the Russian aggressor, to ensure the effective operation, maintenance and repair of equipment and weapons provided by our allies," said Deputy Minister of Defence Ivan Havryliuk, who leads the Ukrainian delegation.

According to him, this is a very important initiative of the allies, given the existing problems in the Ukrainian Armed Forces with the repair of foreign armoured vehicles. "I hope that with the help of our allies, we will be able to create an effective repair base for Western armoured vehicles in Ukraine as soon as possible," the deputy minister added.

Havryliuk informed that the newly created coalition would develop a roadmap that will be in line with the development strategy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

It is expected that in the long term, the member countries of the tank and armoured vehicle coalitions will help create the future armoured vehicle fleet of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and establish an innovative industrial partnership with Ukraine.

As reported, Poland and Germany initiated the creation of an armored vehicle coalition to meet the needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The coalition has since been joined by other partners, including the UK, Sweden, and Italy.

CZECH REPUBLIC INCREASES CONTRIBUTION TO ITS OWN INITIATIVE TO PURCHASE AMMUNITION FOR UKRAINE

The Czech government has approved its next contribution to the initiative to purchase ammunition for Ukraine from third countries.

This was announced at a briefing after a Cabinet meeting on Wednesday by Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala, a Ukrinform correspondent reported.

"The government approved today a further contribution of the Czech Republic to support Ukraine," Fiala said.

He did not name the amount of the contribution, but noted that it is extremely important for Ukraine to know that "within weeks or months" it will receive additional ammunition and thus plan and adapt its tactics on the battlefield.

As reported, the first deliveries under the Czech initiative should arrive in Ukraine no later than June.

Prague initiated the purchase of ammunition for Ukraine in third countries with EU funds. It was about 800,000 rounds of ammunition found in different parts of the world. However, Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky said the day before that the amount of ammunition delivered could be almost twice as much.

RHEINMETALL RECEIVES EUR 130M FROM EU TO INCREASE AMMUNITION PRODUCTION

The European Union has allocated more than EUR 130 million to Germany's arms manufacturer Rheinmetall to increase ammunition production.

According to Ukrinform, the press service of Rheinmetall said this in a [statement](#).

The funds will be used to expand the production of 155mm artillery ammunition and powder. "The programme will support projects in Germany, Hungary, Romania and Spain," the statement says.

Rheinmetall recalled that in total, this year the EU will allocate about 500 million euros to increase ammunition production. "The great importance of artillery is evident from the Ukraine's battle to defend its country. The European armed forces also need to replenish their stocks of artillery ammunition. We are ready for this and we are already working on it," said Armin Papperger, CEO of Rheinmetall AG.

Rheinmetall has been increasing its production capacities since 2022 and the company aims at producing up to 1.1 million artillery shells per year by 2027, the company's press service added.

As Ukrinform reported earlier, Rheinmetall sees huge potential in Ukraine and plans to invest in at least four plants in Ukraine.

AMMUNITION FOR UKRAINE: THE US IS DISCUSSING WITH TURKEY AN INCREASE IN THE PURCHASE OF EXPLOSIVES - BLOOMBERG

The United States is in negotiations to increase purchases of explosive materials from Turkey to boost the production of artillery ammunition needed for Ukraine. According to Ukrinform, Bloomberg reported on this.

According to sources familiar with the matter, Turkish supplies of trinitrotoluene, known as TNT, and nitroguanidine will be crucial in the production of NATO standard 155mm caliber munitions. This could triple the production of these munitions.

Russia's war against Ukraine has sparked global demand for munitions, with Western allies seeking to supply them to Kyiv even as they replenish their own depleted stocks.

Officials say the sharp increase in demand for munitions has led to delays in global orders and put strain on supply chains for defense materials, including components like TNT.

It is expected that by 2025, the Turkish defense firm Repkon will produce about 30% of all 155mm American artillery shells.

In addition, the US Department of Defense has purchased 116,000 ready-to-use munitions from the Turkish company Arca Defense. Delivery is expected to take place this year, with additional purchases expected next year.

Currently, efforts by the US and Europe are aimed at catching up with Russia's production of 4 million munitions annually, including supplies from North Korea.

Meanwhile, the European Union plans to triple its production of artillery munitions this year to approximately 1.4 million units.

As reported by Ukrinform, the European Union has allocated over 130 million euros to the German defense conglomerate Rheinmetall to ramp up munitions production.

DECENTRALIZATION

GOVERNMENT APPROVES DECENTRALIZATION ROADMAP

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has endorsed a plan for local self-government reforming measures in 2024-2027.

The relevant statement was made by the Ukrainian Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development Ministry on [Facebook](#), an Ukrinform correspondent reports.

