SWITZERLAND GLOBAL ENTERPRISE

Ukraine

Business Travel Guide

Compiled by:

Embassy of Switzerland in Ukraine

Kyiv, April 2025

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Ukraine continues to operate against the background of the ongoing Russian military invasion. Martial Law is in place, significantly altering the daily life and business environment. Yet, even under these extraordinary conditions, Ukraine remains open to international cooperation, investment, and business activity. Daily life continues in most regions, and cities like Kyiv, Lviv, and Dnipro maintain a strong sense of normalcy—restaurants operate, public transport runs, and business meetings take place regularly.

Entering Ukraine is possible through land borders with neighboring countries such as Poland, Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia, as the country's airspace remains closed to civilian flights. Foreign nationals should consult their embassy or Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for current travel protocols, including documentation requirements, insurance coverage, and potential restrictions under Martial Law.

Once inside the country, it is important to behave with awareness and respect for the wartime environment:

- Carry identification at all times, and be prepared for checkpoints, especially near infrastructure or in sensitive areas.
- Observe curfews, which vary by region and are enforced by local authorities.
- Avoid photographing military sites, personnel, or strategic infrastructure, as this is prohibited and could lead to detention.
- Remain alert to air raid sirens, which signal potential missile attacks. Most buildings and public places are equipped with bomb shelters or designated safe zones.

Despite the risks, Ukraine's people have shown extraordinary resilience. A strong digital infrastructure, mobile-first public services, and the popularity of cashless transactions allow business to continue with surprising efficiency. Co-working spaces, tech hubs, and startup accelerators remain active in safer parts of the country, and many companies have adapted to hybrid or remote models.

Transfer from the airport to the city center:

Since Ukraine's airspace remains closed to civilian flights, the most convenient route is to fly into Poland. Warsaw Chopin Airport (WAW) is one of the largest international airports in Poland and serves many global destinations. It is a primary hub for traveling to Ukraine by land.

- Trains: Regular trains operate from Warsaw to Przemyśl, a border city in southeastern Poland. The journey takes approximately 5–6 hours. You can take an express train or a slower regional train, depending on your schedule.

  From Przemyśl to Lviv: From Przemyśl, you can continue your journey to Ukraine by train or bus. The trip from Przemyśl to Lviv, a major Ukrainian city, takes about 2–3 hours. The train is the most popular option, but buses also operate frequently. Be prepared for potential delays or changes in the train schedules due to ongoing border controls and security measures.

- Buses: Direct buses from Warsaw to Lviv or Kyiv operate regularly, with the journey taking approximately 9–12 hours depending on the destination. Several international bus companies, such as Ecolines or Flixbus, offer these services.

  Border Crossing: Upon arriving at the Ukrainian border, expect customs checks and a security inspection. You may be asked to provide identification and any documents for your trip such as invitations, reservations, etc.

- Driving: The driving distance from Warsaw to Lviv is approximately 400–450 kilometers, taking around 6–7 hours depending on traffic and road conditions. Note that you will need to cross the Polish-Ukrainian border, so ensure you have all necessary documents, including your passport, driver's license, and relevant car paperwork. Importantly, before departure, check the status of border crossings before departure, as some routes may be impacted by security restrictions or delays.

Be prepared for increased security checks and possible delays when crossing the border into Ukraine. Military checkpoints may be present, especially in sensitive regions. Always carry your passport and any necessary documents, as they will be required for entry.

Oblasts have curfew in place (except Zakarpatska oblast). Mostly the curfew is in place 00:00-05:00, but the closer to the frontline the stricter the curfew gets, with Khersonska and Donetska oblast having 20:00-06:00 and 21:00-05:00 curfews respectively.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

For travels to Ukraine, no specific vaccination is needed. Although there are no particular health requirements, it is advised to have appropriate medical insurance when coming to Ukraine. Minor emergencies can be treated by the many pharmacies located throughout the country. For more serious health issues however, the public health system is of limited performance. While medical doctors are normally competent and well trained, public hospitals are badly equipped and hygiene is not up to the Western standards. Furthermore, it is common that hospitals demand a deposit in advance before starting the treatment. Medicaments have to be paid by the patient himself as well.

