



The
Crimean
MAGAZINE

INVESTMENT SHAPES CRIMEA

HOW CRIMEA HAS SUCCESSFULLY INTEGRATED
INTO RUSSIA'S ECONOMIC AND LEGAL SPACE

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“International organisations have long made their choice against human rights and rule of law”

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS!

Federal targeted programmes for the Crimean Peninsula to revive the infrastructure

INTERVIEW WITH MARIA ZAKHAROVA:

“Crimea is thriving despite Western attempts to isolate it”

WE BUILD *information bridges*



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ГАЗЕТА



EDITORIAL

F

For the eighth year the Ukrainian and Western media along with certain politicians, bloggers and so-called public figures of all stripes have been practicing on the fields of the information war with Crimea zealously demonstrating to each other who lied the most and who has the funniest "horror story" about the Crimea. It is worth pointing out that some of them really have a talent at least in the fantasy style.

And I don't know if we can blame them. After all the Crimean referendum interrupted the plans of the West which were directed against Russia. Moreover the Crimean people showed the whole world that nation united by a common idea, the consciousness of their rightness and the desire of the true freedom can take their own destiny up and turn the course of history despite the resistance of the new pretenders to the global domination.

They try to punish us with sanctions, intimidate and isolate us precisely because of our independence and love of freedom.

But all of this leads to exactly the opposite results. By overcoming difficulties and obstacles we become stronger.

We will tell you how much stronger we've become in this issue. How Crimea in general including its hotels, business and attractions is developing – we have something to be proud of and the investors have something to be interested in.



And we're not doing this to prove something to anyone, but to share our joy and love of Crimea. Because we shouldn't be stuck in an endless struggle to prove the legitimacy of what happened. We don't need a certificate from the West which says "Crimea is Russia". We know that it's true which is enough for us! Just look at Crimea with our loving eyes and you will understand everything.

**Sincerely yours,
Head Editor,
Mariya Volkonskaya**

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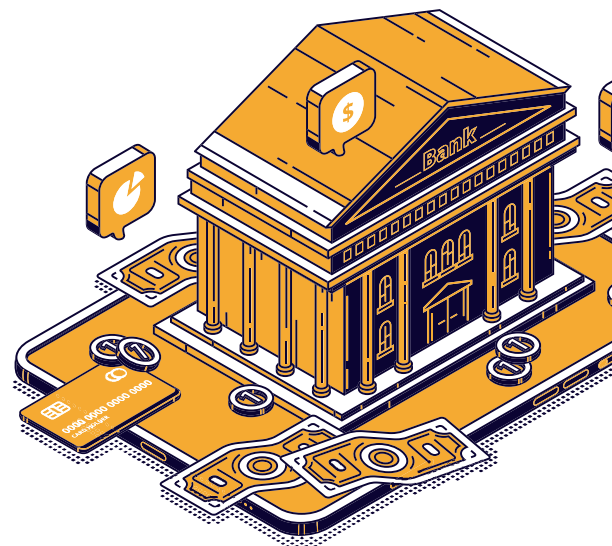
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ONWARDS AND UPWARDS!

Text: Olga Nagornaya

Federal targeted programmes are a unique chance for the Crimean Peninsula to revive the infrastructure destroyed over a quarter of a century and become integrated into the Russian economy

More than a trillion

The Federal Targeted Programme for the Socioeconomic Development of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol is a driver of the republic's growth. Due to this programme, the region is developing a broad up-to-date transport, energy, and social infrastructure that is crucial for resorts. The Russian Government launched the FTP in 2015 and has revised the plan several times since then, extending the deadlines and increasing the funding. The updated version of the FTP should be fully implemented by 2025. The government has approved allocating 1.3 trillion roubles from the fed-

eral budget in 2015–2025. Over the past five years, about 400 important infrastructure facilities have been built with this funding.

By the end of 2020, which was the most productive year in terms of spending under this programme, Crimea had no outstanding sums allocated for the programme, which means the region now has new schools, kindergartens, rural health centres, roads and other infrastructure. By the end of last year, Crimea had used up a record 97 percent of the programme financing and Sevastopol, 91 percent.

1.303 TRILLION

roubles allocated for federal targeted programmes in Crimea and the city of Sevastopol from 2015 to 2025

Travel time halved

The main 2020 event in the Crimean road industry was the opening of the 250.7-kilometre Taurida federal motorway. The 149 billion rouble project was implemented under the federal targeted programme.

The new motorway has almost halved the travel time to most Crimean destinations. It takes two hours to drive from Kerch to Sevastopol, and just 45 minutes from Simferopol to Sevastopol.



REFERENCE

An interesting fact about the Taurida motorway: there are no at-grade intersections with other roads.

New level of medicine

The year the world was hit by the coronavirus pandemic, Crimea scored a major victory by opening a new building of the Semashko Republican Clinical Hospital. With this new state-of-the-art medical centre, the region reached a new level of medical care. It was indeed one of the most ambitious projects implemented under the federal targeted programme. The new healthcare facility has more than twenty specialised departments, including radiation diagnostics, resuscitation, ICU, neurology and cardiology. It has wards with 734 beds; the total floor space is about 65,000 square metres. The medical complex includes a catering unit, its own boiler room, an oxygen station, three transformer substations and even a bomb shelter. The hospital is fitted out with state-of-the-art equipment of the highest class, with intensive care units and ten operating rooms.

REFERENCE

A total of 10 billion roubles has been invested in the construction of the multipurpose republican medical centre, the Semashko Republican Clinical Hospital.



The hallmark of Crimea

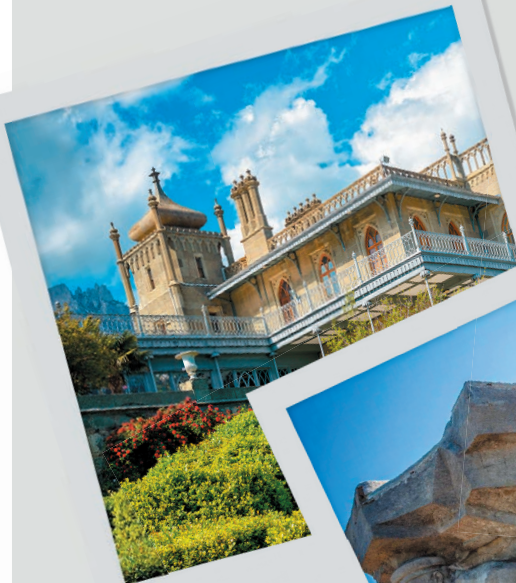
At the end of last year, one of the most recognisable symbols of Crimea, the Swallow's Nest castle, finally reopened after major renovations. This cultural landmark was also revived due to the federal targeted programme, with 87 million roubles provided to renovate the castle. For many years, this historical and architectural heritage piece was in a lamentable state, and its museum services remained limited for a long time. The observation deck at over 40 metres above the sea level was closed because

the slab and the foundation of the castle were structurally unsafe.

Other important landmarks around Crimea are also being repaired, including the Kerch Fortress and the Adzhimushkai Memorial Complex in Kerch, the Khan's Palace in Bakhchisarai, and the Vorontsov Palace in Yalta.

REFERENCE

There are more than 4,700 federal and regional landmarks, as well as newly identified sites of cultural and archaeological heritage in Crimea. Together they make up the golden portfolio of the peninsula.





The Hero City Symbol

The Great Mithridates Staircase, the best-known landmark in Kerch, was reopened on Victory Day in 2021 after major renovations. The staircase, one of the main symbols of the hero-city, has been repaired under the Federal Targeted Programme for the Socioeconomic Development of the Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol after it remained in disrepair for a long time. During his visit to Kerch in September 2016, President of Russia Vladimir Putin issued instructions that the staircase must be restored. The renovations began in September 2019.



REFERENCE

The estimated cost of the restoration project for the Great and Small Mithridates Staircases exceeded 1.1 billion roubles.

A sports resort

The Crimean sports infrastructure is also being revived thanks to the FTP. The plan is to open 18 sports and fitness centres, 16 of them in Sevastopol and two elsewhere in Crimea. In addition, many sports centres are being revived under a different federal programme, namely, the federal targeted programme Development of Fitness and Sports. The Centre for the Training of Crimean Teams in Simferopol has been renovated; the second stage of renovation of the regional sports and training centre Crimea-Sport is nearing completion; a new 18,000-square-metre water sports centre is under construction. The Olympic reserve school in Krasnolesye, Simferopol District, was renovated last summer and



is used as a training base for the Republic of Crimea teams. Repairs at the Avangard Stadium in Yalta, built in the 1960s, are almost complete. The renovated Sports Palace in Yevpatoria is going through the final stage of putting into operation. The project included renovation of the existing building and the construction of a new multifunctional sports and recreation complex.

REFERENCE

Over the past few years, more than 20 billion roubles have been allocated for the development of sports in Crimea. Since 2019, 219 sports grounds have been installed in all districts of the peninsula.





Balneotherapy health resort

A new embankment embracing the medicinal lake in the Saki resort was unveiled in June 2021. The 800 million rouble project, implemented as part of the federal targeted programme for Crimea and Sevastopol, included six thematic fountains, 47 drinking fountains, hardscape elements, an amphitheatre with 650 seats and nine playgrounds for children of different age groups along the 2.7-kilometre embankment

of the Saki medicinal lake. Earlier improvement projects in Saki included the hydro-geological research and production station, which performs observations on the medicinal lake and mines therapeutic mud. The facility is successfully operating, with a new 20-tonne brine tower, a mud mining unit and a brine pumping station. The therapeutic mud production surged six-fold.

REFERENCE

The largest tranches under the FTP in 2021 will go to the Saki urban district, with more than 689.9 million roubles, followed by Feodosia that will receive over 306 million roubles this year.

Thousands of preschool places



The waiting lists at Crimean preschools have been largely reduced due to the efforts made under the federal targeted programme and other social programmes. In 2014, the republic began the construction and major renovation of preschools and daycare facilities, including modular ones. According to the Ministry of Economic Development, the FTP for Crimea and Sevastopol has contributed to the opening of 28 preschools and six schools as of the beginning of 2021. Overall, thanks to various programmes, Crimea has received over 21,000 new preschool places.

Twelve districts have reached 100 percent availability of preschools for children aged from 2 months to 7 years. It is also indicative that the average availability of preschools to children from birth to the age of 3 in Crimea is over 78 percent.

By 2024, 18 more schools and 61 facilities for children under seven are to be built in Crimea. The federal targeted programme for 2020-2024 envisages more than 21 billion roubles for the education system development in Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

INVESTING IN AMBITION

Text: Irina Gulivataya

Photo: Daria Samsonova

Investment **can make a profound difference** in Crimea's economic and social development. The region offers investors an abundance of appealing destinations, including agriculture, tourism, industry and others. **We are going to show in numbers how the peninsula** is boosting its potential thanks to investors.

Over the past 7,5 years, investments in

1 147 000 000 000 ROUBLES

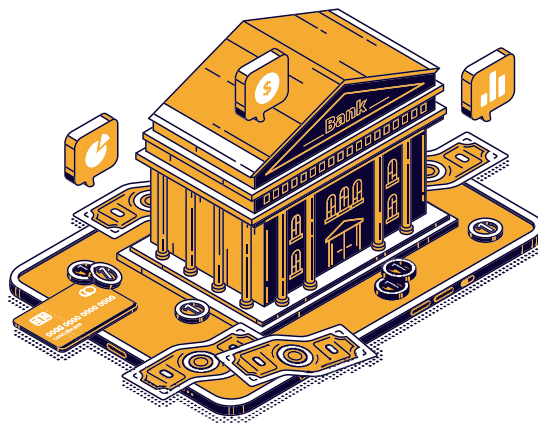
fixed assets in the Republic of Crimea amounted to

FOR 649,2 BILLION ROUBLES of which private investment accounted

Over 178 billion roubles

have been channelled into the implementation of investment projects in the free economic zone (FEZ) since 2015, creating **over 52,000 jobs**.

In 2020 alone **more than 39 billion roubles** were invested in projects developed in the FEZ, creating **about 8,000 jobs**.



1,274 investment projects

are being implemented by small and medium-sized businesses within the FEZ.

Most popular industries:

Trade and services **342 PROJECTS**



Construction **332**



Industry **253**



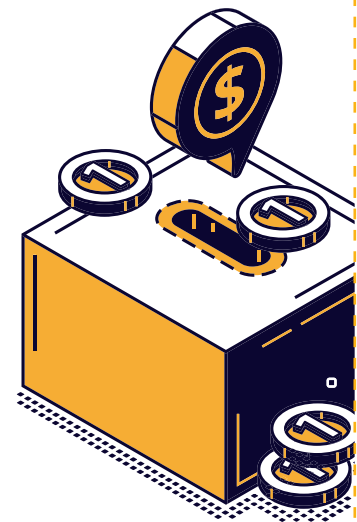
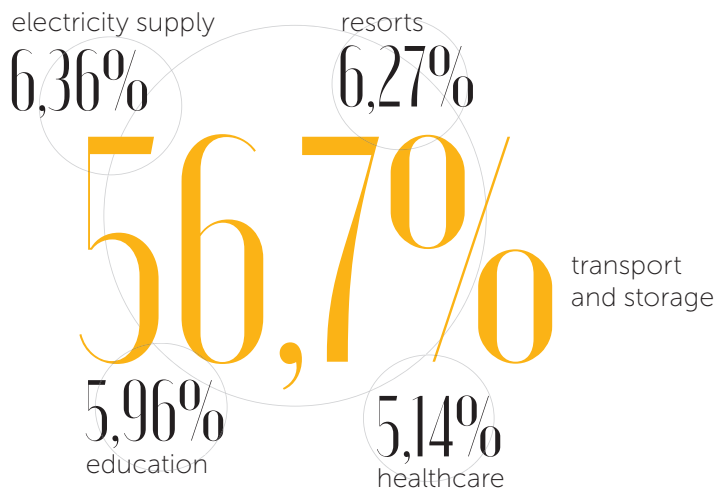
Agriculture **205**



Tourism and resorts **149**



The bulk of the investment went into projects in the following sectors



As of July 2021 investors in Crimea have been implementing

32 AGRICULTURE PROJECTS

- 5 each in the Simferopol, Saki and Leninsky districts
- 4 in Sudak
- 3 in the Bakhchisarai District
- 2 each in Feodosia and the Krasnogvardeisky District
- 1 each in Yevpatoria, Yalta, Alushta, Armyansk, the Kirovsky and Nizhnegorsky districts

33 TOURISM AND RESORTS PROJECTS:

- 13 in Yalta
- 7 in Alushta
- 6 in the Chernomorsky District
- 2 each in Yevpatoria and Feodosia
- 1 each in Sudak, Bakhchisarai and Belogorsk

30 CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS:

- 9 in Simferopol
- 7 in the Simferopol District
- 4 in Yevpatoria
- 3 each in Yalta, Kerch and the Chernomorsky District
- 1 in Saki

27 INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS

- 7 in the Simferopol District
- 6 in Simferopol
- 3 each in Kerch and the Saki District
- 2 each in Yevpatoria and Alushta
- 1 each in Feodosia, Bakhchisarai, the Belogorsk and Bakhchisarai districts

Top 10 regions that have concluded investment agreements as part of the FEZ in 7 years:

- 1 **29,273 billion** RUB and **688** contracts — **Simferopol**
- 2 **12,480 billion** RUB and **136** contracts — **Yalta**
- 3 **6,809 billion** RUB and **73** contracts — **Bakhchisarai District**
- 4 **4,224 billion** RUB and **90** contracts — **Simferopol District**
- 5 **3,571 billion** RUB and **53** contracts — **Kerch**
- 6 **3,027 billion** RUB and **21** contracts — **Belogorsk District**
- 7 **2,967 billion** RUB and **53** contracts — **Feodosia**
- 8 **2,162 billion** RUB and **11** contracts — **Kirovsky District**
- 9 **1,450 billion** RUB and **29** contracts — **Saki District**
- 10 **1,377 billion** RUB and **44** contracts — **Alushta**

45,000

jobs have been created under the new agreements in 26 cities and districts in Crimea.





