

Ukraine reform plans: Away from Russia and towards European integration **World**

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Ivanna Klympush-Tsynadze is Ukraine's deputy Prime Minister in charge of European affairs.

By [Olha Kosova](#) | [euroefe.es](#) | translated by [Paola Tamma](#), Sep 4, 2017 Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Ivanna Klympush-Tsynadze, tasked with European integration, described in an interview the importance of the country's Association Agreement with the EU. [EURACTIV Spain reports](#). *The Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement entered into force on 1 September 1 – an important step for bilateral relations. For the past three months, Ukrainians have been able to travel to the EU without a visa. Ivanna Klympush-Tsynadze explained what this agreement entails for her country, what her government has done until now and what Ukraine can offer to the EU.* **What are the primary benefits for Ukraine?** We see this Agreement as a reform plan to achieve the successful economic and political systems of European member states. We already started to reform before the Agreement came into force. The Agreement is highly ambitious and resembles the plans that Eastern European countries adopted before entering the EU. A complex agreement such as this depends on all actors in Ukraine who initiated this momentous change, as well as civil society, to succeed. But we are aware that our efforts alone are not sufficient, but we need the EU's technical and economic support to ensure that all these changes are actually implemented on schedule. **Ukraine's current government has achieved visa-free travel to the EU for your citizens. What does this mean for EU-Ukraine relations?** I believe this was hugely important for Ukraine. We cut ties with our Soviet past, the Russian empire. The EU's acknowledgement of all our efforts was instrumental. We worked closely with the president, the parliament, civil society and our European partners. I am saddened by the setbacks this process is suffering from – and not due to Ukraine but to internal EU affairs. I hope these political barriers, which weighed on the decision to enlarge visa-free travel, have less importance in European member states. I see a centrist swing within many countries, which are open to engaging in cooperation with Ukraine. Extending the visa regime also means enhancing personal and trade relations. It entails a clearer understanding of who Ukrainians are and putting an end to the myths which the Russian Federation promotes to European countries. This direct communication between citizens will yield positive results for the process of European integration. [⋮] <https://www.euractiv.com/section/enlar ... rds-european-integration/>