

Ukraine

Business Guide

Compiled by:

Embassy of Switzerland in Ukraine

Kyiv, April 2020

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

From Zurich and Geneva flights to various Ukrainian cities are provided daily – whereas direct flights only operate to Kyiv. Starting end of March 2018, [Swiss International Airlines](#) has resumed direct flights from Zurich to Kyiv Boryspil (KBP). [Ukraine International Airlines](#) also operates daily direct flights between Kyiv and Zurich as well as between Kyiv and Geneva. The international airport of Kyiv is located 36 km from the capital. To get from the airport to the city center and main train station, you can take a taxi, an express train or a shuttle-bus.

For touristic, private or business visits, visas are not required for Swiss Citizens for a stay up to 90 days, within a 180-day period. For longer stays, a [visa type D](#) is required. The same regime is in place for citizens of Lichtenstein, USA, Canada, Japan, all EU-member states as well as for 28 other states. A comprehensive list with visa regulations for all countries is available [here](#). For further information, you can also contact the [Embassy of Ukraine](#) in Bern.

One-time export or import of cash and (or) traveller's checks, not exceeding the equivalent of € 10'000 is permitted. Above that limit, customs declaration and a proper documentation of the withdrawal of cash from the financial establishment is required. A short summary of Ukraine's customs regulations is available [here](#).

Coronavirus - New travel reality:

All scheduled commercial international passenger services, including flights, trains and buses to and from Ukraine are currently suspended. Airlines, including SkyUp and Ukraine International Airlines, have conducted special repatriation flights on a rolling basis, with unpredictable schedules. All foreigners without residence permits are banned from entering Ukraine. Starting April 6, all travelers,

both Ukrainian citizens and foreigners, arriving in Ukraine will be required to undergo a 14-day supervised quarantine period.

As always, please read the [actual travel advices](#) of the [Embassy of Switzerland in Kyiv](#) and Federal Department of Foreign Affairs ahead of your trip.

Donbas and Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol:

Please note that trips to the non-government controlled areas are generally not recommended as the Swiss Embassy in Kyiv is unable to provide consular protection in those areas. In case of problem, the possibilities for Switzerland to offer emergency aid are limited or even non-existent. According to Ukrainian law entry of foreigners to the occupied territory of the Crimean peninsula is allowed only by special permission and through the designated control points of entry and exit. Travels without such permission is a punishable offense under Ukrainian law

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.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

2020

Wednesday, 01. January	New Year's Day
Tuesday, 07. January	Orthodox Christmas Day
Sunday, 08. March	International Women's Day
Monday, 09. March	International Women's Day Holiday
Sunday, 19. April	Orthodox Easter Day
Monday, 20. April	Orthodox Easter Monday
Friday, 01. May	Labour Day
Saturday, 09. May	Victory Day
Monday, 11. May	Victory Day Holiday
Sunday, 07. June	Orthodox Pentecost Sunday
Monday, 08. June	Orthodox Pentecost Monday
Sunday, 28. June	Constitution Day

Monday, 29. June	Constitution Day Holiday
Monday, 24. August	Independence Day
Wednesday, 14. October	Day of the Defender of Ukraine

If public holidays fall on a Saturday or Sunday, the following Monday is usually also be considered as a public holiday. It is recommended to check two or three weeks ahead of your planned visit for possible holidays.

The weekend is Saturday and Sunday. Government and private sector offices are closed. Supermarkets, shops, boutiques, restaurants, cinemas are open seven days a week.

HEALTH AND INOCULATIONS

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)

TIME ZONES & TIME DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SWITZERLAND AND UKRAINE

Ukrainian time is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (UTC+2) – one hour ahead than in Switzerland (UTC+1). Ukraine covers one time zone, with two time changes, which take place in spring and autumn.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Ukraine has throughout the country the same 220 watt current and double round-pin sockets like Europe. Power failures are very rare (mostly in the winter season) and of short duration.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

The Ukrainian national currency is Hryvnia (UAH). The exchange rate is approx. CHF 1 = UAH 28, USD 1 = 27.5 UAH; EUR 1 = 29 UAH.

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 centres, 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.

TRANSPORTATION

Ukraine has an extensive train, bus, subway, and airport transportation system. Most of the cities also have aboveground trolleys and small shuttle buses called “marshrutkas.” The tickets for public transportation cost depending on the city 8 to 10 Hryvnia (UAH).

BY AIR

Flights are the most common way of travelling to and from Ukraine. Starting end of March 2018, Swiss International Airlines has resumed direct flights from Zurich to Kyiv. Ukraine International Airlines also operate daily direct flights between Kyiv and Zurich as well as between Kyiv and Geneva. Flight connections to other Ukrainian cities are usually with stopovers.

The international airport of Kyiv-Boryspil (KBP) is the main air-gate to the country. In Kyiv, besides Boryspil airport, international flights are also operated to and from Kyiv-Zhuliany airport.

Ukraine International Airlines and other airlines provide several domestic flights between Kyiv, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Kherson, Ivano-Frankivsk, Odesa, Zaporizhzhia.

