

PMUNC 2014

Ukraine

Chair: Jacob Sackett-Sanders

Director:



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Introduction

A Brief History of Modern Ukraine

As the Soviet Empire slowly imploded, the parliament of SFSR Ukraine first declared their national sovereignty in mid-1990, and followed this with elections held the next year, in December of 1991, which resulted in the election of Leonid Kravchuk as the first president of the newly independent nation. Later that month, president Kravchuk signed the document that officially ended the Soviet Union once and for all, and thus Ukraine became indisputably free and independent.

Over the next decade, Ukraine suffered in the same way as many other former Soviet republics. Despite the capacity for economic growth, the country spiraled into a cycle of unemployment,

hyperinflation, and corruption as bad as or even worse than during Soviet times.

Despite this, Kravchuk's successor Leonid Kuchma helped develop a new constitution and introduce a new, specifically Ukrainian currency. By the turn of the millennium, Ukraine, for all its problems, was at least headed back in a positive direction.

Despite the improvement, tensions in Ukraine continued to boil as many saw what they considered to be a lack of sufficient progress for the nation, combined with rampant corruption on the part of the government. As a result, a large opposition bloc formed with a leadership that notably included former Prime Minister Viktor Yushenko and gas tycoon Yulia Tymoshenko. Together, the wide coalition hoped to defeat Our

Ukraine, the incumbent party, which was seen as a symbol of all the problems plaguing Ukraine and a continuation of the old order. But in 2004, when the first round of election results started to return, coalition leaders were shocked to see Our Ukraine's Viktor Yanukovych narrowly leading over Yushenko, the favored candidate. Protests against the seemingly rigged vote began even before the conclusion of run-off voting, and were naturally led by the important figures of the opposition bloc, like Yushenko and Tymoshenko. These protests would come to be known as the Orange Revolution.

After a month of protests, the Orange Revolution did accomplish its goal—the Supreme Court of Ukraine declared that the voting would have to be done again because of widespread voter fraud. When voting was completed this second

time, Yushenko was declared the winner and members of the revolution were put into ministry positions. The Orange Revolution was an important point in the history of Ukraine, legitimizing and proving the capability of citizens to accomplish major change through a large enough show of discontent. The protests, held in the main square of Kiev (*Maidan Nezalezhnosti* or Independence Square), would serve as a model for the Euromaidan protesters almost a decade later.

While the Orange Revolution initially seemed a complete success, political reality soon kicked in. Shifting alliances among political parties and shifts in voter opinion led to a massive electoral victory in 2006 for Yanukovych's newly formed Party of Regions (created from the remnants of Our Ukraine), which resulted in Yanukovych's rise to prime

minister, even as Yushenko continued to serve as president. What followed was a four year period of power switching, with sometime Yushenko holding primary political power in Ukraine, sometimes Tymoshenko as a political

party leader and prime minister, and sometimes Yanukovych. When the dust cleared in 2010, Yanukovych ran for president again and won, this time in an election that even Western observers said was fair and well carried out.

Euromaidan:

The first three years of Yanukovych's presidency passed relatively quietly.

While there were accusations of trying to remove opposition parties from power and censor the press, his reputation survived sufficiently to win his Party of Regions the largest share of seats in the 2012 parliamentary elections, including against Batkivshchyna, the party of the still popular Tymoshenko. His presidential platform centered on general euro-centrism with a noted respect for Ukraine's historic relationship with Russia, as well as for the special cultural status of the Russian language within Ukraine.

It was in the late fall of 2013 that things began to go awry. The Yanukovych government, then in talks with the EU over an economic deal that would help

Ukraine with almost 20 billion in foreign aid, began to pull back from the deal.

They viewed some of the conditions, such as the release of Tymoshenko from prison and specific governmental reforms, to be too stringent, especially when combined with the EU offering less than 1 billion in loans. Around the same time, Russia began talks over a similar deal that offered almost 15 billion in loans and came without many of the conditions that the European deal had. When it became clear to the public in late November that Yanukovych was not planning to sign the western deal, protestors took the streets. Over the weeks, their numbers swelled from thousands to hundreds of thousands across Ukraine. The core of these new protests was a group of young activists who took to Independence Square in Kiev, and who advertised the protests online with the hashtag #Euromaidan.