"The Government of Ukraine has approved the Decentralization Roadmap. The document determines further steps to implement the reform of local self-government and territorial organization of power in Ukraine for 2024-2027," the report states.

The document specifies key steps for the development of capable communities, such as legislative changes (draft bills on improving the regulation of the mechanism for approving territories of territorial communities and determining their administrative centers; on the peculiarities of restoring public authority in the de-occupied areas; on the division of powers between local governments and executive authorities; on improving legislative instruments for consultations between public authorities and associations of local governments; on local statistics, etc;).

Additionally, the document outlines measures improving the institutional and financial capacity of local self-government bodies; developing local democracy and broader involvement of residents in local decision-making.

"Over the past two years, Ukraine has been facing the biggest challenges in its history, and Ukrainian territorial communities have proven their efficiency and resilience. Hence, even amid the full-scale war, decentralization remains essential. One of our priorities is to continue and deepen the reform," Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister for Restoration, Minister for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development Oleksandr Kubrakov noted.

A reminder that, in 2023, the total number of territorial communities involved in the process of strategic planning increased to 1,314 (91%). In terms of the number of approved community development strategies, the following regions took the lead: Vinnytsia (95%), Poltava (80%), Ivano-Frankivsk (74%), Lviv (74%), and Mykolaiv (73%).

RECOVERY

UKRAINE TO RECEIVE EUR 100M LOAN FROM CEB AS PART OF HOME PROJECT

Ukraine will receive a loan of EUR 100 million from the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) as part of the project 'HOME. Compensation for Destroyed Property'.

The relevant statement was made by the [Ukrainian Finance Ministry](#), an Ukrinform correspondent reports.

On March 25-26, 2024, Ukrainian Finance Deputy Minister Olga Zykova attended a meeting of the CEB's Administrative Council, acting as the official representative of Ukraine.

A new project titled 'HOME. Compensation for Destroyed Property' was presented during the meeting, which provides for granting a loan of EUR 100 million to Ukraine. Following the discussion, the project was supported and approved by the CEB's Administrative Council.

"The housing sector is remaining one of the most affected by the war, with the total losses estimated at about USD 50 billion. The effective implementation of the HOME project will help the Government provide the necessary assistance to citizens whose homes were destroyed or damaged as a result of hostilities. The project provides for more than 2,000 housing compensation certificates, which will allow about 5,700 Ukrainians to receive compensation for their destroyed homes. The new project for Ukraine will allow citizens who have received compensation for their destroyed homes to return to their normal lives as soon as possible," Zykova noted.

The HOME project will be implemented within the framework of the current legislation, namely the Law of Ukraine "On Compensation for Damage and Destruction of Certain Categories of Immovable Property as a Result of Hostilities, Acts of Terrorism, Sabotage Caused by Russian Armed Aggression against Ukraine", and through the eVidnovlennia service.

"This is the second project for Ukraine that the Bank has submitted for approval by the Administrative Council in less than a year after Ukraine joined the CEB, which demonstrates its trust in Ukraine as a partner. Ukraine continues to work actively on joint projects with the Bank and seeks to further deepen bilateral cooperation. I am convinced that strong teamwork will contribute to the achievement of our common long-term political and economic goals," Zykova emphasized.

A reminder that, in June 2023, Ukraine completed the accession process and became the 43rd member state of the Council of Europe Development Bank.

NUCLEAR SAFETY

ZAPORIZHZHIA NPP'S SAFE OPERATION AT POWER LEVELS CURRENTLY IMPOSSIBLE – SNRIU

As long as Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) remains under Russian occupation, it is impossible to safely operate the plant at the power levels.

The relevant statement was made by the [State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine](#) (SNRIU), following a meeting between SNRIU Head Oleh Korikov and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi, an Ukrinform correspondent reports.

"During the meeting, Oleh Korikov emphasized that any intention of Russian occupiers to bring Zaporizhzhia NPP's power units to the power levels for electricity generation poses a huge threat of accidents with radiation consequences that will have transboundary effects. Such actions would completely contradict the terms of the license, rules and regulations on nuclear and radiation safety," the report states.

According to Korikov, Russian military occupation, the lack of proper maintenance and repairs, incompetent and illegitimate personnel have led to a significant deterioration in the nuclear and radiation safety and the lack of emergency response capability.

In addition, Russia's blowing up of the Kakhovka Reservoir adversely affected the possibility of Zaporizhzhia NPP's safe operation.

Korikov noted that Zaporizhzhia NPP's safe operation is possible only after its demilitarization, de-occupation, and return under Ukraine's control.