Vladimir Putin,
Russian President

At the meeting with the leadership of the regions and the Government of the Russian Federation on the development of Crimea and Sevastopol:

“The success of our actions can only be seen if we are able to ensure a significant dramatic increase in private investment. Their volume for the next four years for 2022-2025 in the Crimea and Sevastopol should exceed 1 trillion rubles. This is an ambitious task. It will require coordinated actions of federal, regional and municipal authorities. The successful completion of the implementation of large supporting projects creates the transition to the next stage of the restoration and development of the economy of the Crimean peninsula. We are currently doing and will continue doing everything to ensure stability and security of Crimea in order to further enhance the development of transport, energy and the entire infrastructure”



Sergey Aksyonov,
Head of the Crimea

On the investment climate in the Republic:

“Favorable conditions are being created for the development of investment activities. Among us most attractive sectors for investors are agriculture, construction, industry, resorts and tourism and transport. A draft federal law is also being discussed which will allow to create a special legal regime on the territory of the Crimean Republic and the city of Sevastopol thereby preserving the investor’s confidentiality. This is important in terms of sanctions. The implementation of the task set by the President to increase investment in fixed assets to at least 800 billion rubles over the period 2022-2025 continues. An appropriate action plan has been developed jointly with the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation. Priority investment projects, territories of complex development and other areas that will give the largest inflow of investments have been identified.”



Alexei Pushkov:

«INTERNATIONAL
ORGANISATIONS HAVE
LONG MADE THEIR
CHOICE AGAINST HUMAN
RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW»

Interviewed by Anastasia Sviridova

Strong and charismatic politicians who are a match for their foreign colleagues and can effectively uphold Russia's interests and defend their views, are worth their weight in gold. One of them is Alexei Pushkov, who was born into the family of a Soviet diplomat and graduated from MGIMO University to become a leading foreign policy expert, chair of the State Duma Committee on International Affairs (2011–2016), head of the Russian Federal Assembly delegation in PACE, and the current chair of the Federation Council Commission on Information Policy and Cooperation with the Media.

During his conversation with The Crimean Magazine, Pushkov spoke about public diplomacy, the Western experts who reviewed the results of the 2014 referendum in Crimea, the reasons why the foreign media refuse to publish objective reports on the situation in Crimea, the water blockade, and the anti-Russia propaganda conducted by Western politicians and the neighbouring state

I can name many prominent European visitors to Crimea, from Thierry Mariani, a member of the European Parliament and former French minister in charge of transport, to former Prime Minister of Italy Silvio Berlusconi. And nobody stopped them either in Russia or in Europe. It is quite another matter that these visits annoyed and angered representatives of the liberal forces in Europe

Globes and planes

Question: Mr Pushkov, Moscow is regularly accused of persecuting certain groups of Crimean residents, primarily Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians, for their religion or work in human rights or journalism. The results of online surveys allegedly show that the human rights situation has been deteriorating since the «annexation» of Crimea. These surveys are held online because their compilers never bothered to visit the peninsula. What stops them from coming to Crimea to see for themselves that there is no substance behind all these allegations?

Alexei Pushkov: I have been to Crimea and have not seen any signs of persecution of anyone there. Moreover, unlike the Ukrainian period, now the republic has three official languages: Russian, Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar. The Crimean authorities are paying priority attention to the ethnic policy to prevent discrimination against any ethnic group. I believe that such allegations are

part of the information campaign that is being waged against Russia as a whole and Crimea as its integral part. This campaign is being waged by those who have suffered major losses because of Crimea's historic reunification with Russia, first of all the Crimean Tatar leadership of the anti-Russia émigrés in Europe, who deliver speeches at the European Parliament, submit complaints and pretend that there are indeed human rights violations in Crimea. In fact, their main goal is to continue attracting attention to this subject, because otherwise everybody would lose interest in it.

Question: There are also Western politicians, journalists and MPs who have a negative view of the peninsula even though they have never visited it. They claim that Russia is preventing international observer and expert missions from visiting Crimea.

Alexei Pushkov: In reality, there are no bans on visiting Crimea. Moreover, Gerard Stoudmann, Special Representative of the

Council of Europe Secretary General, visited the peninsula in 2016. I met with him several times in Moscow and Strasbourg. He is a candid and experienced international official. He went to Crimea at the request of the Secretary General to prepare a report on the situation there, in which he outlined several concerns. However, he presented a much better picture compared to those created by Ukrainian representatives in the Council of Europe and PACE. And that is why his report was disregarded in the West and the Council of Europe. As for other visits, French MPs have been to Crimea several times and international observers, including from European countries, monitored elections at different levels there. They did not represent European authorities, but they are prominent public figures, politicians and experts. And

We must bear in mind that Western states will support the water blockade without admitting it in public

none of them ever mentioned any tampering with the results, or any cases of discrimination or human rights violations.

By the way, in 2014 the leading Western pollsters – Gallup, Pew Research Centre and GfK – sent their experts to Crimea to check the results of the referendum. These experts concluded that the overwhelming majority of Crimeans indeed voted for reunification with Russia. The figures they provided were a bit lower than the official result, but they did reflect the will of the overwhelming majority of people in Crimea. After that, the subject of «falsified results» of the referendum was never mentioned in the Western media or by politicians, because it became clear to everyone that there were no figures or any other proof to back up this allegation. During my statements and PACE debates, I spoke time after time about the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of Crimeans, and I don't remember anyone disputing that.

Question: Why do they continue to claim that it is impossible to visit Crimea?

Alexei Pushkov: There are different reasons. Do you recall that Laima Vaikule,

a Soviet/Latvian singer, said that Europeans are prohibited from visiting Crimea? It is not true. She did that simply because she feared she would be blacklisted and persecuted in Latvia. There is no ban on visiting Crimea. I can name many prominent European visitors to Crimea, from Thierry Mariani, a member of the European Parliament and former French minister in charge of transport, to former Prime Minister of Italy Silvio Berlusconi. And nobody stopped them either in Russia or in Europe. It is quite another matter that these visits annoyed and angered representatives of the liberal forces in Europe, who published articles lambasting these politicians, and the liberal media even compiled black lists. But there are no official bans. If any Western experts, deputies and politicians want to visit Crimea, they are free to come any time. And they will see that Crimea is a peaceful land, unlike Kiev, where clashes take place near the Verkhovna Rada all the time, and where far-right nationalists hold their torch marches and attack television companies' offices.

Question: It is true that delegations from all over the world have visited the peninsula since 2014, and none of them reported negative impressions. In fact, Crimea has opted for public diplomacy, because official cooperation appears to be impossible. Have these efforts produced any results?

Alexei Pushkov: Efforts always produce a result, and any contacts are useful. Take the Yalta International Economic Forum, an important event demonstrating Crimea's true image and opening it up to the world. However, I believe

INTERVIEW

that the time factor is what matters most in this case. The international community is gradually coming to accept the fact that Crimea is part of Russia. This was obvious from the very beginning, although few people mentioned it openly in the West. But some did say this. I remember being in Paris in April 2014 to speak before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French National Assembly. On the very first day I turned on the TV in my hotel room and saw an interview by a prominent French politician, who said: «Crimea? Crimea is Russian — everyone knows that.» That was Jean-Luc Melenchon, who won nearly 20 percent of the vote as the left forces' presidential candidate in 2017. Incidentally, former President of France Valéry Giscard d'Estaing once told me in a private conversation: «Look here, everyone knows it very well. Moreover, I can assure you that when Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill went to the Yalta conference in 1945, they didn't think they were going to Ukraine.» It was an ironic way of recognising the Russian status of Crimea. Former US President Jimmy Carter has said the same publicly on many occasions.

Question: Regrettably, this understanding has not had any influence on the official stand of Western countries.

Alexei Pushkov: No, they refuse to give an official recognition to this fact, for a number of reasons. However, time is working in our favour: more maps and globes showing Crimea as a part of Russia are being produced, and the documents of international airliners mention Crimea as part of Russia, based on facts. Of course, these events invariably cause a scandal in Kiev. Ukraine protests and writes angry letters, but what has this changed? I believe that time will put everything in its place.

No right to rights

Question: By the way, the Crimean Magazine also has a diplomatic mission. We run an English-language edition and

distribute it abroad at various international venues and conferences, trying to explain in plain English what is actually going on in Crimea and what makes it tick. Is it worth it, or will no one hear us anyway, no matter how hard we try?

Alexei Pushkov: They will hear you, maybe not right away, and not everyone, but gradually it will happen. I think that explaining how people in Crimea feel, what they think, what they want and what they aspire to is essential. Two million people live in the Republic of Crimea, and they have the right to form their own opinion, and to choose the country where they want to be citizens. By the same token, they have the right to be heard at international venues, and I have always defended this position. To give you an example, Kosovo representatives spoke many times at the Council of Europe and PACE, even though half of the planet has not recognised Kosovo as an independent state. People from Donbass, which is viewed as Ukrainian territory, have taken the floor at the UN Human Rights Council, despite the fact that Ukraine has essentially driven this region away. These people talked about the shelling that they had to endure, their wounds and the loss of loved ones. Of course, the West does not want to hear these facts. However, first, the world cannot be reduced to the West, and second, even in the West there are people who are ready to hear the truth about what is going on. Let me give you an example: over the past two or three years the West started to recognise the existence of neo-Nazi sentiment and movements in Ukraine, so better late than never. This goes to say that all outreach efforts designed to shift the conversation on Crimea from geopolitics to defending the interests and rights of people living on the Crimean Peninsula are worth it.

Question: Still, all these experts and human rights activists are in no hurry to recognise that people in Crimea have their own rights, and, by the way, it is not Russia that violates these rights on a regular basis, as the West is trying to portray the situation.

Alexei Pushkov: I remember being told by the Council of Europe that they cannot send a mission to Crimea because they do not recognise it as being part of Russia. In response, I said: «But you pretend that you fight for human rights! Two million people live in Crimea, so go there and find out whether their rights are respected. No one is asking you to grant or withhold recognition, just pay attention to how people live there.» But all you here in response is that absent recognition, they are not going there. It's a vicious circle. This is where people's diplomacy comes in. When I hear that a representative of Crimea spoke at a UN conference, and Ukrainian delegates tried to prevent him from taking the floor, I don't think this should scare anyone off. It is essential that people speak out to say we are here and we have rights. It is essential that the world knows that the people of Crimea are asserting their right to reside in Russia. Even if Europe and the United States officially pretend that this topic is irrelevant, your presence at international venues and your publicity efforts prove that you have the right to be heard, that

you, the people of Crimea, have the right to assert your position and make it known to the international community. I am certain that these efforts will gradually yield results, and in fact this is already happening.

Question: Incidentally, Editor-in-Chief of The Crimean Magazine Maria Volkonskaya is one of the representatives of Crimea who speak at international venues, including the OSCE. She is well aware that Europe ignores the views of Crimeans. It is difficult to be heard but this is not the only problem. It is often impossible for residents of the peninsula to travel to Europe. We are not allowed to come, we are denied visas, and there are obstacles to the work of journalists...

Alexei Pushkov: This is deliberate discrimination against Crimeans. Europe wants to demonstrate its disapproval of their choice. I would even call it a certain form of punishment and pressure at the same time. I consider these actions illegal. They violate the



Discussing the relationships between Russia and Europe. St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, 2018

principle of defending human rights and the right to freedom of movement. By denying Crimeans access to its territory, the European Union is violating its own principles and international commitments. People should not suffer because of political disputes and be denied the right to move freely, to visit relatives and friends, or simply for tourism. I hope this policy will change sooner or later.

Question: As for the violation of rights, people in Crimea are suffering from acute water shortages and are very irritated by Kiev's statements that this is exclusively the problem of «the occupiers.» We will resolve this problem, of course, but why do international organisations choose not to react to this glaring violation of the fundamental right of Crimeans?

Alexei Pushkov: I think international organisations are silent because they long ago made their choice in favour of geopolitics rather than human rights and the supremacy of law. This applies to PACE and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. I worked in both and know them well. In 2014, the majority of Western delegates in both assemblies supported the coup d'état in Kiev and sided with the new Ukrainian authorities, regardless of what they were. A scandalous incident took place in PACE. When we suggested denouncing Ukraine's ultra-nationalist xenophobic and neo-Nazi parties, proceeding from a similar resolution of the European Parliament dating back to 2011, only 50 delegates out of more than 200 people present in the hall, supported it. All others refused to condemn neo-Nazis! Later on, those

few delegates who supported our resolution, approached me as the head of the delegation and admitted that they were ashamed of their colleagues. It made sense because this vote was a betrayal of the principles supposedly inscribed on the banners of the Council of Europe — supremacy of law, democratic standards and human rights. Cynical geopolitics prevailed: it does not matter what is happening in Ukraine, it must be supported because it is against Russia. This policy eventually led to the imposition of sanctions against our delegation in PACE. We decided to quit in protest. We did not take part in its work for five years before the sanctions were lifted and we were invited to return without any terms and restrictions.

