



NEWS FROM UKRAINE

European Commission to announce Ukraine's readiness to switch to second stage of visa liberalization plan soon

European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Fule said that the Commission will soon inform EU member states of Ukraine's readiness to switch to the second stage of the implementation of the action plan on visa liberalization. Previously, in the presence of a European Commission mission in Kyiv, Ukrainian Prime Minister Arsenii Yatseniuk signed some important legislative acts that resolved the remaining problems in the implementation of the first stage of the action plan.

Commissioner Fule said he hoped that the Ukrainian authorities would not miss the existing opportunity to implement the second stage in a short period of time. He noted that the first stage of the action plan was the adoption of the necessary legislation and that the second was its implementation.

Read more: Interfax, 3 April 2014

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/198956.html>

EU ready to sign remaining part of Association Agreement with Ukraine after presidential elections — Stefan Fule

The EU's commitment to sign the remaining chapters of the Association Agreement with Ukraine was reiterated by the EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Fule at an Eastern Partnership conference in Prague on 25 April. According to Mr. Fule, the signing procedure of the remaining chapters of the Association Agreement can start "as soon as possible after the 25 May presidential elections."

Stefan Fule also confirmed the European Council's decision that the Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area does not constitute the final goal in EU-Ukraine cooperation.

"This is by no means the end of the road... Our partners, especially those with European ambitions, need to see the light at the end of the tunnel and I hope the EU and its Member States will rise to that challenge," he said.

Read more: Interfax, 25 April 2014

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/202344.html>

UN Special Rapporteur urges stronger minority rights guarantees to defuse tensions in Ukraine

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on minority issues Rita Izsák, has urged all parties to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in Ukraine and take immediate steps to ease tensions and step back from further violence.



“Minority rights protection should be strengthened as part of a process of confidence building and to achieve stronger unity in Ukraine’s diversity,” stated Ms. Izsák, who visited Ukraine from 7 to 14 April at the invitation of the Government.

Read more: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 16 April 2014

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14518&LangID=E>

About 5,000 Crimean Tatars moved to mainland Ukraine, — MP Mustafa Jemilev

Ukrainian Parliament Member, a leader of the Crimean Tatars Mustafa Jemilev at his press conference in Kyiv in mid-April said that there were about 5,000 Crimean Tatars who had to leave their land for mainland Ukraine.

He also stated that “Tatars do not renounce the citizenship of Ukraine, but at the same time they do not renounce the Russian one, because it will be impossible to live without Russian passports.”

Read more: Ukraine Crisis Media Centre, 17 April 2014

<http://uacrisis.org/mustafa-dzhemilev/>

Ukrainian Ombudsman initiates creation of a resource centre to assist persons displaced from Crimea

The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights carried out monitoring visits to establishments where people who have moved from Crimea were lodged. There were no complaints about living conditions and food provision; however problems are remaining with enrollment of children into kindergartens and schools, transfer of students to educational institutions on mainland Ukraine, transfer of pension payments to a place of the actual stay, and other issues.

According to the Ombudsman, it is necessary to urgently define a central executive authority for coordination of work of all government bodies ensuring the social and economic and humanitarian rights of displaced persons, and to establish the “one-stop-shop” approach for providing their needs.

The Ombudsman in partnership with the civil organization “Social Action Centre”, initiatives “Euromaidan SOS” and “Crimea SOS”, also initiated the creation of a relevant resource centre.

Read more: Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, 25 April 2014

http://www.ombudsman.gov.ua/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2152:the-commissioner-initiates-creation-of-the-resource-center-for-assistance-to-displaced-persons-from-temporarily-occupied-and-dangerous-territories&catid=14:2010-12-07-14-44-26&Itemid=75

Russia introduces border control with Ukraine in Crimea

According to the acting Head of the Federal Migration Service of Russia in Crimea Piotr Yarosh, the state border is set between Ukraine and Crimea.



“As of 25 April, the state border opens. In the nearest time it will be defined where checkpoints will be set, how to cross the border, as well as the need of issuing migration cards,” Mr. Yarosh stated.

Read more: Ukrinform, 25 April 2014

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/border_set_between_crimea_and_ukraine_320693

<http://www.bignewsnetwork.com/index.php/sid/221428135/scat/2411cd3571b4f088>

Acting President Turchynov signed law on occupied territory

Acting President, the Verkhovna Rada Chairman Oleksandr Turchynov signed the Law of Ukraine No 1207–VII “On Ensuring Rights and Freedoms of Citizens and a Legal Regime on the Temporary Occupied Territory of Ukraine” on 28 April.

The new law, which establishes a special legal regime in Crimea, won 228 votes cast in the 450-seat assembly.

The legislation said Crimea, the city of Sevastopol, and airspace and territorial waters surrounding them are considered as an integral part of Ukraine.

The law imposes travel restrictions on visiting Crimea, requiring foreign tourists to have special permits for entering the peninsula.

According to the legislation, state and private properties in Crimea, including offshore oil and natural gas platforms, will stay under the proprietorship of their current owners.

Contrary to local analysts’ expectations, the law does not envisage a ban on economic and business activities in Crimea.

Read more: Ukrinform, 28 April 2014

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/turchynov_signs_law_on_occupied_territory_320751

U.S. starts issuing ten-year visas to Ukrainians

The U.S. Department of State expanded the visa reciprocity schedule, allowing Ukrainians to obtain ten-year visas. Previously, Ukrainians could apply for five-year validity visas. Ukraine now joins its other European neighbours to the west — Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Croatia. Ukrainians visiting the United States for temporary business or pleasure will now have the ability to travel back and forth to the United States for most types of travel for up to ten years without having to renew their visas.

Read more: Embassy of the United States, 25 April 2014

<http://ukraine.usembassy.gov/statements/visa-10.html>



Ukrainians will be able to get biometric passports this year — Prime Minister Yatseniuk

Biometric passports will be issued to Ukrainian citizens later this year, says Prime Minister Arsenii Yatseniuk.

“We plan to start issuing biometric passports this year and we hope that our European partners will afterwards accelerate the visa-free regime between Ukraine and the EU,” stated Mr. Yatseniuk.

The Prime Minister signed a normative act, which approves the form of biometric passports. According to Mr. Yatseniuk, the cost of such passports will be twice cheaper than currently.

Read more: Europe without Barriers, 26 March 2014

<http://novisa.org.ua/en/yatsenyuk-prognozuye-vvedennya-biometricnih-pasportiv-ts-ogo-roku/>

EU and IOM to help Ukraine and Belarus crack down on cross-border crime

A new EU-funded project has been launched to help Belarus and Ukraine enhance their common border security, a press release from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said on 18 April. The overall aim of the project is to minimize illicit transnational activity such as smuggling and irregular migration through improved cooperation on law enforcement.

In the past, the border between Belarus and Ukraine was an administrative boundary and is thus lacking typical border infrastructure. ‘Blue’ border sections (rivers and lakes) make up over a fifth of the whole length of the frontier, and dense forests also make it difficult to control the border.

The project titled “Strengthening Surveillance and Bilateral Coordination Capacity along the Common Border between Belarus and Ukraine (SURCAP Phase II)” is funded by the EU and implemented by the IOM in partnership with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).

As part of the project, specialized equipment will be procured for the border agencies of the two countries. Regional trainings on integrated border management techniques and best practices, as well as study visits of Belarusian and Ukrainian border guards to the EU, will also be conducted.

Read more: EU Neighbourhood Info Centre, 18 April 2014

http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id=36983&id_type=1&lang_id=450

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