

## NEWS DIGEST FROM UKRAINE, MOLDOVA, AND BELARUS

26 June – 9 July, 2010

### NEWS FROM UKRAINE

#### **U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visits Ukraine**

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton says “NATO’s door remains open to Ukraine,” despite the country’s retreat from pursuing membership in the bloc under President Viktor Yanukovich. She also said that the notion of a Western-aligned Ukraine versus a Russian-aligned Ukraine was a “false choice.”

Ms. Clinton made the remarks on 2 July in Kyiv, where she met with her Ukrainian counterpart, Foreign Affairs Minister Mr. Kostiantyn Hryshchenko, before meeting with Mr. Yanukovich. She was also scheduled to meet with opposition leader Yulia Tymoshenko and representatives of civil society on what is the first stop of the secretary’s five-capital tour of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

Promoting democracy is a major theme of Clinton's trip, which will also take her to Poland, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. Critics have accused the Obama administration of soft-pedaling democracy as it pursues a pragmatic foreign policy that includes what it calls a ["reset" of relations with Russia](#).

Read more:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/02/AR2010070202986.html>

[http://www.rferl.org/content/Clinton\\_Tells\\_Ukraine\\_That\\_Door\\_To\\_NATO\\_Remains\\_Open/2089237.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Clinton_Tells_Ukraine_That_Door_To_NATO_Remains_Open/2089237.html)

#### **Ukrainians released from sexual slavery in Indonesia**

Law enforcement agencies in Kyiv region have released 17 Ukrainian women from sexual slavery in Indonesia over the last two weeks, Public Relations Department of Ukraine's Internal Affairs Ministry in Kyiv region reported on 6 July.

The women were released with assistance from officials from the Ukrainian Embassy in Indonesia. They were recruited by a criminal group who lured women to the Indonesian capital Jakarta with modeling jobs. Upon arrival in Indonesia, they took the women's passports and kept them in a local hotel.

The women were forced to work as prostitutes and take drugs. Among those released from sexual slavery were women from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Belarus aged under 22.

The criminals have now been detained, Mr. Kostiantyn Sapko, head of Kyiv region's police, said. The suspects are charged with human trafficking for purposes of sexual slavery.

Read more: <http://www.kyivpost.com/news/nation/detail/72536/#ixzz0t4XeMKwR>

## **U.S. 'troubled' by reports of media pressure in Ukraine**

The United States has expressed concern over reports of pressure on journalists in Ukraine. Speaking at the Institute of World Policy in Kyiv, U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine John Tefft said there have been "troubling reports of pressure on journalists" in the country. He also said that some media companies in the country practice self-censorship, which, he said, "is equally destructive to the principle of press freedom."

Although Ukraine experienced some gains in liberties after the 2004 Orange Revolution, Ukrainian media freedom groups have complained about growing censorship since President Viktor Yanukovich came to power in February, 2010.

Mr. Tefft said the United States hopes that Ukraine's government "will take action when freedom of the press is threatened," adding, "there should be no going back to the old system of government pressure on journalists and media companies."

Source:

[http://www.rferl.org/content/US\\_Troubled\\_By\\_Reports\\_Of\\_Media\\_Pressure\\_In\\_Ukraine/2081754.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/US_Troubled_By_Reports_Of_Media_Pressure_In_Ukraine/2081754.html)

## **Ukrainians have less confidence in politicians and government institutions**

This is what the results of the poll of the Omnibus national monthly survey say conducted by the monitoring company TNS Ukraine on 3-10 June.

The level of Ukrainians' trust in most politicians and government institutions in June 2010 has declined compared with the figures recorded in May 2010. Trust in almost all politicians declined last month.

Source: <http://www.nrcu.gov.ua/index.php?id=148&listid=122708>

## **Ukraine, Moldova agree on exchange of students**

The Ukrainian Education and Science Ministry and the Moldovan Ministry of Education have signed in Chisinau a protocol on cooperation until 2013. According to the Ukrainian Embassy in Moldova, the document envisages that 105 citizens from Ukraine and Moldova will annually get the scholarships of the two countries to study in universities for public funds. In addition, three extra scholarships will be allocated for postgraduate education.

Ukrainian Ambassador to Moldova Serhiy Pyrozhkov said that this would help, first and foremost, to meet the educational needs of the Ukrainian national minority in Moldova and, accordingly, the Moldovan national minority in Ukraine. From now on, any applicant will have the opportunity to enter higher education institutions in Ukraine or Moldova, speaking the official language of a country in which he or she wants to study. In addition, under the protocol, the parties will contribute to the functioning of educational institutions with instruction in the native language of a respective minority in both states. Therefore, Mr. Pyrozhkov said that the agreement reached between the parties on raising the skills of teachers of the Ukrainian language in Moldova and teachers of the Moldovan language in Ukraine was becoming especially important.