BY ROAD

Visitors can rent a car through the hotel or at a car rental company. An average car depending of the model costs € 40 – 120 per day (www.hertz.ua, www.avis.com.ua, www.sixt.com, www.europcar.com). Most companies could also offer chauffeur service, which is recommended since roads and general driving conditions are not always in line with European standards. An average trip by UBER taxi in Kyiv will cost 120 – 200 UAH (5 – 8 CHF).

BY RAIL

International railway connections are established with Poland, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Baltic States, Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, and Germany.

Within the country, the railway system is functioning well, with express trains connecting larger cities. Intercity trains are like any similar train in Western countries and the same rules apply, except you need to show your passport when tickets are checked. Tickets and timetables are available on the [website](#) of the national railway company.

BY SEA

A connection by ship is operated between Ukraine, Turkey and Georgia.

HOTELS

There are a few 5-star hotels in the big cities and a variety of 4-star, and 3-star hotels. Hotel rates for a single room vary from 130 – 250 CHF in a four-star hotel, and between 250 – 450 CHF in a five-star hotel. Hotel apartments do exist and are often preferred by foreign or local visitors coming for longer stays. To find the accommodation that would meet your requirements, you may consult the usual booking websites like www.hotels-kiev.com or www.booking.com.

Several real estate agencies (<https://parklane.ua/eng>, www.ioneseast8.com.ua, www.teren.kiev.ua, www.blagovist.ua) are specialized in leasing apartments to expatriates. Similar to office prices, accommodation prices vary considerably according to location and level of refurbishment.

COMMUNICATION

Ukraine's country code is +380. The list of region codes is available [here](#).

CELL PHONES

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 charge Wi-Fi connection is available in airports, restaurants, hotels and shopping malls.

BUSINESS HOURS

The regular business week in Ukraine is from Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., with a one-hour break for lunch. Banks are usually open from Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (payments until 4:00/5:00 p.m.). Opening hours for shops also in big department store centers are usually Monday to Sundays from 8:00/9:00 a.m. to 9:00/10:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES AND OPENING HOURS OF THE UKRAINIAN EMBASSY IN SWITZERLAND

Embassy of Ukraine in Switzerland

Feldeggweg 5

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

Working Hours:

Monday – Friday: 08.30 – 18.00

(lunch break: 12.30 – 14.00)

ADDRESSES OF THE SWISS EMBASSY

Embassy of Switzerland in Ukraine

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

E-Mail/Visa: kie.visa@eda.admin.ch

www.eda.admin.ch/kiev

TIPS FOR INITIATING BUSINESS CONTACTS

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 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.

Swiss firms planning to export their goods and services to Ukraine need to have patience and perseverance. Since the process from the initial contact to decision-making is usually rather lengthy.

It is recommended to follow up on its first contact by sending a kind reminder, or to call the person in charge.

The representatives of Swiss companies are encouraged to get in contact with the Embassy regarding their first trips to Ukraine. Further, the Embassy of Switzerland in Ukraine hosts regular Swiss Business Meetings. Representatives of Swiss companies are welcome to join these information and networking events upon invitation (please contact the Embassy).

BUSINESS PRACTICES

Keep in mind that in Ukraine, a lot will rather depend on your initial choice of a reliable partner, which, in practice, may turn out to be a much more important guarantee for fulfillment of the terms of a contract than your beforehand agreed framework of provisions. There are a lot of open source data (state registers of companies, persons, court decisions, [YouControl](#), etc), with will allow you (or your experts) to check your potential partner and his or her Ukrainian company before establishing serious business relations.

Planning large projects or an M&A, it is highly advisable to order an independent legal or tax due diligence of Ukrainian company, business and/or property in order to minimize the risk of failure and to manage your expectations. When trading with Ukraine, you should be careful with respect to payment conditions. You might require partial pre-payment or bank guarantee every time you are not 100 percent sure about your partner's reliability.

SPECIAL FEATURES ON THE MARKET

The Revolutions in 2004 and 2014 triggered a reshuffle among the oligarchs, but the system itself has remained unaltered. Representatives of big business still have a decisive impact on the politics and economy of Ukraine. Ukrainian oligarchs with their politically connected large businesses companies dominate some sectors of economy (metallurgy, power engineering, oil and gas sector, chemical industry, air transport, renewable power engineering, agriculture, etc.) and influence on public policy through their political parties, members of parliament and representatives in government. Their businesses may enjoy more benefits that other Ukrainian or international businesses cannot access. Level playing field is therefore (and unfortunately!) not always present in Ukraine.

While the Ukrainian market holds many opportunities for Swiss companies in various sectors, some specific risks of doing business in Ukraine must be taken into account: despite improving economic and political conditions in Ukraine, the judiciary system is still inefficient and law enforcement is weak, which can be a major risk to businesses. Furthermore, companies may still face high levels of bureaucracy in order to get necessary documents, certification, permissions, etc. for doing business.

For further information, please check the Ukraine market information [here](#) (list of basic addresses, legal provisions, etc.) published on the website.

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