

Alona Lebedieva, founder of Ukraine's AURUM Group, speaks out against "corporate raiders"

EU Today interviewed high-profile businesswoman, Alona Lebedieva – owner of the industrial AURUM Group – and herself a target of corporate raiders.

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, March 17, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The war in Ukraine dominates Europe's headlines. Atrocities not seen in Europe since the Second World War are a sobering reminder of the reality of life.

In Brussels sympathies and support for Ukraine ride high on the agenda, but many are now focussing on the future relationship: one in which it is envisaged that Ukraine will swiftly – after its inevitable victory – be welcomed into the EU.



Conference at Brussels Press Club

Alongside the rhetoric from Commission President Ursula von Der Leyen and EU High Representative Josep Borrell, always genuinely supportive, there are currently deep-seated concerns at member state level, and also amongst the all important high level business community, over the influence of Ukraine's notorious oligarchs.

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Alona Lebedieva

Democracy and Oligarchy are mutually exclusive: the relationships between the highest level of government of oligarchs such as infamous Kolomoyskiy, and others who are less public and less well-known as “oligarchs”, but who are known to be close to President Volodymyr Zelensky, are now coming under scrutiny.

The phenomenon known as Corporate Raiding is another plague on the Ukrainian economy, and

a major source of corruption at political and judicial levels.

[EU Today interviewed high-profile businesswoman, Alona Lebedieva](#) – owner of the industrial AURUM Group – and herself a target of the raiders.

In an attempt to criminalise her, accusing her group of supplying allegedly sanctioned equipment to Russia – there appears to be the motive of seizing her assets, which could then, it is widely speculated, be passed to oligarchs.

Addressing a high-level meeting at the prestigious Brussels Press Club, located alongside the European Commission and the European Council, and in the company of former MEP and head of Delegation for relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Paolo Casaca, Mme Lebedieva outlined her predicament in the fight against raiders.

“Aurum Group is accused of delivering goods to Russia that are banned,” she told us. “But in fact, we are talking about household products, the sale of which is allowed anywhere in the world now. And in general, any ban on trade relations with the Russian Federation arose only in September 22, that is, after half a year of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine. But I have to point out that my group has stopped any collaboration since 02/24/22. The total export volume of pumps from Ukraine to Russia for the period 2014-2022 years amounted to 430 million dollars, the part of our products accounted just 2,3% of these export. And the most interesting fact, that investigation was initiated only against me and my company. I realise there to be a completely biased attitude here.”

Indeed, evidence shows that this transfer occurred in 2017-18, before the current sanctions were imposed. Mme Lebedeva is adamant that neither she nor her group has infringed any existing sanctions or legislation.

I asked, “what precipitated the interest in this?”



Alona Lebedieva, founder of AURUM Group



She replied, "Sadly, some of our competitors – maybe even former colleagues – saw the opportunity to raid, they produced "documents." They want to steal the business that I've been building for decades and this is how it is done. This is wide-scale in Ukraine."

The contribution of Mme Lebedieva herself to the Ukrainian forces had in fact been the subject of discussion in the Press Club just weeks earlier, during a documentary produced by, and presented to an audience of senior journalists by, the highly esteemed British journalist Tim White, during which Ukrainian fighters referred to her company's contribution to the war effort.

The message from the meeting was that in order to truly help Ukraine to recover from the current conflict the EU must address the issue of the Ukrainian oligarchy and law enforcement reform.

EU Today asked: "The expectation of the EU is that in the aftermath of Ukraine's victory the country will free itself of the influence of the oligarchs, of the raiders and the criminals, but is there actually a will to do that in Kyiv?"

"If we want to be a part of the EU then we must overcome this corruption, we must first of all be guided by the principles of law, and not by the criminal orders of the oligarchy", she stated.

"We have already seen some changes in this area of endeavour. Our law enforcement agencies are acting, and this is in no small way due to pressure from the EU, which we appreciate very much. This gives us hope and confidence that things will change."

She added "Law enforcement and the justice system in Ukraine has some way to go, but the EU is our best friend and our best example in this process, and we will get there."

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