Source: <http://www.nrcu.gov.ua/index.php?id=148&listid=122066>

## **Romanian, Ukrainian floods leave 21 dead, force evacuations from homes**

Heavy rain and flooding in Romania and Ukraine have killed 21 people in the past week and forced the evacuation of another 9,500, authorities in both countries said. Heavy rains ruined seven bridges and house and damaged 1,250 kilometers of roads in western Ukraine, said First Deputy Prime Minister Andrii Kliuiev on 30 June at a press conference in Kyiv. In Romania, flooding destroyed 206 houses and damaged 174 bridges and 47 roads, the Government said in an e-mailed statement from Bucharest.

Read more: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-06-30/romania-rain-flooding-leave-20-dead-as-wrecked-houses-force-evacuations.html>

## **NEWS FROM MOLDOVA**

### **Moldova more often mentioned in Brussels**

Moldova came out of the darkness and became a prominent country through its aspirations to join the EU. It is mentioned in practically all the foreign ministers' meetings in Brussels, said Finish Foreign Minister Alexdander Stubb, who is paying a visit to Chisinau at the invitation of his Moldovan counterpart Iurie Leanca. "This visit is very important because we are visited not only by the Foreign Minister of Finland, but also by the Foreign Minister of a European state," Iurie Leanca said in a news conference held jointly with Alexander Stubb. The Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister stressed the discussions they held centered on the economic relations and the European dialogue of Moldova as well as upon the agreement on the liberalization of the visa regime. The support offered by Finland is very important, Iurie Leanca said. For his part, Alexdander Stubb said "Finland is Moldova's friend" and it will support its efforts to come closer to the EU. As to the Transnistrian conflict, the two ministers said it is in the EU's agenda.

Source: No Internet link is available, news agency *IPN*, 7 July 2010

### **Moldova to hold constitutional referendum on 5 September**

Moldova will hold a constitutional referendum on 5 September, when voters will answer the question "Are you for amending the constitution in order to elect Moldova's president at nationwide polls?" A draft law on the matter was adopted by the Parliament on 7 July.

The draft passed by the MPs of the ruling alliance stipulates that the president will be elected through universal, equal, direct, secret and free voting. The procedure of electing the head of state will be set by an organic [fundamental] law.

The draft says that the successful presidential candidate should receive at least half of the cast ballots, otherwise a runoff election will be held for the first two presidential hopefuls.

The current law, which sees the election of the president with the votes of 61 parliamentarians, led to a constitutional crisis as neither the ruling alliance nor the opposition had the necessary number of votes.

Source: <http://www.allmoldova.com/en/moldova-news/1249047643.html>

## **Moldova has announced June 28, 1940 as the “Soviet Occupation Day”**

Moldova has announced 28 June, 1940 as the “Soviet Occupation Day.” The republic’s interim President Mihai Ghimpu has signed the corresponding decree.

Telling reporters that he has issued the decree without consultations with the colleagues in the ruling coalition Alliance for European Integration. According to the decree, the local power bodies are recommended to hold commemoration events on this day.

On 28 June, 1940 after an ultimatum presented by the USSR Romania withdrew its troops and administration from Bessarabia which is occupied in 1918. Later, on 2 August, 1940 the Moldovan SSR was formed on this territory comprising 6 Bessarabian provinces and 6 districts of the Dniester region that were part of the former Moldovan autonomous republic within Ukraine.

Source: <http://www.itar-tass.com/eng/level2.html?NewsID=15261030&PageNum=0>

## **Moldova, USA sign 10.1-million-dollar agreement for economic growth**

The Moldovan Government and the US Government on 7 July signed an agreement on economic growth worth 10.1 million dollars, the Government’s press service has said.

Minister of State Victor Bodiuc signed the document on Moldova's behalf and the director of the USAID Mission Janina Jaruzelski, on the USA’s behalf. Prime Minister Vlad Filat and US Ambassador to Moldova Asif J. Chaudhry put confirmation signatures.

After the signing ceremony, Mr. Filat and Mr. Chaudhry made press statements.

"The today’s document proves once again the positive dynamic of the Moldovan-US relations. The signing of the agreement on assistance for economic growth fits perfectly into the actions that took place in our bilateral relations and which made them more dynamic," Mr. Filat said.

The agreement aims at increasing the productiveness of small enterprises, particularly low-income ones run by less well-off categories of people so that they benefit from opportunities created by the economic growth.

Asif J. Chaudhry said that the US Government backed the ambitious reform agenda of the Moldovan Government and noted that it was for the first time that he saw such a strong commitment to the implementation of reforms.

The diplomat said that the agreement is a first step aimed at backing Moldova’s economic development.

Source: [http://economie.moldova.org/news/moldova-usa-sign-101milliondollar-agreement-for-economic-growth-210713-eng.html?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+moldova%2Feconomia%2Feng+%28Economie+English+Moldova.org%29](http://economie.moldova.org/news/moldova-usa-sign-101milliondollar-agreement-for-economic-growth-210713-eng.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+moldova%2Feconomia%2Feng+%28Economie+English+Moldova.org%29)

## **Official statistics: Average pay size goes up in Moldova**

The average salary in Moldova for January-May period exceeded 2,804 lei (\$218.3), which is 6.2% more than last year. However, its real size insignificantly decreased by 0.5%.