Question: Are you saying that it is not worth appealing to international institutions with such problems?

Alexei Pushkov: It is possible to raise such problems. Our delegations should speak about Crimea's water supply at international venues and emphasise that people have the right to freely access water. But we must bear in mind that Western states will support the water blockade without admitting it in public. They simply hope that this problem will affect the attitude of the Crimeans and worsen the situation on the peninsula. They automatically support Ukraine no matter what it does. When Ukrainian nationalists burned people in Odessa, we were told that the fire started by itself. This was their reaction. We cannot rely on the support of international structures. We must speak about problems and resolve them ourselves. I have already told you about Mr Studman's report in which he criticised Ukraine's water blockade of Crimea and the denial of visas to Crimeans by Western countries. This is why officials in the Council of Europe and Western capitals pretended not to notice this report. It speaks volumes.

People should not suffer because of political disputes and be denied the right to move freely, to visit relatives and friends, or simply for tourism.

Dangerous games

Question: Ukraine has recently become a venue for openly hostile Western actions against Russia. It is enough to recall a training missile strike by US B-52 strategic bombers on Crimea from Ukrainian air space. What is the goal of these exercises?

Alexei Pushkov: The goal is clear: to intimidate and show that the Crimean issue has not been closed for Ukraine and, frankly speaking, its military allies in the West. They are also trying to scare Russia: bear in mind that we can use Ukrainian territory against you militarily as well. I believe if Mr Biden becomes president, and this is most likely, the US will toughen this policy.

Question: So, it's like flexing muscles, right?

Alexei Pushkov: Yes, this is a muscle flex, which has always been a part of world politics. When we send our strategic bombers to the North Atlantic on training flights, the West sees it as flexing muscles as well. It's like an established game. But there is a difference. America's games in Ukraine take place in the direct vicinity of Russia's borders and amount to an aggressive demonstration, as distinct from our flights that follow well-known routes and are not a provocation. Meanwhile, the recent US exercise with strategic bombers are definitely an ostentatious provocation against Russia.

It is essential that the world knows that the people of Crimea are asserting their right to reside in Russia. Even if Europe and the United States officially pretend that this topic is irrelevant, your presence at international venues and your publicity efforts prove that you have the right to be heard, that you, the people of Crimea, have the right to assert your position and make it known to the international community.



After negotiations with the Chinese leadership, Beijing, 2016.



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Interviewed: Maria Volkonskaya

Photo: Ekaterina Bogdanova

“She is beautiful, dangerous and has a sharp tongue.” This is how the opponents of Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, who have met her at diplomatic venues, might describe her. Her statements rapidly become popular quotes, like the one about the Western sanctions: **“Historically, our wings prevent us from crawling.”**

MARIA ZAKHAROVA:

“Crimea is thriving despite Western attempts to isolate it”

Maria is quick on the draw, so an interview with her is a major luck for any media outlet. This is not the first candid conversation she has had with Crimean Magazin, a Crimean magazine that maintains close ties with the Russian diplomatic community. This time we spoke about Ukraine's pie-in-the-sky schemes, the water blockade of Crimea, and who really is infringing on the Crimean residents' human rights.

Question: Ms Zakharova, can Russia as a member of the UN Security Council do anything about the landslide of lies about Crimea coming from the UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)? In late August 2020, it published a report titled "Human Rights in the Administration of Justice in Conflict-Related Criminal Cases in Ukraine from April 2014 – April 2020." Its chapter on Crimea reported violations of the local residents' right to a fair trial, without providing any facts to support this allegation. How to fight these fake reports about the Russian judiciary?

Maria Zakharova: The status of a permanent UNSC member implies special obligations and responsibilities, but it cannot protect us from the lies, distortion, open misinterpretation and machinations used by various international actors in the pursuit of their timeserving considerations. Regrettably, the bodies of the UN Secretariat, including the OHCHR, are no exception in this sense.

As is well-known, the OHCHR's activities within the framework of the Ukrainian dossier are based on a memorandum of understanding it has signed with Kiev. The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU), which has been established at Kiev's request, publishes its findings in quarterly reports. This is a case of bilateral cooperation between the OHCHR and Kiev. Russia has no relation to this arrangement, and no collective decisions have been adopted regarding this matter by the UN Human Rights Council.

However, the OHCHR includes the so-called Crimean chapter in its reports, allegedly in accordance with annual UN General Assembly resolutions, initiated by Kiev, on the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the invalidity of the 2014

Crimean referendum. Under international law, this is ungrounded and inadmissible. The UNGA resolutions initiated by Ukraine have only one goal: to reaffirm Kiev's claim to the Crimean Peninsula, contrary to the conscious choice the people of Crimea made during a free and democratic referendum in 2014.

Moreover, these resolutions are adopted in violation of the universally recognised norms of international law, because the UNGA has no authority in the matter of the legal status of territories. It is notable that the majority of UN member states abstain during voting on these politically-laden anti-Russia resolutions. In other words, they do not support this Ukrainian machination. More than that, the number of states voting for Kiev's initiatives is decreasing with every passing year.

We strongly oppose the inclusion of the so-called Crimean chapter in the UN mission's quarterly reports. The Republic of Crimea and the Federal City of Sevastopol are constituent entities of the Russian Federation, and all and any attempts to include appraisals of the human rights situation in these Russian regions in UN bodies' reports on Ukraine are inadmissible..

Question: The Yalta International Economic Forum was not held in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic, but it has been decided to hold it this year. Will you attend it?

Maria Zakharova: Gladly, if I am invited. The Yalta Forum is one of the top four economic events in Russia and proof that Crimea, as part of Russia, is thriving and successfully developing foreign economic ties despite the Western attempts to isolate it. Every year, the number of contracts signed during the Yalta forum is increasing.

Question: Does the Foreign Ministry have a list of countries which Crimean residents should avoid visiting due to their unfriendly policy towards the peninsula?

Maria Zakharova: This reminds me that several years ago a number of Western countries were plotting and scheming to try to prevent Crimean residents from travelling around the world, thereby grossly infringing on their human rights and discriminating them. And then the year 2020 came, and the coronavirus pandemic hit the world, depriving people in absolutely all countries of the physical ability to travel. These restrictions have also affected the citizens of the Western countries, who sought to deny entry to Russian citizens from Crimea. The past year has given all of us a lesson: stop complicating life for others, it is better to join hands in search of solutions to global problems.

Question: Are there any countries whose delegations Russia will never allow to travel to Crimea under any circumstances?

Maria Zakharova: No, on the contrary, we invite everyone to visit Crimea to see its progress with their own eyes, as well as the specific functioning of Crimean society, where people of different faiths and ethnicities live peacefully as good neighbours.

Question: Isn't it high time for civil society in Crimea to file a human rights violations lawsuit against Ukraine for cutting off the water supply from the Dnieper?

Maria Zakharova: We regard the water blockade imposed by the Ukrainian authorities as a collective punishment of Crimean residents for the informed choice they made in March 2014. More than that, the water blockade has also had a negative impact on the southern regions of Ukraine itself, not only on the peninsula. Since its reunification with Russia, Crimea has gradually adapted to the new conditions and is progressing, whereas the adjacent Kherson Region in Ukraine is facing environmental, sanitary and epidemiological challenges. This is one more proof that Russophobia is pushing the Kiev regime towards highly reckless schemes, including those

that will harm its own national interests and its citizens.

Ukraine is a signatory of several international human rights agreements, which means that it has voluntarily assumed the commitment to respect, protect and exercise the human rights set out in these documents.

“The coronavirus pandemic hit the world, depriving people in absolutely all countries of the physical ability to travel. These restrictions have also affected the citizens of the Western countries, which sought to deny entry to Russian citizens from Crimea.”

For reference, I would like to dwell somewhat longer on these documents. I am referring to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 6 – the right to life), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 11 – the right to adequate food, the right of everyone to be free from hunger, and an equitable distribution of world food supplies; Article 12 – the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 6 – every child has the inherent right to life), and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, where torture is defined in Article 1 as “any act by which ... suffering ... is intentionally inflicted on a person for ... punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed ..., or intimidating or coercing him or a third person ... for any reason based on



discrimination of any kind." Article 2 reads that "no exceptional circumstances whatsoever ... may be invoked as a justification of torture." Therefore, it can be said confidently that Kiev is inflicting torture on the residents of Crimea, thereby neglecting its international commitments.

As we are aware, civil society and individual residents of Crimea, who have been subjected to suffering as a result of the water blockade, have submitted complaints against Kiev's illegal acts to the OHCHR and the UN Human Rights Council's oversight authorities, or more specifically, its special rapporteurs.

Seeking to protect our citizens, we have repeatedly appealed to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet and the UNHRC special rapporteurs, demanding that they thoroughly analyse the

negative consequences of the water blockade for the rights of Crimean residents.

On September 15, 2020, during the 45th session of the UN Human Rights Council held in Geneva, the Russian delegation submitted a request for Leo Heller, the Council's Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, to prepare a separate report on Ukraine's water blockade of Crimea and submit it to the Council and the UNGA.

Question: Will the Russian Foreign Ministry support the Crimean residents' lawsuit against Ukraine?

Maria Zakharova: The Russian Foreign Ministry has long recommended the individuals, public associations and economic entities of Crimea to file water blockade lawsuits with international human rights organisations. We have been working closely together with the Crimean government to provide practical assistance with filing such applications.

At the same time, the Russian leadership is aware that we must above all rely on our own resources to ensure an adequate water supply in Crimea. The Russian government has recently approved considerable budgetary allocations from the reserve fund to the Defence Ministry to ensure an uninterrupted and high quality water supply to the peninsula. We have overcome the energy and transport blockade of Crimea, and we will deal with the water blockade as well.

Question: The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry is actively promoting the idea of an extended Crimea Platform modelled on the Normandy format. Is Russia going to cooperate with the countries included in that informal group?

Maria Zakharova: Let's wait and see what comes out of this plan. You may remember that a similar idea was put forth by former Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavel Klimkin in 2015. President Vladimir Zelensky is now trying to give substance to it; he even claims that several countries have supported it. But speaking about it now is like discussing the volume and beauty of a soap bubble. As for

Russia's potential cooperation with the future members of that club, let's call it a club, I'd like to remind everyone that many countries, including our close allies and partners, do not share Russia's view on the sovereignty of Crimea. But this is not a reason to stop cooperating with them or finding points of contact in other spheres.

If this group discusses the restoration of Crimea's water and electricity supply and Kiev lifting its trade and transport blockade of the peninsula, we will gladly cooperate with it. Russia has always been open to constructive cooperation, including with Ukraine. We will be happy if full-scale human contacts resume between Crimean residents and the people of the neighbouring country, many of whom are linked not only by friendship but also by family ties.

But if Kiev plans to use this platform to play the old de-occupation tune, they should know that we are not interested. The issue of Crimea's territorial affiliation was decided by the Crimean residents themselves in 2014. The peninsula is a full-fledged constituent entity of the Russian Federation, and no platforms, formats or strategies can change that.

Question: Former chair of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People [an extremist organisation prohibited in Russia. – Ed.] Mustafa Dzhemilev has been demanding for over a year now that the office of commissioner for the Crimean Tatar People should be established under the President of Ukraine, hoping that the position will be assigned to his proxy, Refat Chubarov. Kiev has so far not responded to the requests of the Crimean Tatar extremists. Do you know why?

Maria Zakharova: Commenting on the cobweb of Ukraine's domestic policy, which is based on

scandal and intrigue, is a thankless job. This is most likely a political trick. It is no secret that Kiev is using the so-called Mejlis and the Crimean Tatars themselves as bargaining chips. It only brings them up when it wants to show the international community that Ukraine upholds human rights or to request yet more financial assistance from Turkey or the European Union. After Crimea reunited with Russia, the Kiev authorities and all kinds of notorious individuals from among the Crimean Tatars have been trying to assign a political aspect to this matter by presenting Crimean Tatars as victims of "Russian aggression." I wonder what kept Kiev from taking care of them when Crimea was part of Ukraine.

“The Foreign Ministry has long recommended the individuals, public associations and economic entities of Crimea to file water blockade lawsuits with international human rights organisations. We have been working closely together with the Crimean government to provide practical assistance for filing such applications.”

This disregard for the interests of Crimean residents was one of the reasons why in 2014 they voted for their future with Russia. And they made the right choice. During the past six years, much more has been done for all the ethnic groups living in Crimea, including Crimean Tatars, than during the previous Ukrainian period in the peninsula's history.

Question: Various NGOs, which have been established in Ukraine with the assistance from the Soros Foundation, are monitoring developments in Crimea. They publish reports presenting their vision of the human rights situation there, and record information on foreign vessels calling at Crimean ports. Why are they doing this?

Maria Zakharova: I believe that the main political reason is that they are ready to do anything to keep the topic of Crimea a part of the international media discourse. The focus is, traditionally, on Crimean Tatars. Meanwhile, respected international experts, including in the United States, admit that the situation in the peninsula has improved dramatically in recent years, which is why these NGOs are promoting the myth of

“Many countries, including our close allies and partners, do not share Russia’s view on the sovereignty of Crimea. But this is not a reason to stop cooperating with them or finding points of contact in other spheres.”

human rights violations in Crimea. A more down to earth explanation for the grant receivers’ activities is that they need to pay off the money they receive. These organisations are a real fake-making factory. They don’t need the truth about life in Crimea and its development. Their task is to create a negative picture of life in Russian Crimea for the Western consumers. Their reports do not mention the fact that Kiev has not supplied water or electricity to the peninsula since 2014, and has imposed a transport and economic blockade. This is a real infringement on human rights.

As for monitoring the situation in Crimea, which the Western NGOs are allegedly doing, it is impossible to do this from a foreign country. Those who are really interested, come to the peninsula, talk to people and

see the real picture. I have already mentioned that we have invited representatives of international human rights organisations many times to come to Crimea so as to see with their own eyes how people are living there. But Ukraine and its international sponsors hinder that, because the more people visit Crimea, the more difficult it will be to lie about “occupation,” “human rights violations” and “persecution.”

