

Ukraine in Brief

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Ukraine Continues Talks with IMF

According to Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, who sent the ministers of energy and finance to Washington DC to talk to the IMF, the IMF will be sending a team to Ukraine to start work in late August. The ministers were sent to Washington with a strict message from the prime minister, "...that for us the main thing is stabilization of prices and preventing acceleration of inflation." It is said that the IMF will provide up to \$3 billion if they decide to release the tranches that have been postponed.

Political Opposition Continues to be Investigated

Former prime minister, Yulia Tymoshenko has been the topic of conversation for many groups for weeks now. Her most recent trial is about to begin in Ukraine, this time on charges of over spending when purchasing natural gas and oil from Russia, and misusing funds. She was just recently granted the ability by the government to use Serhiy Sas and Serhiy Vlasenko as her legal council.

On the topic of Ms. Tymoshenko's legal quarrels with the current administration, she has been banned from leaving the country. This has caused many different people to question the Yanukovich government on what is going on in Ukraine, and has also caused many people to speak out in behalf of Ms. Tymoshenko. The European Parliament has passed a resolution telling the government of Ukraine that holding Ms. Tymoshenko

within the borders of the country when she has not been charged of anything yet is unlawful. United States Senator John McCain and European Peoples Party president, Wilfried Martins, have also spoken out against Ms. Tymoshenko's situation of not being able to leave the country, and have asked the Yanukovich government to adhere to the European Parliament's resolution and allow Ms. Tymoshenko to leave the country.

Ms. Tymoshenko is currently reaching out to the European Community for help, and she is getting a positive response. This week while President Yanukovich was at the Council of Europe to discuss Ukraine's euro-integration in Strasbourg, France, he was questioned about former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko's ban on travel. His response was short, he said it "was now up to the courts to decide" about her fate. The trial is set to begin June 24, 2011.

Yanukovich's Successful Meetings with PACE

President Viktor Yanukovich spent the better part of the week in Strasbourg, France, meeting with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). Many say it was a successful trip, even though he was questioned on the travel ban on former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, and criticized for the Security Service of Ukraine's (SBU) investigations.

He spoke of Ukraine's desire for European integration, and eventual membership in the EU. He defended his position as to Ukraine's non-aligned status within NATO by saying that he

just wants what is best for Ukraine, and having good relations with both its western Euro-Atlantic neighbors and maintaining good relations with its eastern neighbor Russia. He emphasized, "Ukraine did not abandon its constructive dialogue with NATO" and confirmed that "Ukraine is strongly committed in its goal towards EU integration," and "can help improve and accelerate the process of Europe's unification".



(Photo: President Yanukovich and Secretary General of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Thorbjorn Jagland eurofora.net)

After meeting with President Yanukovich, PACE deputy Tadeusz Iwinski said, "Of course, it was important that in his speech, Yanukovich said that Ukraine was committed to achieving the goal of becoming a part of the European family and wants to become an EU member. ... I think that it will take from five to ten years, about ten years, for Ukraine to become an EU member." He also said that Yanukovich's opinions and statements were very fair and balanced.