Source: <http://www.azi.md/en/story/12526>

## NEWS FROM BELARUS

### **Belarusian president signs laws on Customs Union ratification**

Belarusian President Aleksander Lukashenko has signed laws on the ratification of a number of documents on the Russian, Belarusian and Kazakh Customs Union code, the Belarusian national Internet website dealing with legal issues said.

The Customs Code, making the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan fully operational, came into force on 6 July.

The Customs Union formally came into existence on 1 January, 2010, but was unable to start working fully until the Customs Code came into effect.

The Russian and Kazakh presidents approved the Customs Code earlier in June. Belarus dragged its feet on the ratification; however Mr. Lukashenko announced on 3 July that the country had also ratified the document.

From January 1, 2012, the three states are expected to introduce a single economic space.

The leaders of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on 5 July already voiced their interest in joining the union.

**Source:** <http://en.rian.ru/world/20100707/159721264.html>

### **UN Goodwill Ambassador Sharapova visits post-Chernobyl projects in Belarus**

Maria Sharapova, tennis star and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Goodwill Ambassador, has touched down in Belarus to visit children living in areas affected by the 1986 Chornobyl nuclear disaster.

The family of Ms. Sharapova, 23, fled the Belarusian city of Gomel a year before she was born because of radiation concerns in the wake of the accident, which exposed more than 8 million people in Belarus, Ukraine and Russia to radiation.

It is one of the initiatives supported by the three-time Grand Slam champion's Maria Sharapova Foundation, which, in partnership with UNDP, supports seven youth-oriented projects and a scholarship programme in areas affected by the Chornobyl accident.

Ms. Sharapova on 1 July made a personal contribution of \$250,000 to further expand the UNDP-supported activities.

**Source:** <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35208&Cr=chernobyl&Cr1=>

### **Over 40 illegal migrants arrested at Vitebsk-Pskov border**

Over 40 illegal migrants have been arrested during the "Nelegal" (Illegal) operation at the Belarusian-Russian border held by the joint law-enforcement bodies of Pskov and Vitebsk Oblasts in May 2010, head of the department for Pskov Oblast of the Federal Migration Service of Russia Alexander Paramonov told media on 24 June. He took part in a working meeting of the heads of the migration services of Pskov and Vitebsk Oblasts in Vitebsk on 24 June, news agency BelTA has learnt.

Vitebsk and Pskov law enforcement officers hold such joint operations every quarter of the year. The Pskov Oblast which borders on the regions of the three states and which is crossed by over 2 million people every year reports a high illegal migration rate. Russian law enforcers are in a close cooperation with the Belarusian colleagues on this issue. "Cooperation against illegal migration is high on the agenda of every working meeting," Alexander Paramonov said.

Read more: <http://news.belta.by/en/print?id=549648>

## Belarussian President suggests joint steps to Lithuania

Belarussian President Aleksander Lukashenko suggested to Lithuania a number of joint steps toward the strengthening of independence of the two states. He made these suggestions at the meeting with Lithuanian Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius on 28 July.

"In order to strengthen our independence, sovereignty, the might of our states, we must immediately take a number of steps to strengthen this independence," Mr. Lukashenko stated. He noted that Belarus and Lithuania "used to live within one state for long." "We have similar problems and, as they are similar, solutions of these problems will be similar, too," Mr. Lukashenko added.

Mr. Kubilius, in his turn, said the two states, indeed, have good opportunities for cooperation to strengthen independence, "particularly in energy." "We all know that dependence on one supplier of some resources can sometimes crease problems. It is good to have an alternative, as economic logic suggests," he said.

Mr. Kubilius also noted that the Eastern Partnership initiative of the European Union can offer good opportunities for the strengthening of bilateral cooperation.

**Source:** <http://www.itar-tass.com/eng/level2.html?NewsID=15272685&PageNum=0>

## Belarus, China have big potential for cooperation

Belarus and China have a big potential for cooperation, Vice Premier of Belarus Vladimir Semashko said as he met with Deputy Commerce Minister of China, Chairman of the Chinese part of the Belarus-China commission for trade and economic cooperation Gao Hucheng on 28 June.

Vladimir Semashko reminded that on 25 June the President hosted a session on Belarus-China economic cooperation. "The pivot of the relations is a Chinese USD 15 billion credit line opened for Belarus," the First Vice Premier noted. Belarus has already implemented over a hundred of large projects with the help of the loan.

In 2003-2009 China put nearly USD 232 million of investments in the Belarusian economy.

Source: <http://www.data.minsk.by/belarusnews/062010/682.html>

*Please note that IOM bears no responsibility for the accuracy and content of the press summary, which is based on external news services and does not necessarily reflect the views of IOM.*

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