Over the next month, both sides dug in. A small group of protestors built a small but intimidating fortress on the square to shield them both from the cold and local police, and the protest entered into a continuous 24/7 state. The government, increasingly concerned with the size of the protests and what was perceived as their unlawfulness, began to resort to more and more violent tactics to dislodge the protesters. Despite a series of small riots in Kiev, neither side could be budged. As December wore on, opposition parties like Batkivshchyna, UDAR, and Svoboda joined in with the protestors, championing their cause as the cause of all Ukrainians who sought a more just government with stronger EU relations. UDAR and Vitali Kitschko, in particular, became major figures in what was becoming known as the Euromaidan Revolution.

Throughout this all, the Yanukovych government insisted that the deal with Russia was necessary for economic reasons, and that it held no stipulations preventing continued talks with the EU. As the protests continued, un-swayed by their reasoning, the Rada, still controlled by a large majority coalition of the Party of Regions and the Communist Party, passed anti-protest laws in mid-January. For this they were immediately condemned by much of the international community, and three days later a mass protest in Kiev erupted into outright rioting as protestors attempted to storm government buildings. It was throughout this period that militant and extremist groups began to plant themselves in earnest among both the Euromaidan protestors and among government supporters. Their actions, often covert, would go on to be blamed as intentional efforts on the part of the wider

revolutionary movement/official
government policy.

In February, after another round of
clashes between protestors and police,
Yanukovych's government essentially
surrendered, and Yanukovych fled
Ukraine on February 24th. The next day
the Rada voted to impeach him as
president (an action he, from Russia, still
decries as illegal) and the Party of
Regions almost instantly began leaking
membership. Together, UDAR,
Batkivshchyna, and Svoboda were able
to form a new majority coalition and
quickly installed a new government.
Unfortunately, this served as not the end,
but the beginning of the real trouble for
Ukraine.

The Conflict thus far:

Even while much of central and western Ukraine was protesting loudly, large swathes of eastern and southern Ukraine had continued to support the government. Following Yanukovich's ouster, large protests against the new government were held in Crimea, and Russia used this opportunity to slowly take political and military control of the peninsula. A referendum on independence was held just a few weeks later in March, in which an overwhelming percentage of voters voted to be independent from Ukraine with a view towards integrating into the Russian Federation. While the West and Ukraine has decried this referendum as illegal, coerced, and rigged, Russia and some pro-Russian groups within Crimea have countered that Crimea has always had the highest percentages of Russians

and Russian speakers in Ukraine, and that they felt threatened by perceived anti-Russian sentiment among the new government. The take-over was virtually bloodless and Ukraine was able to peacefully withdraw its military, but the Ukrainian government has vowed not to surrender Crimea.

During the same time period, in eastern Ukraine, particularly in the Donbass region, pro-Russian citizens had taken to the same tactics as the Euromaidan protesters, first occupying government buildings, and then engaging in conflict with local authorities. The violence quickly intensified, and local paramilitaries took de facto control of much of the oblasts (provinces) of Donetsk and Luhansk. Following significant unrest, both oblasts declared themselves autonomous and began to engage in open conflict with the

Ukrainian military. While not a significant threat by themselves, the situation became more complicated when Russia again began to send troops over the border, usually in unmarked uniforms. With the backing of the much stronger Russian military, the insurgents have been able to make and keep minor territorial gains.

Where we now stand:

The date is May 26th, 2014.

You, as a ranking member and an important government minister, are tasked with setting Ukraine on a path to prosperity. But it will not be easy! In the short term, the people of western Ukraine would like to see a hard line taken on the annexation of Crimea by Russia. In the east, the violence continues to escalate and the oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk have now declared themselves the independent Federal State of Novorossiia. Though the West continues to nominally back you, only minor sanctions have been passed, and the EU shies away from harming its economic relationship with Russia. Russia is encroaching from the east, and the most extreme of the insurgents have envisioned all of southern Ukraine,

down to Transnistria, as part of the new “independent state.” All of this must be dealt with.

But make no mistake. The voters of western Ukraine are not overly patient, nor are they afraid of protest and revolution. The economy of Ukraine is still weak, billions in debt is yet to be paid, and reform is still on the minds of the citizens, even if they are distracted for a moment. Fail to deliver on your promises to fight corruption, wrestle some semblance of control from the oligarchs, and improve the life of the average Ukrainian, and surely you’ll be next in line for the protestors.