Additionally, Korikov and Grossi discussed the impact of Russian massive attacks on the nuclear and radiation safety of nuclear energy facilities and the performance of IAEA monitoring missions at Ukrainian nuclear power plants.

A reminder that Zaporizhzhia NPP has been under Russian occupation since March 4, 2022.

ENERGY

UKRENERGO: POWER SUPPLY RESTRICTIONS PERSIST IN KHARKIV, ODESA REGIONS

Following Russian attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, power outage schedules are remaining in effect in the Kharkiv and Odesa regions.

The relevant statement was made by Ukrenergo National Power Company on [Facebook](#), an Ukrinform correspondent reports.

Critical infrastructure facilities were reconnected across all cities affected by Russia's recent strikes. Electric transport services were restored partially.

Meanwhile, heavy high technology equipment was damaged at Ukrenergo's substations, and the company will need some time to replace it. Hence, high-voltage power grids are unable to transmit large electricity volumes required to meet the needs of all consumers.

"Therefore, in the most affected regions, consumers receive electricity in queues, i.e. power outage schedules are in effect. Currently, power supply limits are introduced in the Kharkiv and Odesa regions," Ukrenergo noted.

In the Khmelnytskyi region and the city of Kryvyi Rih, power supply restrictions were lifted. However, if the consumption rate increases, Ukrenergo's operations center will have to take corresponding measures.

On March 27, 2024, Ukraine is planning to import 12,802 megawatt-hours of electricity from Romania, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and Moldova. No electricity exports were scheduled.

A reminder that, on March 22, 2024, Russia launched the largest missile and drone attack on Ukraine's energy infrastructure. As a result, such cities as Kharkiv, Odesa and Kryvyi Rih were facing the most challenging situation with power supply services.

UKRNAFTA EXPANDS FUEL IMPORTS

This year Ukrnafta PJSC has started to import fuel from such countries as Denmark, Slovakia and Türkiye.

The relevant statement was made by the company's [press service](#), an Ukrinform correspondent reports.

"In 2023, the company imported fuel from the United States, Sweden, Poland and Greece. In 2024, we started bulk fuel deliveries from the United States, Sweden, Poland, Denmark, Slovakia and Türkiye," the report states.

According to Ukrnafta PJSC, all fuel products made by such companies as Orlen, Hellenic Petroleum, Marathon Petroleum Corporation and others have corresponding certificates.

A reminder that Ukrnafta PJSC was granted a permit by the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine to concentrate the assets of Glusco filling stations, which had been seized.

UKRAINE, LITHUANIA TO COOPERATE IN ENERGY, WATER SUPPLY REGULATION

The Ukrainian National Commission for Energy, Housing and Utility Services Regulation (NCER) and the Lithuanian National Energy Regulatory Council (NERC) have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation.

The relevant statement was made by NCER's [press service](#), an Ukrinform correspondent reports.

"The memorandum declares the intention of the parties to encourage the development of regulation and promote a competitive environment in the energy and water supply sectors of Ukraine and Lithuania. The parties agreed to prevent measures that cause a distortion or restriction of competition in the markets," the report states.

In addition, the energy regulators of Ukraine and Lithuania are planning to exchange information, experience, and implement joint measures.

A reminder that the Ukrainian State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate and the Lithuanian State Nuclear Power Safety Inspectorate (VATESI) held an online seminar on the safety regulation of the decommissioning of RBMK reactors at Chornobyl NPP and Ignalina NPP.

REGIONS**VINNYTSIA REGIONAL AUTHORITIES SIGN MEMORANDA OF COOPERATION WITH SOUTH KOREA'S SAMBU**

Vinnytsia Regional Council has signed the memoranda of cooperation with South Korea's Sambu Engineering & Construction Co., Ltd.

The relevant statement was made by [Vinnytsia Regional Council](#), an Ukrinform correspondent reports.

The South Korean delegation included the top managers of such companies as Sambu Engineering & Construction, THE CODI, Taemyung Industrial and RozeAI Inc., who signed the quadripartite memoranda of intent and cooperation.

"We know that the Republic of Korea is also planning to allocate funds for Ukraine's future recovery and reconstruction – our infrastructure, educational system, and help entrepreneurship. Your consistent support is very valuable to us. I hope that this will give rise to the implementation of many projects. We are interested in developing cooperation with the Republic of Korea in all areas of mutual interest. Vinnytsia Regional Council is always ready for constructive dialogue and support for mutually beneficial projects," Vinnytsia Regional Council Head Viacheslav Sokolovyi noted.

In the Vinnytsia region, South Korean business representatives visited one of facilities of Organic-D, where a sandwich panel plant is expected to be built.