The calls of foreign vessels at Crimean ports are proof that the peninsula is developing its economy and international trade, economic, humanitarian and other ties.

Question: Do Ukraine and the West continue to pin their hopes on a revision of Crimea’s status?

Maria Zakharova: Our position is perfectly clear on this matter: the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol are full-fledged constituent entities of the Russian Federation, which they joined in accordance with the free expression of people’s will. Ukraine and other countries, which maintain the illusion on this score, should recall what President Vladimir Putin said at a meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club on October 22, 2020 regarding the Turkish President’s aspirations regarding Crimea, which Recep Tayyip Erdogan doesn’t recognise as a Russian territory, he said: “I do not care about them because the interests of Russia are reliably protected, take my word for it.”

Question: The Foreign Ministry of Russia is working closely together with Crimean media outlets. You have visited the peninsula many times, and the editorial office of Crimean Magazin has published three



Maria Zakharova at the traditional foreign policy briefing in Moscow presents the first issue of "The Crimean Magazine" in English, 2018.

English-language yearbooks, which it presented on international platforms, and our website has an English version as well. How effective are these joint activities? Can we get through to those who don't want to know the truth about life in Crimea?

Maria Zakharova: I would like to use this occasion to thank the Crimean Magazin media holding for their professionalism and their creative approach to their work, and especially for their English-language yearbooks and the English version of their website. Information about Crimea in foreign languages attracts genuine interest among our foreign partners and is the best possible proof of the real human rights and media

freedom situation on the peninsula. Joint activities are clearly effective. The Western bias and anti-Russia sentiments are proof that few people there want to know the truth about Crimea. But we can attain our goal if we continue working together. This may take time, but one day, after a long period of rejection, resistance, inertia and bias, the international community will accept the sincerity of the Crimean residents' choice and the intentions of Russia, which came to the rescue of its people. This can only be done through the publication of truthful information about the real situation in Crimea.

Question: Please, complete the phrase: "To me, Crimea is..."

Maria Zakharova: ...a miracle!

INVESTMENT

SHAPES

CRIMEA

Text: Anna Abuvakarova

Over the past eight years, Crimea has successfully integrated into Russia's economic and legal space. Outlining strategic economic priorities and investing heavily in them paves the way to the region's balanced development. **Investment since 2014 amounted to 1.08 trillion roubles,** including 600 billion in private investment.

The commitment by investors to develop all sectors of the Crimean economy has guaranteed that it remains well balanced. Businesses proactively invest in agribusiness, health resorts and vacation centres, trade, transport and logistics, manufacturing, construction, the energy sector and other spheres. Each of these sectors is attractive in its own way, **supplemented by a whole range of measures to support businesses**





Photo: Simferopol airport press service

The photo shows the new terminal of Simferopol International Airport. The terminal area is more than 78 thousand square meters. This is an investment project that was put into operation on April 16, 2018. The total scope of the private investments — 32 billion rubles. The capacity of the new terminal is up to 3650 passengers per hour. It also provides for: 8 mobile boarding bridges, 55 check-in desks for passengers and luggage, 28 elevators and 16 escalators and parking for 1,500 cars.

The sun and preferences

Crimea's agro-industrial complex accounts for 6.7 percent of the gross regional product, surpassed only by trade and manufacturing. With its mild climate and a long summer that lasts four to five months, Crimea is a good place for growing most agricultural crops, including subtropical cultures that can withstand freezing temperatures only for short periods.

The priority agricultural sectors include primary (processing grapes, making base wine) and secondary (fermentation, bottling and distribution) winemaking, grain milling, dairy, meat processing, fruit and vegetables processing, bread baking, gardening and creating logistics centres.

INVESTMENT PROJECTS IN AGRICULTURE

KOKTEBEL VINTAGE WINE FACTORY

INVESTMENT: 1.4 BILLION ROUBLES

The project consists of reviving one of Crimea's oldest wineries. The investment will help expand and upgrade production processes, build a new blending facility and buy a new bottling line. The winery has already launched a new product line-up. The investment project will create 445 jobs.

BELOGORSKY GREENHOUSE COMPLEX

INVESTMENT: 3.9 BILLION ROUBLES

This is a modern greenhouse facility specialising in tomatoes. Launched in 2020, the first phase of the high-tech Belogorsky greenhouse complex produced 200 tonnes of tomatoes.

FRUIT COLD STORAGE FACILITY WITH A CAPACITY OF 15,000 TONNES

INVESTMENT: 1.1 BILLION ROUBLES

The investor has set up a full production cycle from growing fruit to their storage, built a 1 billion-ruble storage facility and launched two sorting lines.

KRYMSKOYE ZOLOTO FOOD PRODUCTION PARK

INVESTMENT: 500 MILLION ROUBLES

This is the first sunflower oilseed deep processing factory with the on-site daily production capacity of 100 tonnes.



Since 2015, a powerful support has been created for the development of agriculture in the Crimea – new greenhouse facilities are being built, old ones are being modernized. Since the beginning of 2021 the Crimean agricultural products have already been exported to 11 countries of the world.

A resort paradise

Crimea is a unique region that offers the most favourable conditions for developing and ensuring the prosperity of health resorts and holiday destinations. Building on its resources, the peninsula provides investors with multiple opportunities, from eco-tourism to creating entertainment and resort facilities.

Importantly, all the segments are sure to find their customers, since almost 40 million tourists travelled to Crimea over the past six years and the tourist flow is increasing every year. The priority investment opportunities include health, cultural, educational

and event tourism, trekking, bicycle, underwater, equestrian, ethnographic, sports and cruise tourism. Building new kinds of accommodation with high service quality and all inclusive offerings, camping sites and promoting tourism for children are also important.

TOURISM INVESTMENT PROJECTS

PRIMORSKY PARK IN YALTA

INVESTMENT: 281 MILLION ROUBLES

The investor has rebuilt and improved the Primorsky waterfront area that has a beach, a recreational area and a green space. The waterfront promenade has been paved with granite tiles, and beach maintenance facilities have been built. The upgrades also included the installation of lighting, the renovation of hydraulic and coast-protection structures, as well as the construction of a 3,000 square metre multi-purpose facility.

YALTA-PARK THEMED ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

INVESTMENT: 16 BILLION ROUBLES

This investment project has yet to get off the ground, and is expected to be completed within five years. According to its developers, it will offer world-class amusement rides, shops, cafes, restaurants and a hotel covering a total of 100,000 square metres.

Industrial future

With 16.8 percent of the GRP, manufacturing is the leading sector of the Crimean economy. This sector employs over 100,000 people. Machine building and the manufacturing of metallurgical and construction materials are the top investment priorities.

INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT PROJECTS

CONCRETE PRODUCTION FACTORY

INVESTMENT: 49.5 MILLION ROUBLES

The factory operates two PR-1200 production lines and uses automated concrete machines. The production of vibropressed products has been fully automated, completely excluding the human factor.

KRYM-MAGISTRAL BITUMEN CONCRETE FACTORY

INVESTMENT: 63.5 MILLION ROUBLES

The company has already built a bitumen concrete factory in Gvardeisky near Simferopol, and launched the production of bitumen-concrete mixtures, offering them both for sale and using them for its own projects. The factory currently employs 47 people. It has worked on major sites in Sevastopol, helped build a new airport complex in Simferopol and worked at Artek International Children's Centre.



BUSINESS

The Crimea is being built at an accelerated pace. According to the data of Federal tax statistics office in the Crimea in January–November 2021, 564.4 thousand square meters of the total area of residential buildings were commissioned in the republic, which is 7.5 percent more than in the same period of 2020. According to some forecasts, by 2030 the population of the peninsula may increase from 2.4 to 2.9 million people due to an increase in the birth rate and migration so real estate construction is one of the most promising business areas.

Big on construction

Construction is one of the most vibrant sectors of the Crimean economy. It accounts for 9.7 percent of the region's GRP. Housing and single-family-home construction remain at the top of the investors' agenda.

TOURISM INVESTMENT PROJECTS

ZHIGULINA ROSHCHA RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

INVESTMENT: 16.2 BILLION ROUBLES

Zhigulina Roshcha is the first major integrated development project in Crimea. It promises to create a new, people-friendly urban environment for 25,000 residents. This residential neighbourhood will have 7,500 flats on a territory of 45 hectares, and will offer all the necessary amenities and social infrastructure, including a state-of-the-art school building for 1,100 pupils, 4 pre-school facilities, an art school, a sports centre, a business centre, a multi-level parking lot, etc.

YEVPATORIA HOUSING COMPLEX

INVESTMENT: 2.6 BILLION ROUBLES

This will be the first comfort-class residential complex in Yevpatoria, one of Crimea's oldest cities. Built to the most stringent industry standards, it stands out by its location, design and infrastructure with mostly low to mid-rise residential buildings, convenient transport options and enclosed courtyards.



CRIMEA IN GEOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Crimean Magazine published an article by Hendrik Weber, head of the People's Diplomacy Norway NGO, which first appeared in the April edition of the Norwegian magazine Friheten (Freedom). Unofficial translation from Norwegian.



People's Diplomacy Norway Association, which promotes constructive cooperation between Russia and Norway, has repeatedly called out the anti-Russian and anti-Crimean sanctions as unfair, illegal and pointless. We were planning to raise this issue at a conference in Oslo, which had been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

When discussing such a delicate matter as the reunification of Crimea with Russia, it is important to hear directly from people living on the peninsula, and so we extended an invitation to Alexander Mashchenko, head of the foreign relations department of the Crimean Vernadsky Federal University. Despite the fact that he had all the necessary papers and had personally visited the Norwegian embassy in Moscow to apply for a visa, Mashchenko's request was turned down on February 27, 2020 on the following grounds: «Dear Alexander, your travel document is not recognised by the Schengen countries. This corresponds to Annex 10 to the Visa Guide,

the Travel Document Recognition Table, as well as Article 4 of Decision 1105/2011/EU. We make no exceptions. You can travel to Norway without a visa with your Ukrainian biometric passport.»

So, Alexander Mashchenko can enter Norway with a Ukrainian passport, which he does not have, since he is a Russian citizen and lives in Crimea. Alexander is left wondering why he has to apply for a citizenship of another country just to be able to attend the conference in Oslo. Mashchenko did not receive a response from the Norwegian embassy. This is just one of many examples of how Western sanctions infringe on the freedom of speech and human rights.

State Duma deputies Frants Klintsevich and Svetlana Savchenko, together with Senator Vladimir Dzhubarov, who sits on the Federation Council's Foreign Policy Committee, said that Norway would receive an official complaint.

«This is the ultimate hypocrisy. Europeans talk to us about democratic values and how they respect the rights of every individual, while at the same time violating the rights of an entire territory,» Svetlana Savchenko said.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry has called the upcoming conference in Oslo a Russian propaganda event controlled from Moscow. Moreover, Kiev claims that Russia is taking advantage of this event to make use of its «advocates.» The Ukrainian authorities were so scared that they called the Norwegian Ambassador to Ukraine, Ole Terje Horpestad, in March who confirmed that the Norwegian government was not questioning Crimea's state affiliation.

Norway imposed sanctions on Russia alongside other countries in 2014 due to the alleged destabilisation of Ukraine and the so-called annexation of Crimea. These measures initially targeted 170 key individuals, 44 companies and organisations.

It's illegal for individuals and foreign companies to export goods from Crimea, invest in its economy, visit the peninsula, deliver products to its territory, or provide services to regional enterprises in the energy, oil, gas, telecommunications and transport industries.

Some multinational companies quickly found a way to get around the sanctions. The products are first sold to foreign companies in China and Israel (they have not yet imposed restrictive measures), and then sent to Crimea for sale to consumers.

Private individuals were hit by the sanctions the hardest. Visa applications to Norway and other

EU countries are turned down for Crimeans. There is no mail service between Crimea and the West. Items ordered on foreign websites are not delivered to the region.

The sanctions affect not only Russia, but Norwegian and European manufacturing, agriculture and commercial fishing. More and more economists, banks and corporations in Europe claim that the restrictions hit them harder than Russia. The sanctions encouraged Russia to completely overhaul its agricultural system, making the country self-sufficient.

The sanctions policy has only forced Russia to turn to the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, which did not impose restrictions. Sanctions are a tool which the West uses to force the people of Crimea to renounce a choice they had made when they became a constituent entity of the Russian Federation. This will never happen.

The American elder statesman Henry Kissinger once famously said: «Sanctions are not a strategy, but an acknowledgement of a lack of strategy.» One way or another, we must accept the reality and conduct a dialogue with Russia. The Norwegian government needs to commit to pursuing an independent foreign policy that meets the interests of the national economy and state security. The sooner we start, the less embarrassment there will be for us and our government. What the West does to Russia is unfair and represents a violation of human rights and freedom of speech of people living in Crimea.

DIFFERENT TRADITIONS, ONE HISTORY

How representatives of nearly two hundred ethnicities coexist in Crimea

Text: Anastasia Berezovskaya

Photo: Natalya Somova, Alexander Shinkarevsky, Lydia Vetkhova, from the archive of the project "We love Crimea" of the "Monolith" group companie

From time immemorial, Crimea has been home to an eclectic mix of peoples, **with about 200 ethnicities coexisting** there in peace and harmony. Everyone is free to profess their religion, celebrate their holidays, teach their young people their customs and traditions, and of course, **share their cultural specifics with their neighbours**

As many as 175 nationalities are now represented in Crimea. Russians are the biggest ethnic group accounting for 65 percent of the total population. Other major groups include Ukrainians (16 percent) and Crimean Tatars (13 percent). Crimea is also home to Belarusians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Uzbeks, Moldovans, Jews, Koreans, Greeks, Poles, Gypsies, Chuvashes, Bulgarians, Germans, Mordovians, Georgians, Turks and many others.

Crimea is like a motley blooming field. Its peoples are as strong as they are united.

