



The Next Visa-Free Frontier:

CANADA

With visa-free to EU earned, Ukraine looks at Canada next

It's been a big year for Ukraine so far – the long-awaited visa-free travel to Europe has arrived and a new free trade agreement with Canada came into effect. Both big accomplishments that Ukraine can be proud of having earned. But there have been hiccups along the way. Ireland's Ryanair, which had signed agreements to affordably move Ukrainians to and from Europe, backed out because of what they called "meddling" by authorities at Boryspil Airport. Canada, among the first countries to recognise Ukrainian independence, has steadfastly denied visa free travel to Ukrainians (even as they have granted it to Ukrainian commerce). While Ukrainian authorities work to ease travel for Ukrainians by luring back Ryanair, what do they have to do to earn the same visa-free travel to Canada as they have already earned to Schengen Europe?

Give us your business, just not your business leaders

In a petition signed by thousands of Canadians requesting the abolishment of the visa regime on Ukrainians, the Government

of Canada remarked that "it is incumbent upon Ukraine to meet Canada's established criteria for a visa exemption" and states that as of May 2016 "Ukraine falls short of the [migration trends and country conditions] thresholds Canada uses to gauge suitability for a visa exemption". The government did, however, find the country conditions in Ukraine to be suitable enough to implement the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA) last month. Free trade for Ukrainian business? Sure. Free travel for Ukrainian business leaders? Ahem, nope. Wait, what? Just what is it that Canada sees that Europe doesn't?

The farce that Ukrainian travelers won't return home

The suggestion from the Canadian government response is that too many Ukrainians would overstay their visas and/or claim refugee status in Canada. These suggestions seems weak in the face of early statistics. In the first three months of visa-free travel, only 61 Ukrainians were refused entry into the EU (0.026%), mainly for incomplete documents or overstaying on previous trips. At the same time, travel to the EU increased by 10% from 2016. More travellers – more money! The same can be said about

asylum requests. Germany granted just 20 out of 2705 applications in 2015, while France granted 30 out of 1425 (2015). How many did Poland – by far the most likely place to receive asylum applications – grant in 2015? Just two.

It's your turn Canada!

So while Ukrainian authorities try to figure out the quagmire surrounding Ryanair, they should rightly be questioning their Canadian counterparts on what else needs to be done to meet Canada's migration thresholds. While Canada has every right to set their own visa requirements, it seems odd and out of place that a country that shares such historical ties (over 125 years of Ukrainian immigration to Canada) and business ties (CUFTA) would still require a demeaning visa process for business and tourist travel. In the meantime, Ukrainians should continue to revel in their visa-free travel to Europe, and leave their hard-earned dollars in countries that recognise their accomplishments in reform.

Lee Reaney,
Editor of Lviv Today



OPEN BORDERS PUBLISHING

Publishers: Peter Dickinson & Boleslav Malinovski
Editor-in-Chief: Viktoriya Larina
Editor: Lee Reaney
Managing editor: Mila Hadzieva
Journalists: Olha Schchur, Robert Baker, Orest Koronenko, Lee Reaney
Photography: Evgen Kraws, Vitaliy Grabar, photo agency "Lufa"

Print: "Art Print Studio" printing house

Advertising inquiries:
advert@lvivtoday.com.ua
Tel.: +38 032 235 81 00
Mob.: +38 068 501 35 01

Address:
Lviv Today Editorial Office
27/9 Valova str.
Lviv 79000 Ukraine
Tel. +38 032 235 81 00

Letters to the editor:
info@lvivtoday.com.ua
www.lvivtoday.com.ua

Lviv Today is West Ukraine's English-language monthly lifestyle magazine. It is distributed via leading hotels, airlines, restaurants and business centres throughout Lviv region. Monthly circulation: 5,000

Registration information: Lviv Today is registered with the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice as a print media title. License number: LV 862/115

All materials published in Lviv Today are the intellectual property of the publisher and remain protected by Ukrainian and international copyright laws. Open Borders Publishing does not accept responsibility for the goods and services advertised in Lviv Today. While every effort has been made to make sure information provided is accurate and up-to-date, we advise readers to double check where appropriate.