There are some private clinics in Kyiv, providing services for foreigners (English speaking doctors):

www.dobrobut.com

www.medikom.ua

www.oberig.ua/en

http://www.boris.kiev.ua/en/

www.isida.ua (obstetric-gynaecological clinic)

www.eurolab.ua

www.dila.com.ua (clinical trials)

PUBLIC SECURITY / RECOMMENDED PRECAUTIONS

FDFA Travel Advice page for Ukraine: https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/representations-and-travel-advice/ukraine.html

TIME ZONE

Time difference between Switzerland and Ukraine

Kyiv	Eastern European Time , which is +1 hour from Bern time

Daylight Saving Time: clocks are turned forward by one hour on the last Sunday of March and turned back on the last Sunday of October.

BUSINESS HOURS

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays and Nationals Holidays
Government Offices	9:00-18:00	Does not work	Does not work
Banks	9:00-13:00 14:00-18:00	Does not work	Does not work
Shops	08:00–22:00	08:00–22:00	08:00–22:00

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day	01.01
International Women's Day	08.03
Orthodox Easter Day (date is determined as the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox)	20.04
Labour Day	01.05
The Day of Remembrance and Victory over Nazism in the Second World War of 1939-1945	09.05

Orthodox Pentecost (date is determined as the 50th day after Easter)	08.06
Constitution Day	28.06
Ukrainian Statehood Day	15.07
Independence Day	24.08
Day of Defenders of Ukraine	01.08
Christmas Day	25.12

According to Ukrainian law, public holidays are days off in Ukraine. However, while the country is under martial law, this rule does not apply. Only those holidays that fall on Saturday or Sunday are considered days off.

Accordingly, during martial law, no additional day off is added after holidays that fall on Saturday or Sunday.

This restriction applies only to state-owned enterprises and institutions. Private companies have the right to grant their employees days off for holidays at their discretion.

NATIONAL TRADE FAIR CALENDAR

The dates of the main trade fairs can be obtained from: https://mvc-expo.com.ua/en/exhibitions-and-actions/

COMMUNICATION: TELEPHONE AND INTERNET

Ukraine's country code is: +380

Local SIM card can be bought at: Specialized provider shops, grocery shops and newspaper shops at public transport stops

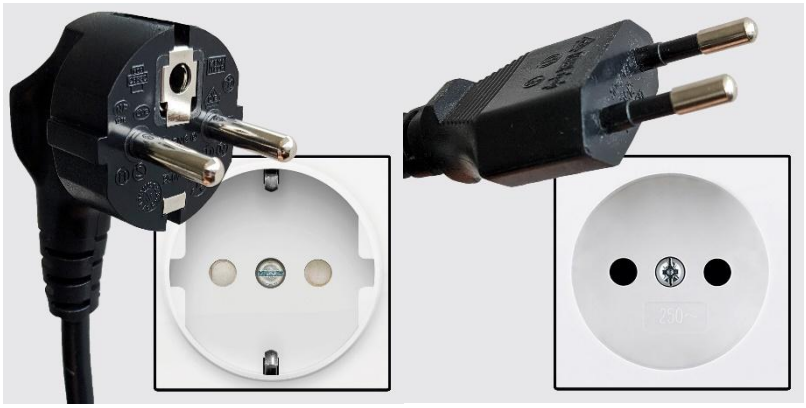
Important phone numbers:

Police	101
Fire department	102
Medical emergency	103

It is very easy to buy a local SIM card in any mobile shop without passport or ID card. The biggest providers in Ukraine are Kyivstar, Vodafone Ukraine and Lifecell – all providing a range of services to more or less similar conditions. Free of change Wi-Fi connection is available in restaurants, hotels and shopping malls.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Electricity plug and socket: Type F and Type C.