Russians

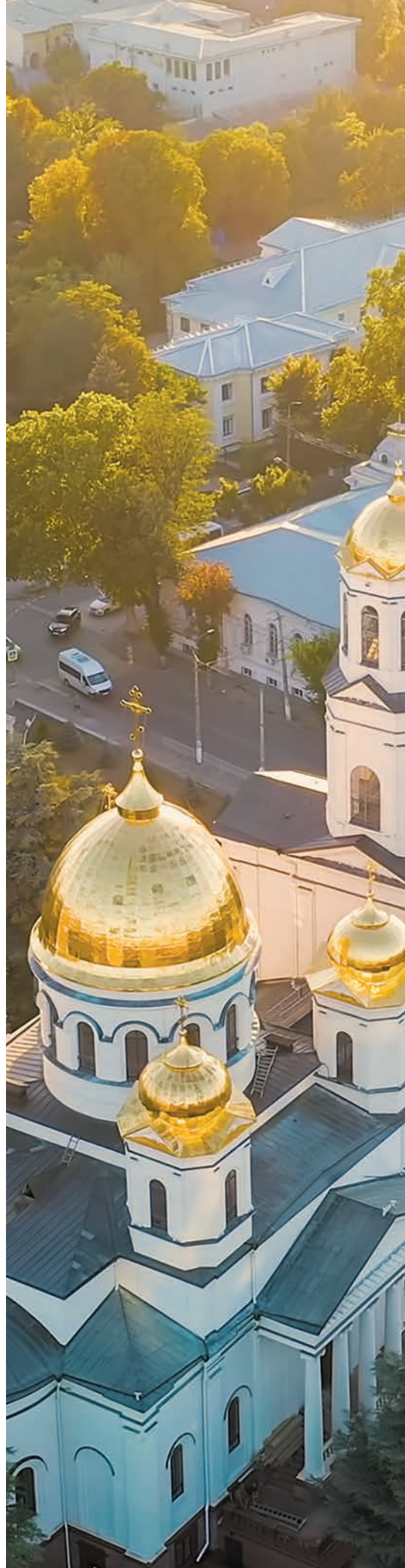
Russians are the most numerous group in Crimea. On April 19, 1783, Empress Catherine II signed a manifesto on the accession of the Crimean Peninsula, the Island of Taman and the Entire Kuban Province to the Russian State. The new Taurida Governorate (province) was inhabited by representatives of many peoples, but Russians have been an absolute majority since then.

April 19 has always been a meaningful date for the people of Crimea. This was especially true in the 1990s, when the peninsula remained a part of Ukraine against the will of its residents. Since then, keeping in line with tradition, a festive meeting and parade have been held annually on April 19, with people laying flowers at the monuments to Vasily Dolgorukov-Krymsky and Alexander Suvorov in Simferopol; and since 2017, to the restored statue of Catherine II.

Since the integration of Crimea, Russians have made a huge contribution to all spheres of the region's development. Alexander Pushkin and Ivan Bunin lived and worked there, and Alexey Gorky came to Crimea on foot, from Odessa. The artist and poet Maximilian Voloshin, Romantic writer Alexander Grin, wine-maker Lev Golitsyn, architect Nikolai Krasnov and other prominent Russians lived there.

The Russian community in Crimea continues to help foster Russian identity in Crimeans, to preserve and develop Russian culture and the Russian language, and support compatriots in other countries.

The Russian community's activity helps strengthen interethnic and interfaith harmony on the peninsula, as well as Crimea and Russia's ties with the former Soviet republics and other countries, with Russian communities abroad.



Church of Alexander Nevsky

The idea of building a cathedral dedicated to the Faithful Saint Grand Prince Alexander Nevsky in Simferopol was put forth by Catherine the Great who visited Simferopol while traveling across Crimea in 1787. The cathedral was destroyed by the Bolsheviks in 1930. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, its restoration began. Now there is a monumental cathedral of unusual beauty sitting in the centre of Simferopol. In 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin took patronage over the rehabilitation of the church.

Three languages - Russian, Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar — are official in Crimea.


Crimean Tatars

Young women in colourful dresses performing folk dances, young men competing in the traditional kuresh wrestling, while cooks are preparing meat over a fire nearby, offering pilaf and sweets. Workshops on clay modelling, weaving, painting, and blacksmithing, crowds everywhere — people are celebrating the bright and cheerful Crimean Tatar holiday of spring and fertility, Hydyrlez. The festivities take place annually in Bakhchisarai, once the capital of the Crimean Khanate. Tens of thousands of Crimeans, and guests from mainland Russia and abroad, attend the celebrations.

Head of Crimea Sergey Aksyonov said at the opening of Hydyrlez in 2019: «There is an overwhelming sense of pride when seeing all Crimeans, without exception, join the festival of spring and fertility, which is a Crimean Tatar holiday. There is a deep feeling of friendship, and respect for the culture and traditions of all peoples who live in Crimea.»

In the eight years since Crimea's reunification with Russia, more has been done for Crimean Tatars than in countless years before. Russia moved to rehabilitate this minority group; roads are being built in places densely populated by repatriates; their rebuilt households have been connected to the gas, electricity and water supply; new housing is being built, and financial benefits are allocated annually to complete house construction.

Another living block for repatriates was completed in September 2021. In Simferopol alone four more projects are now in progress to build blocks for exonerated citizens. Two buildings, one with 162 and the other with 36 flats, will be added in the Ak-Mechet microdistrict in 2022. Two more high-rise blocks are under construction in the Novonikolayevsky microdistrict.



The Khan's Palace in Bakhchisarai is being renovated for the first time in five centuries. The government allocated over 2 billion roubles to repair this cultural heritage piece while preserving the historical appearance of the palace. The Khan's Palace in Bakhchisarai is the only example of Crimean Tatar palace architecture in the world, the family heritage of the House of Giray. The palace remains one of the hallmarks of Crimea and it is one of the most visited tourist attractions.

The Crimean Tatar television channel, Millet, went on air exactly seven years ago. Millet shows programmes that highlight the life of the Crimean Tatars, their customs, culture and history. It produces its own documentaries, and publishes updates on events taking place in the republic. Content in the Crimean Tatar language accounts for more than 70 percent of the airtime on the channel that broadcasts 24 hours a day.

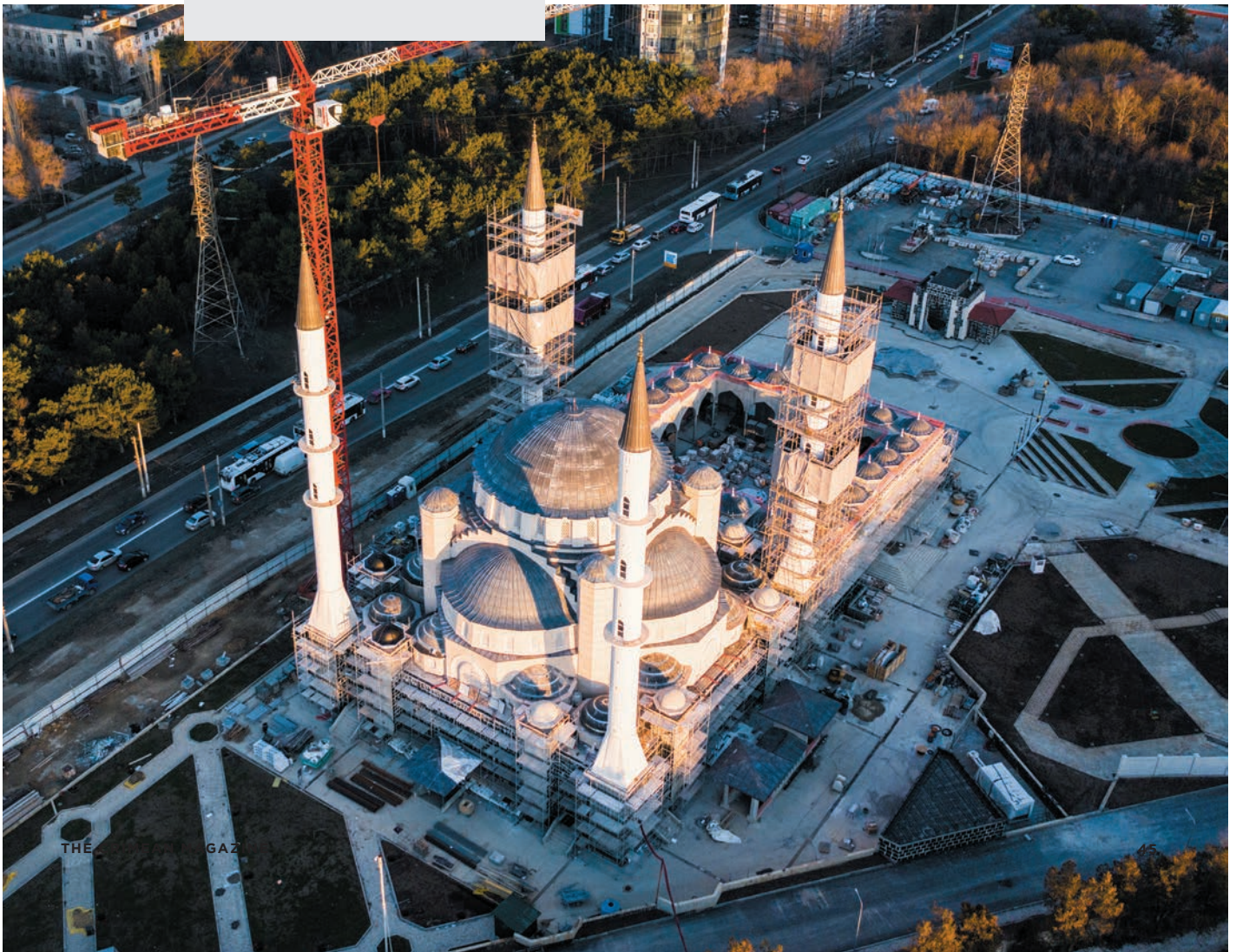
According to the 2014 census,

229,000

Crimean Tatars live in Crimea, which is almost 13 percent of the total population of the republic.

Looking upward

The construction of the largest cathedral mosque is nearing completion in Crimea. The plans to build it have been discussed since the 1990s, when Crimean Tatars began to return to their homeland en masse, but the construction did not actually begin until 2015. The biggest mosque in Crimea is to be completed soon year, on the southern hill of Simferopol. According to the project, the mosque has four minarets, each 50 metres high. The main building is 37 by 37 metres, topped with a 28-metre dome. The new mosque is expected to become one of the main architectural masterpieces of the Republic of Crimea.





Ukrainians

According to the 2014 census, Ukrainians are the second biggest ethnic group, with 344,500 people living in the republic, or 15.7 percent of the population. The Ukrainian community in Crimea is very active, publishing the glossy magazine Krim Syogodni in Ukrainian, organising various cultural events, festivals, thematic round tables, and engaging in people's diplomacy. The Ukrainian community has created the project Pereiaslavska Rada 2.0 – a Ukrainian language news agency which focuses on events in Crimea, Russia and Ukraine.

Crimea annually holds Days of Ukrainian Culture. In 2021, the project was devoted to the 110th anniversary of the birth of Vera Roik – an ethnic Ukrainian artist and keeper of embroidery patterns from various nations. The central library of Crimea, in Simferopol, is a popular venue, because it bears the name of the outstanding Ukrainian writer Ivan Franko.

Ukrainians are the second biggest ethnic group, with

344,500

people living in the republic.



Crimean Karaites

There are only about 2,000 Karaites in the world, and 535 representatives of this small but very friendly community live in Crimea, which is their historical homeland.

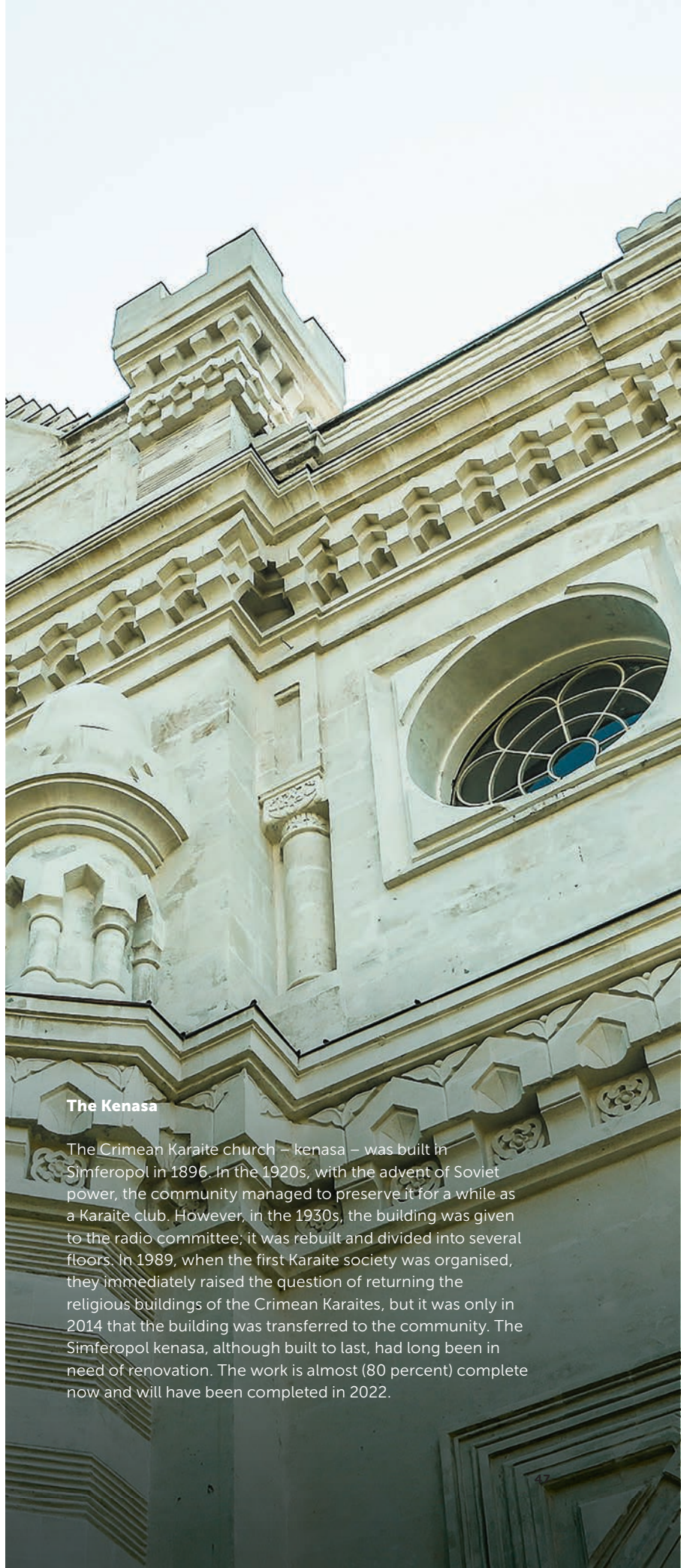
Karaites speak the Turkic language of the Kipchak group. Their religion is based on venerating the Old Testament and the one god, Tengri. The Karaites have also preserved some pagan rituals.