And remember—your party was part of a coalition meant to topple the existing government. Now that it is gone, it’s important to balance loyalty to party or to ideology with loyalty to keeping the

government functioning. Once, you could be elected solely on the basis of what party you *weren't* a part of. But the citizens and the media will be watching you, waiting for you to make the difference in the struggle for Ukraine's future. But they are also ready to reveal you as a fraud if, at day's end, you prove to be like so many before you. Take care, even more so if you're without party. Sometimes it pays to have friends in high places.

Political Dossier:

Major Political Parties of Ukraine

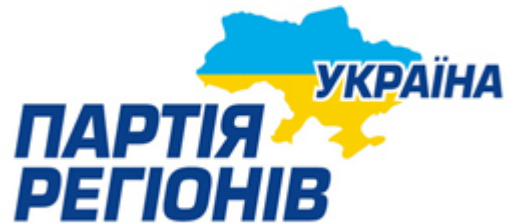
Verkhova Rada, or *Rada* for short, is the Ukrainian Parliament.



Batkivshchyna

Led by Tymoshenko, Batkivshchyna (meaning Fatherland) is a centre-right, pro-EU party that currently has the most seats in the Rada. Culturally, their platform is anti-Russian and anti-Russian language, and they seek recompense or recognition for Holodomor, the mass starving of millions of Ukrainians during Stalin's reign, which they classify as genocide against the Ukrainian people. Geopolitically Batkivshchyna is western oriented and is at least nominally

interested in continuing talks of EU accessions, though they have recently been more focused on denunciations of Russia than anything else. Domestically, their primary battle has been declared to be a war against endemic corruption.



Party of Regions

Before Euromaidan and the flight of Yanukovich, the Party of Regions was by far the most dominant party in the Rada, representing Euro-skepticism and promising to protect and preserve the place of Russians within Ukraine. They represent a more centric position on the Ukrainian spectrum, favoring slow change over revolution and focusing their domestic attention primarily on

improving the quality of life for average Ukrainians. Following the crisis, the party has been heavily splintered as MPs jump ship, hoping to distance themselves from the former party of Yanukovych and some of the Party of Regions hardliners who have gone so far as to suggest the dissolution of Ukraine as it is today. While the party has officially condemned Yanukovych, the association has remained, leading to it being banned from some regions of the country. Nonetheless, it holds the second largest number of seats in the Rada, only just behind Batkivshchyna, perhaps a testament to its previous popularity.



*UDAR (Ukrainian Democratic Alliance
for Reform)*

Led by Vitali Klitschko, UDAR is another centre-right party, though unlike Batkivshchyna, they tend to shy away from controversial social or cultural topics. Their rhetoric revolves around reducing social inequality through reform of all aspects of the current governmental system in Ukraine, from reducing the benefits offered to members of parliament to developing an entirely new structure for the education system in Ukraine. They have also developed a working partnership with the Christian Democratic Union of Germany, the party of Chancellor Angela Merkel. They hold the third highest number of seats in Parliament, though there is a large gap between the top two and UDAR. Despite this and their participation in Euromaidan, UDAR was denied any ministerial positions following the ouster of Yanukovych.



Svoboda

Led by Oleh Tyahnybok, Svoboda (meaning Freedom) is a far right party that describes itself as primarily a nationalist party. Rejecting the idea that nationalism is something to be ashamed of, they pursue straightforwardly anti-Russian policies along with other social policies that can be considered conservative, such as opposition to abortion and gay marriage. Criticized as racist and anti-Semitic by outside observers and some political scientists from within Ukraine, their goals include the criminalization of “Ukrainophobia,” the ouster of any and all communist members of government, and the complete halt of all teaching of Russian in

Ukraine. They hold only a handful of seats fewer than UDAR, and despite their rather extreme views, they are part of the ruling coalition, offering enough seats to form a majority.



Communist Party of Ukraine

In many ways a dying party, able to secure only the votes of long time communists, the Communist Party of Ukraine brings a far left and anti-nationalist view to the Rada. They stand alone in openly calling for the raising of Russian to the level of official state language, and are disliked by the right for their criticism of Ukrainian nationalist heroes such as Roman Shukhevych and Stepan Bandera. While previously they survived as a party thanks to consistent

participation in a coalition with the Party of Regions, their continued support for Yanukovych has led the Party of Regions to distance themselves from the communists. Without this protection, it is believed that the communists will soon be run out of the Rada all together, as they are reviled by most in the majority bloc.