The voltage in Ukraine is 230 V with a frequency of 50 Hz.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

National currency in Ukraine is the Hryvnia (UAH).

Exchange rate as of April 1, 2025: CHF 1 = UAH 46.53.

Ukrainians and foreign nationals may export currency from Ukraine without declaring it if the amount does not exceed the equivalent of EUR 10,000. For amounts above this limit, a customs declaration is required. In addition, documents confirming the origin of the funds may be required, such as a bank statement of withdrawal or other official financial documents.

Visa, Master Card, and American Express are accepted in major boutiques, hotels, restaurants, and in department stores. Credit card fraud is not excluded, it is therefore recommended to use a credit card only in trustworthy establishments and to check, as far as possible, how it is handled. Personal cheques will normally not be accepted.

In daily life, cash still plays an important role in Ukraine and it is the most widely used payment method. Many taxis have no possibility to accept electronic payments and cashless payments are completely inconceivable in public transport in most of Ukrainian cities.

You will find ATMs on the streets, in big supermarkets, at banks, and commercial centers, providing cash (UAH) 24 hours a day. Important: some banks can set temporary limits on ATM withdrawals (3000 – 5000 UAH/day).

US Dollars and Euros can easily be exchanged in many exchange offices located throughout the city. Other currencies such as Swiss Francs can be exchanged in major Ukrainian banks or some exchange offices. You might be asked for an ID (passport). You should never change money on the street; there is usually little difference in rates but you will likely be cheated.

	everywhere	almost everywhere	limited	not accepted
Cash (national currency)	☒	☐	☐	☐
Cash (USD)	☐	☒	☐	☐
MasterCard	☒	☐	☐	☐
Visa	☒	☐	☐	☐
American Express	☒	☐	☐	☐

Diner	☐	☐	☐	☒
Apple Pay	☒	☐	☐	☐
Google/Samsung Pay	☒	☐	☐	☐

DOMESTIC TRAVEL, LOCAL TRANSPORT

The most commonly used kind of public transport is buses, trams in certain cities. The quality of the services is good. We usually recommend to not rely on public transport, as it stops functioning during the air alerts, which can be frequent.

Taxi fare for a 15 minutes journey: depends on the time of day, but usually comes to 150-200 hryvnia (3-4 CHF)

Main ride hailing apps: Uklon, Bolt, Uber

Main method of payment for taxi and subways: Cash or card for taxis, card for subway

Car rental with/without a driver can be arranged at numerous companies:

- Sixt
- Avis
- NarsCars

Rental price ranges from 1200-2000 UAH per day (23-40 CHF per day), depending on the chosen car.

ACCOMMODATION, TEMPORARY OFFICE SPACE

Most cities in the country have a variety of hotels present. Three star hotels are the most numerous, however five stars hotels are also available throughout the country.

Big cities have coworking spaces, that might be suitable for short-term office work, otherwise big cities are able to accommodate all of the office rental requests.

LANGUAGES USED FOR BUSINESS

Ukrainian is the official state language. It belongs to the Eastern branch of the Slavic group and is written in Cyrillic script. Russian is very widely used as a second language for informal communication, especially in Kyiv, in the big cities in the East as well as in the South. While many young people are now learning English, most people do not speak it. You cannot count on being understood easily as you make your way around town. Street signs are mostly in Ukrainian and English.

English is the most widely spoken foreign language and might be spoken in hotels, restaurants and department stores in major cities. German or French are less spoken. Company's documents and catalogues in these languages are therefore of very limited use.

BUSINESS PRACTICES

Tips for initiating business contacts:

Generally, companies are eager to establish business connections with foreign companies. Some companies might have troubles communicating in English or any other language.