//

The ground floor of the kenasa will house a common prayer room for men; the second floor is for women. There will also be a room for children. A museum commemorating Tamara Ormeli, a famous Karaite woman who collected artefacts related to the Crimean Karaite religion, history, culture and lifestyle, will open in the basement of the kenasa. The museum will be always open for visitors.

Natalya Kropotova,

Chairwoman of the Regional National and Cultural Autonomy of the Crimean Karaites in the Republic of Crimea



The Kenasa

The Crimean Karaite church – kenasa – was built in Simferopol in 1896. In the 1920s, with the advent of Soviet power, the community managed to preserve it for a while as a Karaite club. However, in the 1930s, the building was given to the radio committee; it was rebuilt and divided into several floors. In 1989, when the first Karaite society was organised, they immediately raised the question of returning the religious buildings of the Crimean Karaites, but it was only in 2014 that the building was transferred to the community. The Simferopol kenasa, although built to last, had long been in need of renovation. The work is almost (80 percent) complete now and will have been completed in 2022.

Armenians

The first Armenian settlements in Crimea date back to the 8th century, when Crimea was part of the Byzantine Empire, and the Armenian people had to hastily flee from the raids of the Seljuk nomads. They chose the Crimean peninsula for a temporary shelter, but later it became home to many Armenians.

The Armenian cultural heritage in Crimea mainly consists of religious buildings. In Feodosia alone, there are 40 Armenian churches, as well as schools and caravanserais.

Crimea is the birthplace of the famous Aivazovsky brothers. Gabriel Aivazovsky was a teacher, historian, translator, and church leader. His younger brother was the great Russian artist Ivan Aivazovsky. The brothers were born and raised in Feodosia. Their legacy is invaluable for the national culture, not only of the Armenian people, but also of Russia as a whole.

In 2021, the first ethnographic centre of Armenian culture opened in Donskoye, Simferopol Region. The opening was devoted to the 150th anniversary of Alexander Spendiarov, a classic of Armenian music, a prominent musician and public figure as well as a teacher. The centre has two thematic halls, one devoted to the history of the Crimean Armenians, and the other, to the history of Armenia. Visitors can see traditional dresses brought from different regions of the country, household items, and musical instruments. The display is arranged around a particularly valuable exhibit, a khachkar (stone cross). It was found by accident in Bogaty, Belogorsk District. It is believed to be 650 years old.

The Church of St. Hripsime in Yalta is the temple of the Crimean Apostolic Church in Yalta. It is considered one of the masterpieces of the Armenian architecture of the Crimea. It was built at the beginning of the 20th century.





Greeks

The Greeks are one of the most ancient peoples of Crimea. Although there are few Greeks living there now, they have made a great contribution to the development of Crimea as we know it. Greeks were the first to grow grapes and make wine on the peninsula; they laid out the first gardens and became the first fishermen in the coastal waters.

There is a Greek cultural and ethnographic centre, Karachol, in

the Crimean village of Chernopolye. It is a recreated Greek manor house from the mid-19th century. The museum exhibits household items, clothing, embroidery, and old photographs. In the centre of the village, there is the church of St Constantine and Helen, Equal-to-the-Apostles. The Greeks celebrate the church holiday dedicated to Saints Constantine and Helen, Panair, with especial solemnity. They also mark the Greek New Year, Ay-Vasil, which is on January 14.

According to the 2014 census,

2,646

Greeks live in Crimea..



**Syuren station:
“The path of revival of the
peoples of Crimea”**

There is a railway station in the village of Syuren, Bakhchisarai District, sadly remembered for the first train departed from there on May 18, 1944 with Crimean Tatars sent to Central Asia. Now it is the site of a huge memorial, which is almost complete, The Path of Revival of the Peoples of Crimea. One of its central elements is a touching sculptural group by People’s Artist of Russia Salavat Shcherbakov. It depicts the day of the tragedy: old people, women and children leaving their homes to get in covered goods wagons. Their faces are full of sorrow, eyes lowered to the ground; a boy throws a last glance at the gate of his home. The sculpture

is life-size, with elaborately depicted emotions on the faces. Children’s toys, dropped in a hurry, a lonely wheel from a cart and a dog left in a yard outside. A little further off, two children stand on an island holding toy boats — a symbol of their return to their homeland.

In addition to the sculptures, the memorial complex includes a museum; the building is shaped to symbolise how the tragedy divided peoples’ lives into before and after. There is an alley leading towards two hands pointing to the sky. There is a mosque on one side of them, and a Christian chapel on the other. The memorial complex in Syuren is a magnificent project that tells us we can only embark on a path towards rebirth in peace. It is in the final stages of construction. On May 18, 2021, it already hosted mourning events on the Day of the Crimean Tatars’ deportation.

One of its central elements is a touching sculptural group by People's Artist of Russia Salavat Shcherbakov. It depicts the day of the tragedy: old people, women and children leaving their homes to get in covered goods wagons. Their faces are full of sorrow, eyes lowered to the ground; a boy throws a last glance at the gate of his home.





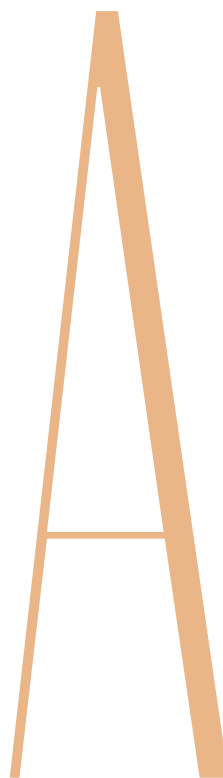


FROM VINE TO WINE

Text: Andrey Novokhatko and Anastasia Zaplotneva

Photo: from the archive of "The Crimean newspaper", press service of "Mriya Resort & Spa"

Business in Crimea is impossible to imagine without winemaking. Crimean wines are a brand that is famous well beyond the peninsula, appreciated by both wine professionals and ordinary wine lovers. Happily, neither sanctions, nor problems with water supply or weather have affected the region's wineries, which are developing sustainably, increasing the area under cultivation and launching new products



All for the best

Vine-growing and winemaking is a major segment of Crimean agriculture. The peninsula has a unique environment for growing grapes and making dry, sweet, table and fortified wines. The industry rapidly deteriorated after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when the economy was in tatters and unable to support producers, and many vineyards were uprooted.

But the Crimean winemakers have managed to save the most important thing: personnel and traditions. Old-school professionals are training new personnel, with whom they share the secrets and intricacies of winemaking in Crimea. Their profession gained a new lease on life in 2014, when viticulture and winemaking were declared the priority spheres of Crimean agriculture.



The import of wines plummeted from \$8 million worth in 2016 to \$287,000 in 2020.





State support

Huge funds have been allocated to the winemaking sector annually, including over 1 billion roubles in 2015-2018 and over 600 million roubles in 2019 alone, and the figure continues to grow. This has produced the desired effect: the area grown with grape-bearing vines has increased several times over and is currently more than 20,000 hectares.

According to the Crimean Ministry of Agriculture, 2.3 billion roubles of state funds were allocated to 21 local wine companies between 2016 and 2020. During the Ukrainian period of the peninsula's history, wine producers had only obsolete equipment, which undermined their competitiveness with other winemaking regions.

Funding is provided both to grape growers and winemakers. For example, the companies that make still and sparkling wines with a protected geographical indication and a protected designation of origin were given tax incentives (a lower rate of excise duties), which boosted the sector's development.

Crimean vineyards are regularly renewed. Between 2014 and 2020, the share of low-yield vineyards, planted more than 20 years earlier, has decreased by 9.5 percent. Thanks to state support measures, 3,819 hectares of new vineyards have been planted over the past seven years, and another 4,000 hectares will have been planted by 2025. Budgetary allocations to vine-growing in Crimea will amount to 446.75 million roubles in 2021.

The wine industry of the republic was represented by 33 enterprises at the beginning of 2021. The production capacities of the Crimean wineries allow: to process 278.9 thousand decaliters of grapes per year; pour 53.7 million decaliters of wine products; withstand simultaneously 36.5 million decaliters.

The Crimea ranked first among the regions of the Southern Federal District in terms of growth in agricultural production in January-September 2021. The growth amounted to 18.6% in the Republic and was due to an increase in crop production.



MADE IN CRIMEA

As many as 119 grape varieties are grown in Crimea, including 67 technical, 28 technical-table and 24 table varieties. The overall area under cultivation in Crimea is over 20,000 hectares.



The photo shows a modern park and architectural complex on the territory of the Mriya Resort & Spa complex which is a large-scale infrastructure including an interactive space, a wine discovery center and a vineyard with an area of more than 7 hectares



But where do the new plants come from? As of late 2021, 75 percent of new vines have been grown in Russia, namely in the nursery gardens of Crimea, the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, the Krasnodar Territory and the Rostov Region.

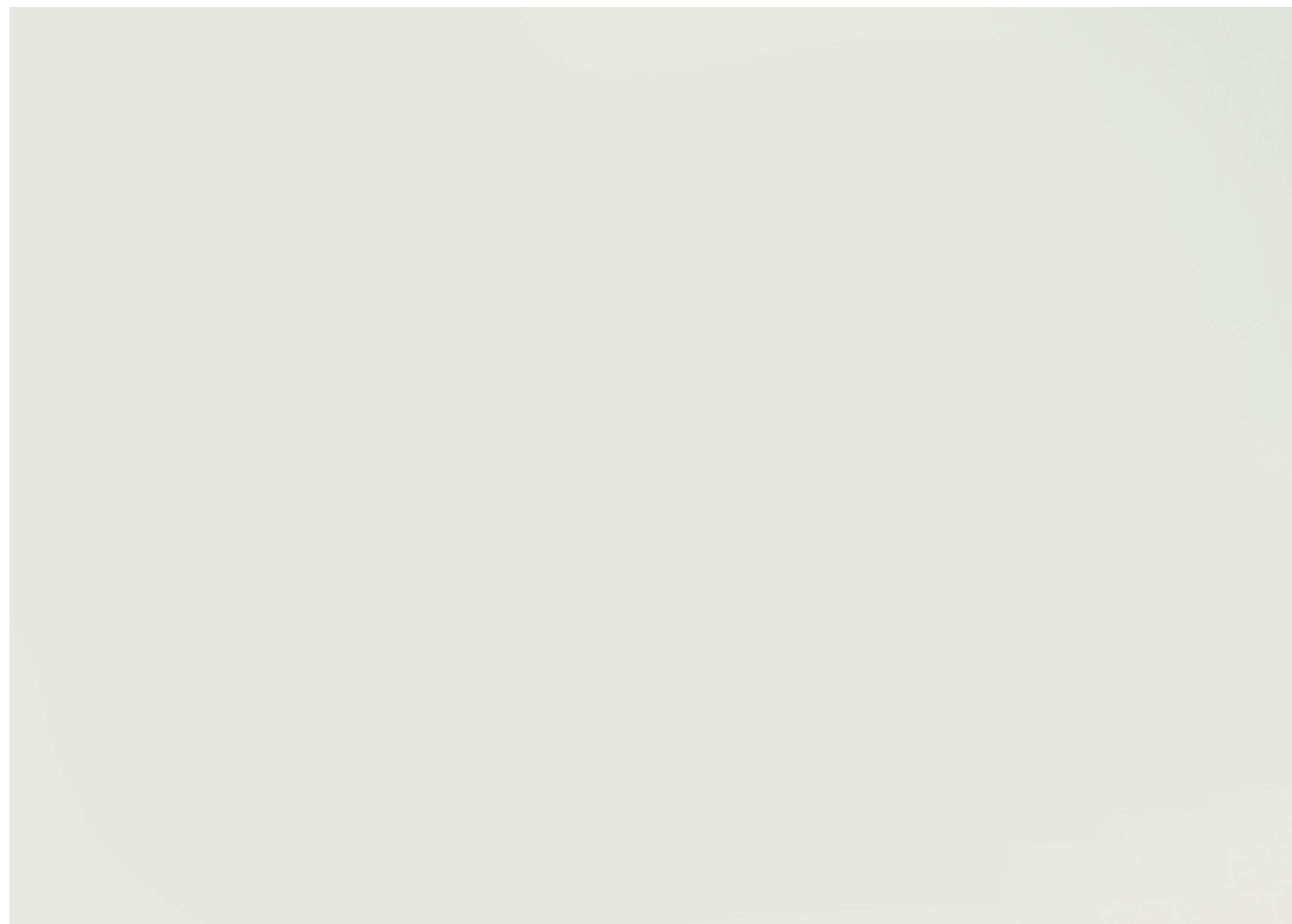
Wine import substitution

Crimean winemaking received legislative protection in December 2019 with the adoption of the Federal Law on Vine-Growing and Winemaking in the Russian Federation, which has dramatically reduced the import of wines and wine products and has increased the sale of Crimean wines.

The production of Crimean grape wines increased by 26 percent in 2020 compared to 2016, thanks to state support measures set out in the above-mentioned law.

The demand for Crimean wines is growing, especially sparkling wines, resulting in a boost in production in June and July 2021. The production of sparkling wines went up by 45 percent in June 2021 compared to May 2021 and by another 17 percent in July compared to June 2021.

HIGH DIVE INTO



SANCTIONS

**Text: Andrey Novokhatko
Photo: Evgeny Letov**



Since 2017, the Russian Crimea has been **hosting a prestigious international championship in high diving**, or diving into water from extreme heights.

Athletes from the United States, England, France, Mexico, Colombia, Spain, Belarus and Ukraine are among participants. Despite sanctions and thanks to Crimea's unique nature — and the event organisers, the world's best athletes come to the **high diving competition in Yalta and the cliff diving competition in Simeiz**

SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

For all these years, Ukraine has been trying to prevent leading international athletes from participating. Ukrainian politicians threatened athletes with criminal liability for visiting Crimea. However, that never stopped foreigners travelling to the peninsula. In fact, even athletes from Ukraine itself came to compete, which speaks volumes.

Former athlete of the Red Bull World Series, Alain Kohl of Luxembourg is a frequent competitor in Crimea. He visited the peninsula for the first time in 2011.

