

Kyiv, 12 September 2024

Two leading employers' organizations from Poland and Ukraine signed a historic cooperation agreement during the „Europe-Poland-Ukraine: Cooperate Together” conference in Kyiv on September 12th. The Federation of Employers of Ukraine (FEU) and the Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers of Poland (ZPP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding, initiating cooperation on the future of trade between the European Union and Ukraine.

Ruslan Illichov, General Director of the Federation of Employers of Ukraine, and Marcin Nowacki, Vice President of Poland's Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers, have signed a document formalizing the organizations' cooperation in the coming years. The parties publicly announced their intention to join efforts in supporting Ukraine's accession negotiations with the European Union, especially regarding trade, and business practices and regulations harmonization.

The European Union has formally opened long-awaited accession negotiations with Ukraine in June 2024. The end of the Autonomous Trade Measures system overlaps with the end of Poland's upcoming presidency of the Council of the European Union. As Ukrainian and Polish businessowners and employers, we are acutely aware not only of common interests, but also of the difficulty in finding middle ground in contentious issues, the parties state in the opening remarks of the document.

The two organizations have worked together in the past. At the end of 2023, they organized and mediated unprecedented negotiations between Polish and Ukrainian hauliers during the protest of Polish hauliers at the Ukrainian border.

The upcoming time will be crucial for relations between Poland and Ukraine, as well as between Ukraine and the European Union. We expect the coming year to be challenging. Thanks to our organizations' cooperation, FEU and ZPP already have experience meeting such challenges head-on. Signing the agreement cements our will to cooperate and support each other in providing the best outcome for all parties involved – said Ruslan Illichov, General Director of the Federation of Employers of Ukraine.

Cezary Kaźmierczak, President of Poland's Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers, remarked: *Cooperation between Poland and Ukraine has the potential to change the balance of power and the shape of Europe. While our governments build the framework, businesses in both countries need to tighten their cooperation. If we communicate, cooperate, and constantly improve, we can create a peaceful and prosperous future for our people.*

The parties set out to organize a series of consultations with representatives of employers, entrepreneurs, and social partners in Poland, Ukraine, and Brussels to produce a joint White Paper before the end of 2024 defining and advocating for the common interests of Polish and Ukrainian businesses.

The newly formalized partnership has reached out to the officials responsible for the economic development of their respective countries to offer their capabilities and experiences in any and all initiatives relating to the future of trade between the European Union and Ukraine. The copies of the Memorandum were sent to the First Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine and the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, Yulia Svrydenko, and the Minister of Development and Technology of Poland, Krzysztof Paszyk.

„Europe-Poland-Ukraine: Cooperate Together” Conference

Objective: to deepen Polish-Ukrainian economic cooperation in the areas of transport and logistics, trade, and infrastructure cooperation. Also, to outline Poland's role during its presidency of the EU Council.

The conference brings together high-ranking representatives of government, business, and the expert community from both countries to discuss the prospects for the development and consolidation of Ukraine's and Poland's economies. It provides an opportunity to establish B2B contacts between Polish and Ukrainian businesses.

The event focuses on the following key topics:

- Current state and prospects of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation: discussion of economic relations between Ukraine and the EU, as well as opportunities to deepen cooperation between Ukraine and Poland in the context of European integration.
- Scaling up trade cooperation: consideration of opportunities for consolidating the economies of the two countries and developing trade between Ukraine and Poland, including prospects for entering new markets.
- Infrastructure cooperation: the importance of developing transport infrastructure and transshipment terminals, which will further strengthen ties between the two countries and ensure efficient logistics.

Organizers: Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers of Poland (ZPP)

Co-organizers: Totalizator Sportowy Foundation, Business for Ukraine Center

Poland's Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers

Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers (ZPP) is the fastest-growing employer organization in Poland. The organization brings together 18 regional organizations and 22 trade organizations. They gather 21,089 companies (as of 31st December 2023) with a total of 772,272 employees. As a member of the Social Dialogue Council in Poland, ZPP uses its influence to promote free market, fair competition, legal stability, and economic transparency. ZPP is represented in Brussels through its Representative Office, European Enterprise Alliance membership, and SME Connect membership. The union has two representatives in the European Economic and Social Committee.

<https://zpp.net.pl/>

Federation of Employers of Ukraine

The Federation of Employers of Ukraine (FEU) is the most influential association of Ukrainian businesses. Founded in 2002, the Federation has successfully represented and protected the interests of businesses in Ukraine and internationally for 20 years.

At present, the FEU unites more than 140 sectoral and regional organizations of employers representing the most critical sectors of the economy of Ukraine, such as machine building, metallurgy, automotive, aerospace and defense industries, agriculture, chemical industry, IT, media industry, energy, medical and microbiological industry, construction, transport and infrastructure, retail and logistics, light and food industries, tourism, utilities, services sector.

The Federation represents over 8,000 enterprises, collectively employing nearly 3 million people and generating about 70 % of the national GDP.

<https://fru.ua/ua/>

Contact info:

Maja Jankowicz

m.jankowicz@zpp.net.pl