Scheduling Meetings:

In a business environment, punctuality is expected, but a 5–10-minute delay is often taken in stride, it is better to plan 2-3 days or even a week in advance. If it's a personal meeting, sometimes people can be 15-20 minutes late without warning, especially in a less formal context. To plan a personal meeting a day or two in advance request is sufficient, but not at the last minute if it is something important.

For business meetings, it is customary to follow a dress code and use last names or patronymics (if the situation is official). For friendly meetings, everything is simpler, but in any case, being late without warning is inappropriate.

Telegrams and WhatsApp are very popular. Many people plan business meetings not via email, but via messengers. Email is not widespread and does not take the same place as in the West **Business attire:**

Most private sector operates in “business casual” style. Governmental agencies and public servants operate in strict business attire.

Introducing yourself:

No general formalities. People expect brief introduction of name and intention for the meeting.

Building trust and personal relationships:

For establishing initial business contacts with a Ukrainian partner, it is advisable to have references or introduction from another company. The same is true for the other way round: make sure you obtain references regarding reliability, financial stability and legal grounds for operating activities.
In Ukraine, personal contacts are of particular significance, and they strongly influence business decisions. Therefore, it is highly important to establish such “trust-based” contacts through networking activities such as dining, tennis, golf, going out together, etc.

Serious industry’s focused exhibitions and forums will give you an opportunity to meet potential partners. There are plenty of business events organized by the European Business Association and American Chamber of Commerce, where you can get in touch with local and international business communities and environment and build out your business contacts.

Offering and accepting gifts and invitations:

Formal meetings do not expect but welcome a gift.

It is considered rude to decline a gift, so inform the counterparty of inability to accept a gift, if such exists and context suggests the intention to present a gift to you.

Sensitive topics:

Topics relating to martial law restriction and military mobilization efforts (vacation destinations, relatives, attendance of international events, etc.).

Language issues regarding Russian vs. Ukrainian: if you know Russian, it’s better to speak English to avoid uncomfortable situations.

General political topics: avoid possible contentious narratives.

General religion: differential of Russian vs. Ukrainian church.

BUSINESS RISKS

- Economic volatility: Inflation, the hryvnia exchange rate, and tax burden instability. Frequent changes in macroeconomic policy and government programs.

- Regulatory unpredictability: Laws and tax rules change frequently, sometimes without a transition period. Risk of excessive bureaucracy or duplication of requirements.
- Corruption and administrative pressure
- Cybersecurity: Due to the war, there is a high level of cyberattacks, in particular on infrastructure and private companies.
- Logistics and energy: Destruction of critical infrastructure (bridges, warehouses, energy). In 2025, Russia did not attack Ukraine's energy sector, although nothing prevents them from continuing their tactics to destroy the Ukrainian energy system.
- Human resources risks: Mobilization and migration affect the availability of skilled workers. Frequent changes in the team, rotation of specialists.

Some of these problems existed before the start of the invasion and have been exacerbated by the Russian invasion. According to OECD's Country Risk Classifications, Ukraine has the highest rating of risk – 7/7.

Swiss Export Risk Insurance SERV insures political and *del credere* risks involved in exporting goods and services.

Products for exporters

Product for service providers

Products for financial institutions

The full range of services and products offered by SERV can be obtained at www.serv-ch.com.

IMPORT OF SAMPLES AND CATALOGUES

Ukraine is a member of the ATA Carnet system, which facilitates the temporary importation of goods without the need to pay customs duties or taxes. This system is particularly beneficial for businesses bringing in commercial samples, exhibition materials, or professional equipment for temporary use. All Ukrainian Customs offices are authorized to handle ATA Carnets during their operating hours. ATA Carnets are not accepted for unaccompanied goods.

Ukraine accepts ATA Carnets for the temporary importation of:

- Commercial Samples
- Exhibition and Fair Goods
- Professional Equipment

These goods can be brought into Ukraine without incurring customs duties or taxes, provided they are re-exported within the validity period of the ATA Carnet.

