



DATE: December 20, 2013



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[Ukraine Opposition to Keep Up Protests After Russian Deal](#) Ukraine's opposition vowed to keep up street protests against President [Viktor Yanukovich](#) after he sought to calm anger at a \$15 billion Russian bailout by pledging to raise wages before his 2015 re-election bid. Thousands of pro-European Union demonstrators spent the evening listening to anti-Yanukovich speeches on Independence Square, also called Maidan, urging them not to back down. Barricades were fortified to prevent a repeat crackdown, while protesters cooked on the central square in open fires, sang songs and tried to stay warm in near-freezing temperatures. Vitali Klitschko, a former boxing champion, called for a massive New Year's Eve celebration to be held on the square. **Bloomberg.** [Read More.](#)

[Ukraine Demonstrators Turn out Despite Arctic Conditions](#) Below freezing temperatures did not do enough to cool the anger of pro-European Union demonstrators at the pro-Russian president of Ukraine. Thousands of protesters refused to leave the snow-covered roads on Tuesday. A top diplomat made a trip to the scene in an effort to thaw the tensions. Law enforcement forces donned riot gear and tried to take control of the demonstrators and route them away from sensitive government buildings but avoided an out and out crackdown. Experts believe that this could have been a reaction to the pressure put on President Viktor Yanukovich by the West over the past few days. **Amog.** [Read More.](#)

[Ukraine's Yanukovich tells "revolutionary" opposition: 'Wait for elections'](#) Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich on Thursday criticised opposition leaders, who have brought tens of thousands of protesters onto the streets, for harbouring their own political ambitions and conducting "revolutionary" actions. "Personal ambitions have to be kept in check. I am categorically against politicians who have initiated revolutionary actions," he told a televised news conference. **Reuters.** [Read More.](#)

[Putin announces plan to pardon for Khodorkovsky, Pussy Riot](#) Speaking at the end of a press conference broadcast live across Russia on Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin made the surprise announcement that he would pardon jailed oil tycoon, Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Khodorkovsky, 50, has "spent more than 10 years in prison. It's a serious term," Putin said, adding that he would grant the pardon "in the nearest time." Putin said Khodorkovsky had submitted a formal request. **Deutsche Welle.** [Read More.](#)

[Reckless raising of stakes in Ukraine may lead to civil war'](#) The West's open support for Ukrainian protests incites and supports revolutionary behavior, political commentator Aleksandr Nekrassov told RT. **Russia Today.** [Read More.](#)

[Yanukovych tells West to keep out of Ukraine crisis](#) Ukraine's Russian-backed President, Viktor Yanukovych, has said he strongly opposes Western politicians intervening in the crisis in Ukraine. He also suggested that Ukraine could adopt parts of Russia's recently founded Customs Union with other former Soviet republics. The opposition is furious after he accepted a Russian bailout, seen as a reward for rejecting EU integration. Russian President Vladimir Putin said he was defending the Russian economy. **BBC News- Europe.** [Read More.](#)

[Putin's expensive victory](#) ANOTHER victory for Vladimir Putin, another defeat for the West. That is how the outcome of the battle for Ukraine, the country between Russia and the European Union, is being portrayed in Moscow and in many Western capitals. On December 17th, after a meeting between Mr Putin and Viktor Yanukovych, Ukraine's president, Russia agreed to lend Ukraine \$15 billion and to slash the gas price from \$400 to \$268 per thousand cubic metres, as a reward for Mr Yanukovych's ditching of an association agreement with the EU. **The Economist.** [Read More.](#)

[Help Ukrainians Stand Up for Western Values](#) Before Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych signed a deal to bail out our country's economy this week, there was excitement among Western officials and analysts about the way some businessmen who have bankrolled the president's rise to power appeared to be distancing themselves from him. Many Ukrainians weren't fooled. The country's so-called oligarchs still supported Yanukovych. **Bloomberg-Opinion.** [Read More.](#)

[Yanukovych: Politicians should not start revolutionary processes](#) Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych has said that politicians in no case should start revolutionary processes in the country. When asked what conclusions the authorities drew from the pro-European rallies, Yanukovych said: "A lot of different conclusions. This is not for the first time that there are attempts to seize power in the country through unconstitutional means. We've been there. I am categorically opposed to politicians starting such revolutionary processes." **Interfax- Ukraine.** [Read More.](#)

[Putin defends Russia's close ties with Ukraine](#) Russian President Vladimir Putin has defended his push to maintain close links with Ukraine saying it is vital for Russian national interests. He told journalists that he considered Ukraine a fraternal state, adding: "We should do what family members do, we should support our sister nation in dire straits". Mr Putin made the comments in a news conference just days after Russia gave Ukraine a \$15bn (£9.2bn; 10.9bn euros) bailout and gas discount. **BBC News.** [Read More.](#)

[Opposition to attend roundtable with Yanukovych if all detained protesters are released - Yatseniuk](#) Batkivschyna faction leader Arseniy Yatseniuk has said that Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych is planning to attend on Friday another roundtable meeting to resolve the situation in the country. "Today, we heard from [Parliament Speaker Volodymyr] Rybak that Viktor Yanukovych allegedly wants to participate in a roundtable tomorrow. We believe that such a roundtable could be held if the law on the release of peaceful protesters is voted for in parliament and signed today," he said at a briefing on Thursday. **Brama.** [Read More.](#)

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