Another parliamentary faction, it is comprised of a small group of unaffiliated MPs sharing three commonalities: a promise not to pursue a ministerial position, an interest in European integration, and a desire to purge any and all communists from the Ukrainian government.

Economic Development

Not actually a party but a parliamentary faction, it is led by Anatoliy Kinakh and comprised entirely of former members of the Party of Regions. Whether to save their own political careers or because of genuine changes of heart, its members now back the Yatsenuk government in power.

The current government of Ukraine, following the ouster of Yanukovych, is a coalition between Batkivshchyna, UDAR, and Svoboda, backed also by the Economic Development Faction. While these parties were united in opposition against Yanukovych and the Party of Regions, now that they are in power, the cracks and differences in ideology have begun to appear throughout the government and Rada.

Sovereign European Ukraine

Position List



Arsen Avakov—*Minister of Internal Affairs, Batkivshchyna*

A classic eastern-European politician with his hands in many baskets, he is currently the president of a large Kharkiv charity, the chairman of the Kharkiv branch of Batkivshchyna, and head of a supervisory board on joint-stock companies in Ukraine. Arrested in Italy in 2012 by Interpol on charges of illegally transferring land, his election to the Rada allowed him to return to Ukraine a free man. Crafty and shrewd, he is a loud voice in the outrage at Russia's violations of Ukrainian sovereignty in the east.



Lyudmyla Denisova—*Minister of Labor and Social Policy, Batkivshchyna*

Originally a school teacher, her political career began in the 90's when she moved from northern Russia to Crimea, where she was eventually appointed as the regional minister of Economy and Finance. In 2007, after joining Batkivshchyna, she was offered the position of Minister of Labor and Social Policy a first time, during Tymoshenko's second term as Prime Minister. She has been linked to embezzlement and abuse of power, but no charges have stuck.

Andrii Deshchytsia—*Minister of Foreign Affairs, unaffiliated*



Educated in Canada, Deshchystia has been

the primary political face of Ukraine in its search for international support against Russian aggression, helping to set the groundwork for the Geneva Statement on Ukraine. He is a strong proponent of sanctions against Russia and the development of a visa-free regime for Ukrainians hoping to visit the European Union.



Mykhailo Koval—*Minister of Defense, unaffiliated*

A dry, career officer in first the Soviet and then Ukrainian militaries, he is considerably less fiery and political than his right wing predecessor, Ihor Tenyukh. His term thus far has been a delicate balancing act between appeasing western and NATO interests, trying to suppress

the fighting in eastern Ukraine, and delicately dealing with the covert and not-so-covert Russian support of the rebels.



Serhiy Kvit—*Minister of Education and Science, Batkivshchyna*

The former president of the prestigious National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Kvit is known more for his zealotry and ardor than for his track record of affecting actual substantive change. He has also been linked to various right-wing groups in Ukraine.



Andriy Mokhnyk—*Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, Svoboda*

A long time nationalist and member of Svoboda, Mokhnyk brings a staunchly nationalistic and right wing view to the cabinet. A strong opponent of perceived “russification” in parts of Ukraine, he supports the outright banning of any and all current or former Communist Party members and the nationalization of strategic assets in Ukraine. He, following his party platform, is not a supporter of major investment in alternative energy sources.



Oleh Musiy—
Minister of Healthcare, unaffiliated

While officially unaffiliated with a political party, he spent the end of 2013 and the beginning of 2014 organizing

medical services during the Euromaidan protests in Kiev. Since his appointment as Minister of Healthcare, he has focused primarily on fighting endemic corruption within the wider healthcare system of Ukraine, especially in the areas of procurement and regulation of medical supplies. He is popular among the members of the Rada, Ukraine’s parliament.