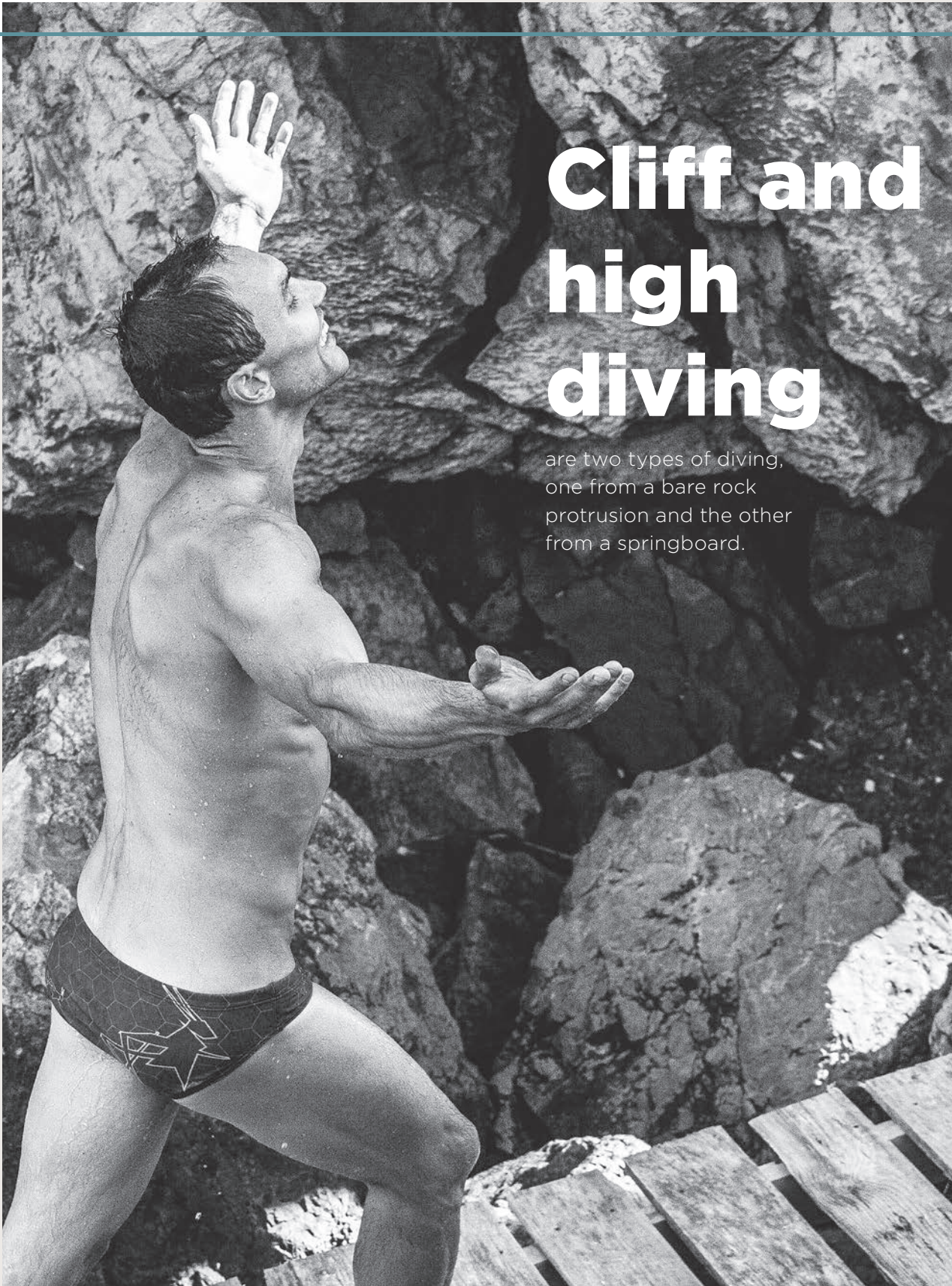
«I have indeed noted a difference when it comes to infrastructure, roads, buildings, tourism development and people. The government is spending a lot of money on developing the region,» he says. «It was in 2017 that Ukrainian officials warned us for the first time about possible consequences of visiting Crimea because they still considered it part of Ukraine. But it didn't stop me from going there. It was a competition in an excellent diving spot and sports must be separated from politics. I still come to Yalta every year. I like the High Diving World Cup in Crimea. The organisers are like family to me and the audience is fantastic.»

David Colturi, the US diver and winner of the Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series, shares this opinion.

«Crimea could become a training base for high divers from all over the world. But first, we need to know about potential consequences for foreign divers as they don't want to be restricted in international travel or other things. The High Diving World Cup in Crimea is always organised to the highest standard, with the best possible conditions for all competing athletes. Take a similar approach and you could create an incredible training base.»

Colturi says he is glad to see that Crimea is expanding, with hotels, restaurants, shops and recreational areas.





Cliff and high diving

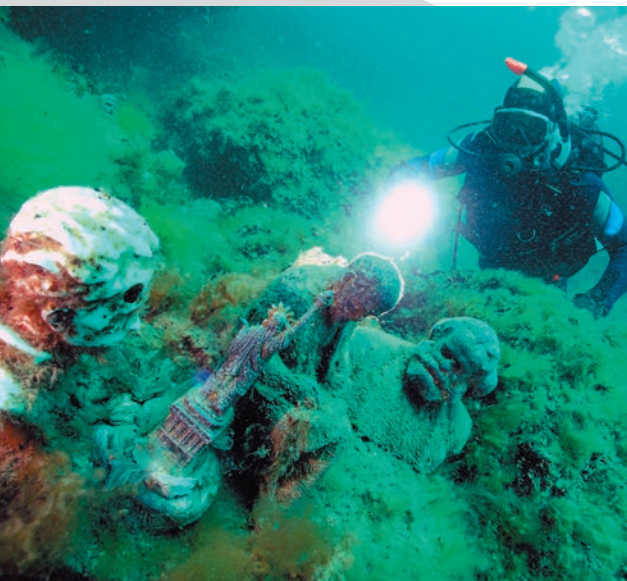
are two types of diving, one from a bare rock protrusion and the other from a springboard.

For extreme lovers

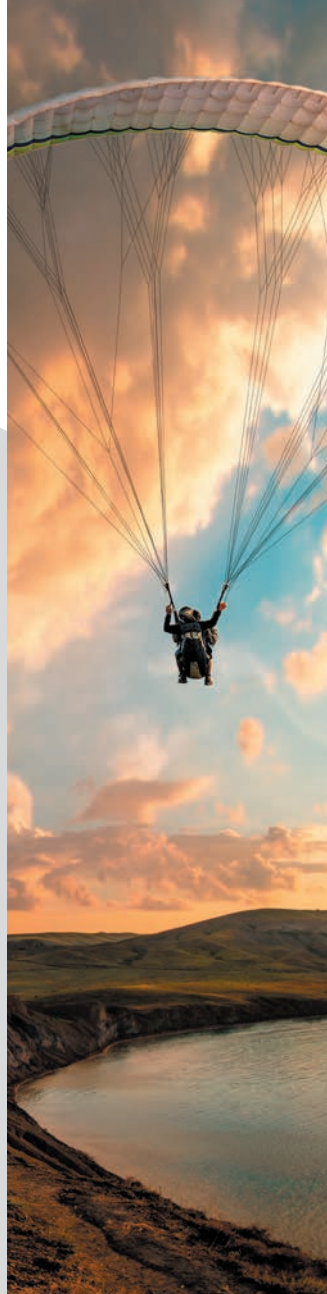
There are thrilling experiences for any taste in Crimea

Via ferrata. A new extreme route, the Sky Trail via ferrata, opened on Mount Ay-Petri (a peak of the Crimean Mountains, around 1,234m high) in 2021. This is a climbing route secured with a safety chain that allows climbers to pass along the rocks over a chasm. Extreme adventure enthusiasts can climb suspended steps stretching for 360m to enjoy an awe-inspiring view of southern Crimea. There are two more tourist attractions on Ay-Petri that have been in operation for eight years, a suspended bridge between jagged rocks and a zip-line. There is also a bungee jumping site.





Diving. Various diving activities, which are very popular with tourists, can be found along the entire shoreline. In addition to sea creatures and archaeological artefacts dating from the Greek colonisation of the northern Black Sea to World War II, divers can explore other exciting locations such as the Alley of Chiefs near Cape Tarkhankut and an underwater exhibition of anchors at Cape Aya.



Paragliding.

The Klementyev Mountain near Koktebel has long been a destination for hang gliders and paragliders. The White Rock near Belogorsk is a place of power for hot air balloon enthusiasts, with regular aeronautics festivals attracting hundreds of pilots and thousands of tourists.



Kitesurfing.

The village of Medvedevo is a popular spot for kitesurfers thanks to its favourable location on the southwestern shore of the Black Sea in Crimea, on the Tarkhankut Peninsula.

Photos: shutterstock.com, author: Aleksey Mnogosmyslov, igor61, aldas





Buon appetito **IN CRIMEAN**

Text: Anastasia Zaplotneva

Residents of popular tourist destinations are well aware that visitors can and must be as impressed by gastronomic delights as they are by the region's cultural heritage, extraordinary architecture or spectacular events. The local cuisine is as important a hallmark as world famous sights or international festivals. Food can be even more revealing about the past and the future of a region. So what is Crimean cuisine like?

Real Crimean cuisine is a kind of patchwork quilt. Just as the peninsula retains the heritage of many civilisations, it also preserves its gastronomic traditions, which are a bizarre mixture of cultures and eras. It has room for the nutritious, hot and spiced oriental cuisine as well as seafood, reminiscent of Mediterranean customs, and juicy vegetables and fruit that grow under the warm Crimean sun. The cheeses of this area can compete with Italian ones; local wineries could teach recognised world leaders from France and Spain a thing or two, and the local fish menu is in no way inferior to masterpieces from other coastal regions

A royal fish

The Crimean Republic is home to about 70 aquaculture enterprises. For all the variety of the local marine resources, sturgeon is rightfully considered one of the most famous delicacies. This fish, worthy of the royal table, is appreciated by gourmets all over the world. Russian sturgeon is cultivated in Israel, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Kazakhstan, Iran, Azerbaijan and even Hawaii. There is also a farm in Crimea.

The sturgeon farm in the village of Yermakovo, Dzhankoi District, was developed from scratch, literally amid the steppes — an agreement for a 38.7 million rouble investment project was signed four years ago. The risky project has paid off, and the fish-breeding farm now supplies the royal fish to the domestic market. The farm is unique mainly because it breeds sturgeon in artesian water, which is ideal in terms of chemical composition as well as temperature. No other Russian company can boast anything like this.

By the way, sturgeon can grow to a truly gigantic size. At the beginning of the last century, a fish was caught weighing 320 kilogrammes. However, it is impractical to grow such large fishes on an industrial scale, so sturgeons are harvested when they reach 2 to 5 kg.



The Yermakovo farm has reared and sold about 130 tonnes of sturgeon and trout since 2018.

At present, the Republic of Crimea has 6 sturgeon and 5 trout farms.



A Vitamin charge

Due to the combination of the fertile Crimean soil and a favourable climate, local farmers grow delicious fruit and vegetables. Fragrant tomatoes, sweet strawberries, luscious apples and soft, velvety peaches — nature has generously endowed the inhabitants of the peninsula with its riches. There are also persimmons, figs, cornel-berry, watermelons and melons, plums and apricots, cherries, raspberries and feijoa.

Gardening is one of the traditional segments of local agriculture. Crimean farmers grow fruit that can easily rival that of international producers in terms of quality. For example, one of the largest full-cycle horticultural enterprises, Old Crimea Fruit, founded in 2014, specialises in apples. Its orchards, which span 255 hectares, have globally popular varieties such as Golden Parsi, Golden Reinders, Granny Smith, Fuji, Gala, and Early Red One. By the way, the enterprises grow seedlings for new gardens not only in Crimean nurseries, but also in Belgium and Italy.

Crimean farmers have harvested

2,000 TONNES

of stone fruit last year, including cherries, sour cherries, apples, peaches, apricots, and cherry plums.

In 2020, 2,050 hectares of perennial fruit and berry crops were planted in the republic.

Seafood delicacies

Like any other Black Sea region, Crimea focuses on all kinds of aquaculture. In particular, there are successful mussel and even oyster farms in the republic — a total of 16 farms. Local production volumes are constantly increasing. According to the regional Ministry of Agriculture, local companies supplied 736 tonnes of mussels in January-June 2021, or 36.8% more than in the same period last year. Oyster farms also achieved a noticeable increase, an additional 155 tonnes compared with the first half of 2020.

One of the largest Crimean shellfish breeding centres is Lake Donuzlav in the western part of the peninsula, used by the local companies Donuzlav-Aquaculture, Alliance-NTI and Chernomorstroyindustria. Yakhont LTD in the village of Katsiveli is the leading firm on the southern coast of Crimea. It grows Black Sea mussels and Pacific giant oysters, which can compete with French delicacies.

By the way, Crimea has Europe's first incubator for growing shrimp larvae, an achievement of the only local enterprise that grows Vannamei King prawns. Founded in 2015, the farm quickly gained recognition in Crimea as well as across Russia, and this year, it plans to make forays into international markets.

CRIMEAN MARICULTURE

paves the way for booming growth of gastronomy tourism – almost every local producer offers excursions and tastings.



Say 'Cheese'

Cheese making is a relatively new industry for Crimea. Not so long ago, only a few local enthusiasts tried it, but in recent years, Crimeans have been confidently expanding into cheese production. Local cheese factories roll out well-known European varieties as well as authentic local produce based on recipes invented on the peninsula. Crimean craft cheeses can surprise even sophisticated chefs with European backgrounds.

For example, farmers in the village of Luchistoye near Alushta make cheeses from the milk of cows and goats grazing on the slopes of Demerdzhi, and give them appropriate names that refer to local landmarks. For example, a young goat cheese with mint and Crimean herbs is called Kastel; there is semi-hard Aluston or funa cheese with noble mould. In the Belogorsk District, visitors can try a craft black cheese called BlackOut — the producers were inspired by the actual 2015 power cut in Crimea.

Crimean cheese makers use various spices and herbs, turning an ordinary mass-market product into an unusual delicacy. They add turmeric, caraway seeds, sun-dried tomatoes, black sesame seeds, onions, saffron and even cocoa. Elite products are eagerly snapped up by hotels and restaurants, but dairies also offer them to visitors to try — gastro tourism is expanding fast in Crimea, and many farmers are happy to welcome guests, give them tours and arrange tastings of their products.