ATA Carnets should be completed in English, Ukrainian, or Russian.

If you're importing samples or catalogues into Ukraine without an ATA Carnet, customs duties and taxes may apply.

- Customs Duty: 10% on the value exceeding €150.
- VAT: 20% on the value exceeding €150, plus the assessed customs duty.

When importing goods without an ATA Carnet, the following documents are typically required:

- A bilingual invoice (Ukrainian and English) certified by the signatures of the director and chief accountant, along with the company seal.
- Detailed descriptions, such as extracts from catalogues or manufacturer's certificates.
- Completion of the appropriate customs declaration forms (CN22 or CN23), depending on the value and nature of the goods.

USEFUL LOCAL WEBSITES, ADDRESSES, EMAIL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Business news	https://www.ukrinform.net/	https://biz.liga.net/en	https://kyivindependent.com/
Customs hotline	https://customs.gov.ua/en/contactus	Domestic Hotline (within Ukraine): 15-45 (free of charge) International Hotline (from abroad): +380 44 284 19 15	post@customs.gov.ua
Map of air alerts	https://map.ukrainealarm.com/		

Most of Ukrainians are using Telegram as their main source of information and communication.

ADDRESSES OF EMBASSY AND CONSULATES OF SWITZERLAND

Embassy of Switzerland

vul. Kozyatynska, 12

01015 Kyiv

Phone: + 38 044 281 61 28

Phone/Visa: + 38 044 590 44 85

Fax: + 38 044 280 14 48

Out-of hours emergency contact number: + 38 067 502 78 08

E-mail: kyiv@eda.admin.ch

www.eda.admin.ch/kiev

According to the current situation, travel to and stays in Ukraine are not recommended. Swiss nationals who decide to remain in the country or to travel to Ukraine against the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs' advice must be aware that Switzerland may have only limited or no means to provide assistance in emergencies.

The Embassy of Switzerland in Ukraine provides limited consular services to Swiss travelers and Swiss residents in Ukraine only. The Regional Consular Center for Southeast Europe at the Embassy of Switzerland in Romania provides consular services for Swiss travelers and Swiss residents in Moldova.

Consular services provided by the Embassy of Switzerland in Ukraine include assistance with civil status matters, registration and deregistration, and other consular affairs. Swiss identity documents cannot be issued. The visa section is temporary handled by the Embassy of Switzerland in Bucharest, Romania.

Opening times:

Monday – Friday: 08.30 – 18.00

(lunch break: 12.30 – 14.00)

Opening times:

Embassy of Switzerland in Romania

09:00 - 12:00

ADDRESSES BILATERAL TRADE PARTNERS

Switzerland Global Enterprise is the official Swiss foreign trade and investment agency. With HQ in Zurich and offices around the world, its helps each year +6'000 Swiss companies develop in 140 countries.

Xavier Cornut – country expert Ukraine

xcornut@s-ge.com / www.s-ge.com

SURA is an association based in Switzerland that facilitates Swiss companies' engagement in Ukraine's reconstruction process in a transparent and effective way.

SURA | sura-swiss.ch

ADDRESSES OF THE EMBASSY AND CONSULATES OF UKRAINE IN OR FOR SWITZERLAND

Embassy of Ukraine in Switzerland

Feldeggweg 5 Working Hours:
3005 Bern, Schweiz
Phone: + 41 31 352 23 16
Fax: + 41 31 351 64 16
E-mail: emb_ch@mfa.gov.ua

www.switzerland.mfa.gov.ua

Opening times:

Monday – Friday: 08.30 – 18.00
(lunch break: 12.30 – 14.00)

Consulate General of Ukraine in Bern

Consular Section

+41 (0)31-352-23-78

consul_ch@mfa.gov.ua

Opening times:

Mon, Wed, Fri - 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Tue, Thu - 10:00-11:00 a.m.

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