Yevhen Nyshchuk—*Minister of Culture, unaffiliated*

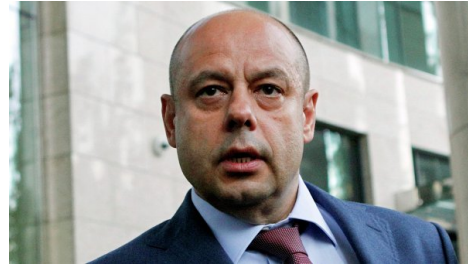
Known to some as “the Voice of Maidan,” Nyshchuk is well known for his participation in revolutionary activities, participating in both the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan protests. A successful and decorated actor, he has

prioritized the preservation of Ukrainian culture in a time of great social upheaval.



Pavlo Petrenko—*Minister of Justice, Batkivshchyna*

A young lawyer who studied at Chernivtsi National University, his political career took off when he became a leading legal expert within the Front of Changes political party in 2010. While Front of Changes merged politically with Batkivshchyna, making him a Batkivshchyna member, he still holds strong ties to Front of Changes, which operates as a separate organization outside of politics and as a sub-unit of Batkivshchyna within politics.



Yuriy Prodan—*Minister of Energy and Coal Industry, unaffiliated*

A long time participant in the Ukrainian bureaucracy, Prodan served under Yanukovich, Tymoshenko, and now Yatsenuk, including a previous stint as Minister of Energy and Coal Industry. While a qualified expert in the field of energy, opponents have criticized him for helping create the National Energy Market, a bloated and monopolistic state electricity company. He is believed to have strong ties to Kolomoyskyi and the Privat Group.

Pavlo Sheremeta—*Minister of Economy and Trade, unaffiliated*

Educated in the United States and with contacts in business around the world, Sheremeta founded the private business school Kyiv Mohyla Business School and later served as the president of the Kyiv School of Economics until his appointment as minister. He is unaffiliated with a party, but known for his strong emphasis on deregulation, something that can put him at odds with other political elements that prefer that the Ukrainian government avoid rushed or over-strong efforts to privatize state companies.



Economy, deputy chairman of the National bank, and chairman of

the State Treasury of Ukraine. With significant contacts within private sector finance, Shlapak brings a party-unaffiliated expertise to the new Ukrainian cabinet. He is, however, known to be an unofficial representative of the powerful Kolomoyskyi/Privat Group within the government.



Oleksandr Shlapak—*Minister of Finance, unaffiliated*

An experienced bureaucrat, Shlapak has previously spent stints as the Minister of

Ihor Shvaika—*Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food, Svoboda*



A somewhat controversial figure, Shvaika is a lawyer known for his

opposition to shale-gas and for a child kidnapping scandal that erupted in 2012. A member of the far right party Svoboda, he has so far promised slow but steady reform of agricultural policies, including easing the process to register land and heavy equipment.



Oleksandr Sych—*Vice Prime Minister w/ portfolio of Humanitarian*

n Policy, Svoboda

Nominally chosen to serve the nation as an organizer of humanitarian relief, especially following the struggles of the Euromaidan protest and the eruption of the nation into conflict, he has instead found his place in social activism and commentary. A member of Svoboda, that activism has been extremely conservative

in nature, and he hopes to further his nationalist and socially conservative agenda while Svoboda's political capital is still high following the protests.



Vitaly Yarema—*Deputy Prime Minister w/ portfolio of Law Enforcement, Batkivshchyna*

A respected and determined man, Yarema is the former chief of police in Kiev and affiliated with Batkivshchyna, although not officially a member. With the help of extensive military, police, and legal contacts, he is hoping to spearhead the reorganization of police forces, help restore order to Ukrainian cities that have been disrupted by the 2014 tensions, and root out those within the Interior

Ministry who may have abused their power during the Euromaidan protests.

Other Important Domestic Figures



Vitali Klitschko—*Leader of UDAR*

A former professional boxer and longtime supporter of Yushchenko, Klitschko was a major player in the founding of UDAR, of which he was almost immediately made head. A popular “man of the people,” well known due to his boxing career, he has often spoken of his firm belief that issues of economy and corruption should take precedence over squabbling about language and ethnicity. Pro-EU, pro-NATO, and staunchly against

any cooperation with the Party of Regions, he has not had great success in attempts to run for high office, but his endorsement of Poroshenko surely played a role in his overwhelming victory in the 2014 presidential election.