The parties signed the quadripartite memoranda of intent and cooperation. The representatives of the South Korean delegation expressed support for Ukraine in its struggle against the Russian aggressor and assured the Ukrainian side of their investment assistance with the country's reconstruction and recovery.

A reminder that Ukraine's Vinnytsia region has a well-developed infrastructure, competent workforce and favorable investment climate, and is open for international cooperation. The development of industrial production, willingness to introduce innovations and SMART technologies open wide prospects for the region's cooperation with foreign investors.

LAW AND ORDER**UKRAINE TO JOIN OECD PUBLIC INTEGRITY INDICATORS INITIATIVE**

Ukraine will join the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) initiative 'Public Integrity Indicators' and collect information in the coming months.

The relevant statement was made by National Agency on Corruption Prevention (NACP) Head Viktor Pavlushchuk during the session 'Insights from the OECD Public Integrity Indicators' at the 2024 OECD Global Anti-Corruption & Integrity Forum, an Ukrinform correspondent reports, referring to the agency's [press service](#)

"The NACP will actively participate in the process of data collection within such sections as 'Quality of Strategic Framework' and 'Accountability of Public Policy Making' in 2024. We will provide accurate and timely information as we aim to contribute to the success of this initiative and demonstrate our commitment to promoting transparency and accountability. The existing OECD data are already being studied by the NACP to improve and adjust the current policies," Pavlushchuk said.

In his words, this is an opportunity for Ukraine to strengthen the national system of integrity and align its anti-corruption efforts with the best international practices.

Pavlushchuk mentioned that last week the NACP sent a letter to the OECD, confirming Ukraine's readiness to join the initiative. He also expressed gratitude to the OECD Secretariat for its support and promoting Ukraine's involvement in the above initiative.

The Ukrainian delegation, consisting of the representatives of the National Agency on Corruption Prevention (NACP), the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU), the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO), the High Anti-Corruption Court of Ukraine (HACC), the Ukrainian Justice Ministry and others, is taking part in the 2024 OECD Global Anti-Corruption & Integrity Forum on March 25-29, 2024.

TRANSPORT**UKRZALIZNYTSIA TO DIRECT MORE THAN UAH 65B TO PROCUREMENT PURPOSES IN 2024**

In 2024, Ukrzaliznytsia JSC is planning to direct more than UAH 65 billion to infrastructure restoration and construction purposes. Most of the funds will be spent on procurement from local producers.

The relevant statement was made by Ukrzaliznytsia JSC Management Board Chairman Yevhen Liashchenko, an Ukrinform correspondent reports, referring to [Rail.insider](#).

"[...] Ukrzaliznytsia's procurement budget has exceeded UAH 80 billion over the past two years. This year, more than UAH 65 billion is expected to be directed to procurement purposes. The areas where these funds will be spent include infrastructure restoration and construction," the report states.

Additionally, the company will continue to implement the projects intended to increase Ukraine's export potential, namely the increased possibility of transport services to the Odesa region's ports.

Liashchenko also spoke of the intention to involve as many producers and suppliers in the procurement process as possible. At the moment, Ukrzaliznytsia JSC receives products from more than 2,000 companies, but the company's plan is to significantly raise their number.

According to Liashchenko, Ukrzaliznytsia JSC is actively participating in the 'Made in Ukraine' program and has high hopes for import substitution.

A reminder that Ukrzaliznytsia JSC provides support for Ukrainian businesses by purchasing goods and services mostly from domestic producers. In 2023, the company directed UAH 35.7 billion to procurement purposes, and 74% of that sum went to Ukrainian suppliers.

SOCIAL

UKRAINIAN CUSTOMERS INCREASINGLY CHOOSE DOMESTIC BRANDS – RESEARCH

The share of Ukrainians choosing domestic brands has increased from 69% to 74% over the past year.

The relevant consumer trend research findings were published by [Gradus Research](#), an Ukrinform correspondent reports.

In particular, in December 2022, 69% of respondents chose Ukrainian brands over foreign ones. In March 2024, 74% of respondents gave preference to Ukrainian-produced goods and services.

At the same time, according to the researchers, Ukrainian customers are rather cautious about changing their usual brands. More than half of respondents (54%) give preference to familiar brands.

Meanwhile, there is a significant demand for new brands on the Ukrainian market, as 37% of Ukrainian customers showed willingness to experiment. The key factor motivating them to give a try to the new brands is the desire to support Ukrainian producers (57%) and the desire to save money (45%).

A reminder that government support programs for domestic producers in Ukraine are expected to be scaled up and expanded in 2024.