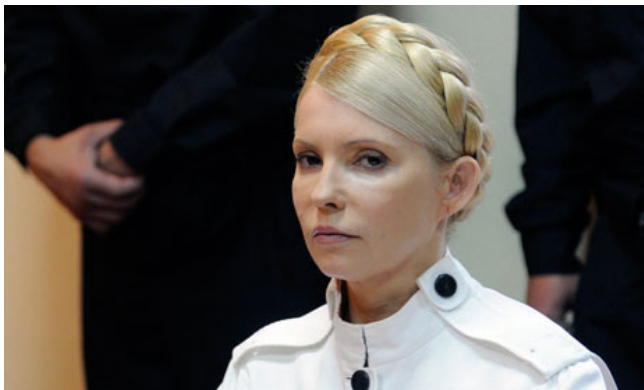
***Petro
Poros
henko***

—
President of Ukraine



A businessman with a “candy empire,” Poroshenko is historically most associated with the former political block “Our Ukraine,” which was the bloc of Yushenko throughout most of the first decade of the millennium. Elected on May 25th, 2014, Poroshenko has promised not to give up on Crimea and to take the fight to the rebels in eastern Ukraine, as well as to work on further economic agreements with the EU, in the hopes of furthering

their talks of eventual accession. While he toes the nationalist line when it comes to domestic issues, it is believed he will serve as president with great realism and pragmatism, doing what is necessary to advance Ukraine. As is often the case, he has a few accusations of corruption in his closet, but these did not seem to sway the voters of Ukraine. It is worth noting that because of Crimea's status and the violence in the east, elections were not held in either region, both considered more pro-Russian historically than western Ukraine, where turnout was high.



Yulia Tymoshenko—*Leader of
Batkivshchyna*

A woman who divides opinions around the globe, Tymoshenko is a former two time prime minister and was a presidential candidate in the 2014 elections. Participating in both the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan, she is seen by the West and by her supporters as a symbol of the fight against corruption. She was arrested in 2011 on charges of abuse of power which resulted in almost 3 years of imprisonment, something which allies have insisted was politically motivated. That said, she is also a wealthy business woman, made rich during the wild period after the fall of the Soviet Union, and she only became richer during her time as Prime Minister, a fact her detractors often point out. Wildly popular, charismatic, and with an undeniable streak of nationalism, Tymoshenko is one of the most important figures in Ukrainian politics.

Viktor Yanukovych—former President of Ukraine



Having previously served as prime minister under Yushenko, he again ran for president in 2010, winning the election without great social upheaval. (It was his apparent victory over Yushenko in 2004 that led to claims of voter fraud and the Orange Revolution.) As president, he sought to balance Ukraine more evenly between Russia and the EU, seeking to raise the status of the Russian language while crafting economic and trade deals between both partners. In late 2013, Euromaidan began in opposition to the perceived corruption and nepotism within his government. The protests and discontent eventually grew so large as to

force Yanukovych to flee to Russia in February, for his Party of Regions to disown him, and for the Rada to vote to remove him from presidency the very day after his flight. While most of the world no longer recognizes him as president, he continues to release statements from Russia in an official register, insisting that his ouster was illegal.



Arseniy Yatsenyuk—Prime Minister

A young member of Batkivshchyna who spent much of the past decade entrenched in the government holding various ministerial positions, following the ouster of Yanukovych he was quickly chosen as the new Prime Minister. European oriented and strongly reform minded, he

has combined social conservatism with a strong trend towards reforming civil service and purging Ukraine of as much corruption as possible. In mid-2014 he left Batkivshchyna to form the People's Front party in response to the decision to place Yulia Tymoshenko as the head of the party list for the upcoming election.

Viktor Yushenko—former President of Ukraine



Following the Orange Revolution in 2004, it was Yushenko who eventually emerged as the president of Ukraine. Though widely backed by other major opposition figures at the time, such as Tymoshenko, his presidency quickly turned into one

dismissal of the government after another, most prominent of which was his removal of the Orange Revolution members from the cabinet in 2005. His government in 2006 even went so far as to appoint Yanukovich as Prime Minister, who would eventually go on to replace him as president. Though strongly pro-west, his stance on Russia has been seen as more moderate than other would-be reformers, and he sees Russia as a valuable partner, even if perhaps not under Putin's regime. While not currently in a position of political power, he is still an important figure in the national discourse for reform, and may run for office again in the future. Over the years, he has increasingly become critical of Tymoshenko in particular.

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