In January-July 2021, 1,022 tonnes of cheese were produced in Crimea, a 19.5% increase year-on-year.

The Crimean gastro farm Feodoro took second place in the Best Russian Cheese competition.





In vino veritas

Crimean wines are a brand, which is no less famous than, say, French or Spanish wines. Local winemakers' products are regularly awarded with medals at professional contests. Due to the unique Crimean climate, our producers make classic dry wines from traditional grape varieties as well as sweet dessert or strong aged drinks.

Crimea has an unusual climatic peculiarity — a relatively small plot of land can contain various zones with completely different climatic conditions. As a result, wines made from the same grape varieties can have completely different taste. The Alma Valley wine-making company is based in the Alminskaya Valley with unique soils (dark brown loams on the hillsides and carbonate-rich black soils in river valleys); the Perovskih Estate terroir allows producing wines with good minerality and acidity; Solnechnaya Dolina is based on Cape Meganom with its high average annual temperatures, almost no precipitation, strong hot winds, and sandy-siliceous soils.

But the largest Crimean winery is the legendary Massandra, which grows more than 50 varieties of grapes and tolls out about 10 million bottles of wine a year. The factory also houses one of the richest wine collections in the world, the Massandra enoteca with about a million bottles.

Winemakers often work with classic and recognisable grape varieties such as Cabernet, Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Merlot, Pinot Franc and others. But there are also autochthonous grape varieties in Crimea — White Kokur, Kefesia, Sary Pandas and others.

EIGHT CRIMEAN WINERIES

export their products such as still wines, varietal wines, sparkling wines, cognac, grappa, and cider.



Street food

Crimean cuisine, like any other, would be incomplete without street food. Snacks sold from stalls and kiosks, cooked right in front of the customers, have been elevated to the rank of art in most countries around the globe. Crimea has something to offer here as well.

Crimean street catering is where oriental motives are most clearly manifested. Chebureks hot from the oven, yantyks — less calories but no less flavour, and famous Karaite pies — there are limitless varieties of snacks made from meat, cheese, herbs and dough. All of those can be certainly ordered at numerous cafes and restaurants, but it is the greatest pleasure to buy a steaming cheburek on one of the numerous Crimean embankments and eat it on the go.

All kinds of seafood are also popular among street vendors. Baked mussels and rapana, dried and smoked fish, boiled shrimps and crayfish — tourists have a lot to choose from. And let's not forget about fresh fruit, which can be purchased at every corner, or even plucked from the nearest tree — no one can be denied a tasty and healthy dessert in Crimea.

Cheburek is a gem of the Crimean Tatar cuisine, a deep-fried semicircle made from unleavened dough filled with minced meat, onions and spices.

Last year, the Karaite pie represented Crimea at the Tastes of Russia contest. A funny fact: this name is actually Russian. In Karaite language, they are called

ET AYAKLAK

EVERYONE TO CRIMEA!



LOUDER, BRIGHTER, COOLER

Text: Anastasia Zaplotneva

Photo: press service of the Tavrida.ART, press service of
Palmira Palace, Mikhail Patlis, Lidia Vetkhova, Evgeny Letov,
press service of Mriya Resort & Spa

Do you miss bright and dazzling emotions, extreme fun and active leisure? **Then Crimea is the right place for you!** Are you dreaming of basking under the hot sun by the azure sea and getting that striking golden tan? Then Crimea is the best place for you! Are you wandering in search of inspiration and fresh ideas? Then Crimea is exactly what you need! Our peninsula can be so diverse: it can be bustling and slightly crazy or slow and relaxing. It can also be inspiring and even healing... **Therefore, it is hardly surprising that Crimea attracts millions of tourists each year, and it can unlock the heart of every visitor**

Record-breaking results

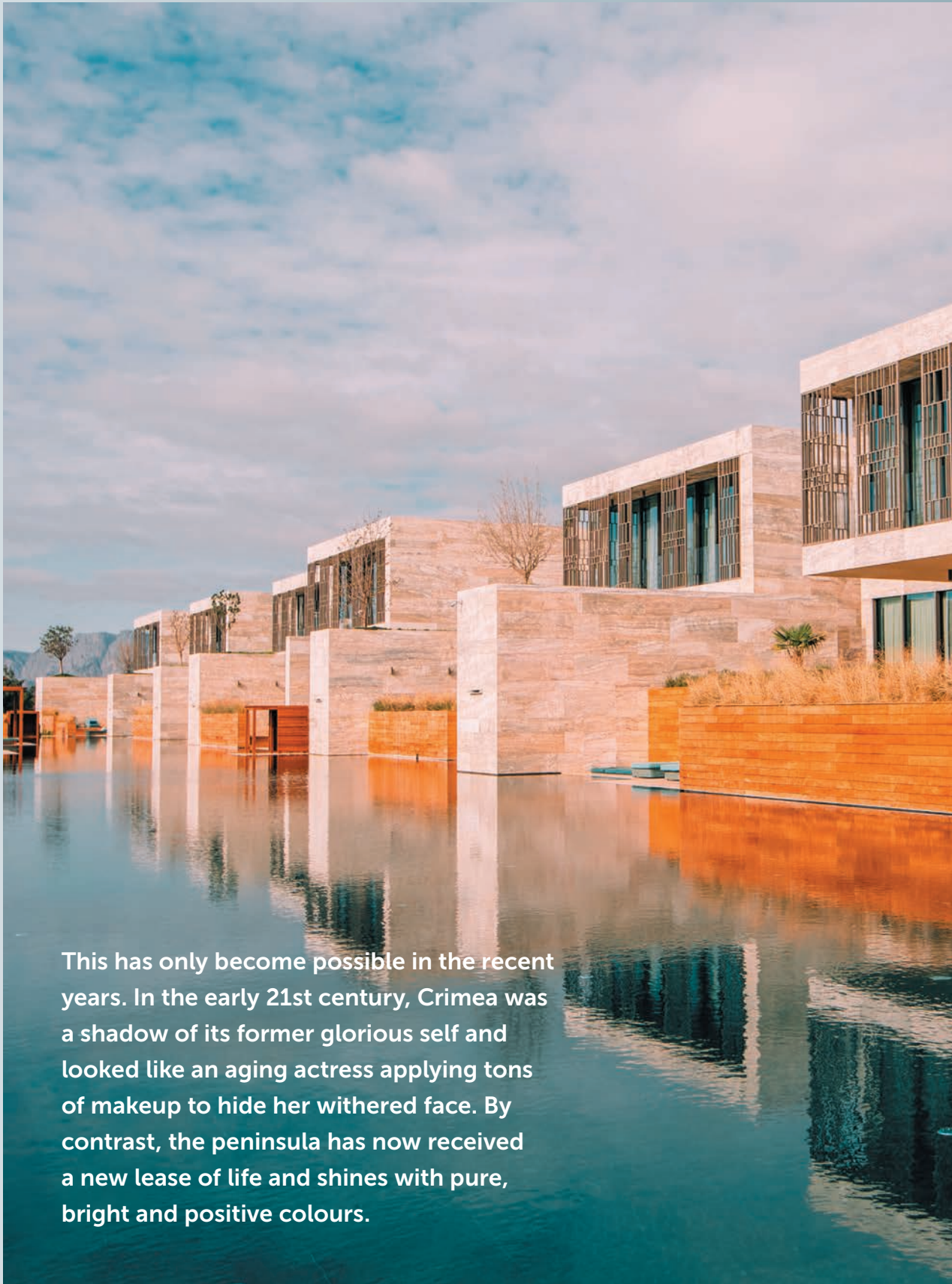
Crimea was popular as a resort in the heyday of the Russian Empire and in the 20th century, and it retains this status today. Moreover, the peninsula is now experiencing a real renaissance. In the past few years, demand for local resorts has been growing steadily and breaking all records. 2021 was particularly successful. We welcomed 9.5 million tourists. This is quite impressive, taking into account that the republic's population is no more than three million people.

What helps us break our own records and get better day after day? First of all, we invest in the tourism industry, infrastructure and human capital. For example, Crimean hotel owners can take out soft loans for building or overhauling various facilities. According

to the Head of the Republic of Crimea Sergey Aksyonov, the programme will allow Crimea to implement projects worth over 23 billion roubles. This has only become possible in the recent years. In the early 21st century, Crimea was a shadow of its former glorious self and looked like an aging actress applying tons of makeup to hide her withered face. By contrast, the peninsula has now received a new lease of life and shines with pure, bright and positive colours.

The people of Crimea have a lot of plans, including creating the Greater Crimean Trail for eco-tourists, setting up more beaches for people with disabilities, restoring abandoned mud baths that used to be famous all over the world ... and the list goes on. In the next few years, Crimea, which is famous for its seaside holiday hotels, may also become an alpine ski resort. Although the local mountains are a far cry from the Caucasus or the Alps, skillful investment can help open several alpine skiing facilities with slopes for the pros.





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The secret of popularity

Local event tourism is much more widespread in Crimea than in any other region. It is impossible to single out any particular festival that can serve as the peninsula's visiting card, just like in other countries. Crimea hosts dozens of festivals, and each of them can be a subject of a separate story.

By the way, enogastronomy tourism is one of the most popular and promising aspects of Crimea's development as a resort. The peninsula holds many food festivals, including the Sea of Food festival in Koktebel or WineFest. And #NovemberFest is rightfully seen as the most famous festival here. What is more, it was ranked the best national gastronomy event and placed first in the finals of the Russian Event Awards 2019. It also received the Culture category's Grand Prix in the finals of the Russian Event Awards 2020.

The country's main gastronomy festival brings together over 30 wineries and farms at one and the same venue. Thousands of Crimea residents and people from Russia and other former Soviet republics flock here. Each year, the event attracts more and more tourists and other visitors from Crimea, and their number has soared from 4,500 to over 12,000 people in the past three years.

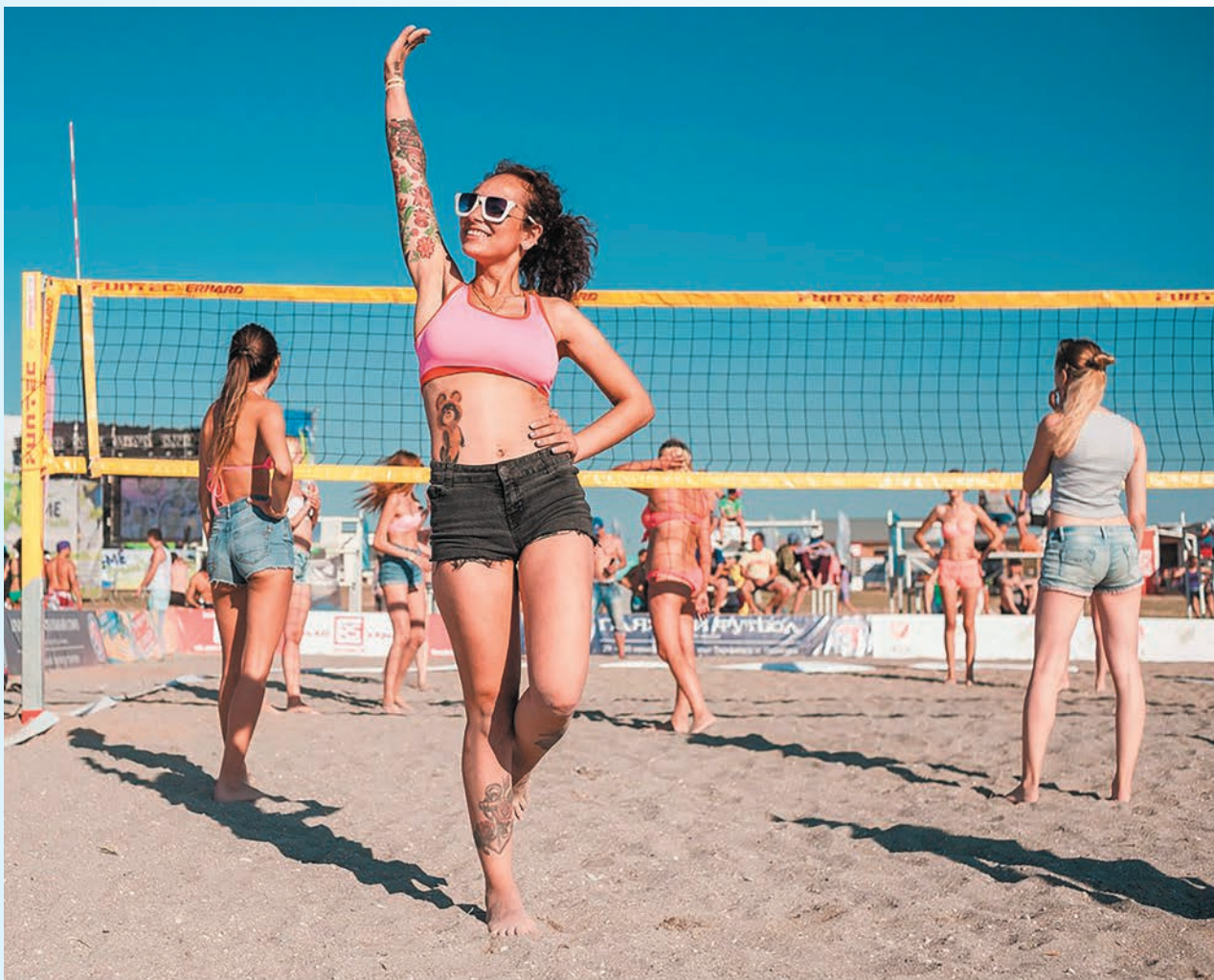
Faster, stronger, braver

Crimea has also become the main attraction for a lot of people who enjoy active leisure, healthy lifestyle, and even extreme sports. Those who like yoga and spiritual practices travel to Crimea to find harmony and balance while surrounded by the idyllic nature of the peninsula. Those who take pleasure in hiking, traverse the peninsula's many mountain paths. Adrenaline fans never miss two iconic events: Crimea High Diving World Cup, which attracts the strongest athletes from all over the world, and the EXTREME Crimea International Youth Festival of Extreme Sports.



EXTREME Crimea chose its site at the westernmost point of the peninsula, Cape Tarkhankut. There, on white-sanded beaches with crystal-clear water, nature itself has created the perfect environment for diving, windsurfing, kitesurfing, and platform diving. Those who enjoy flyboarding, yachting, beach football, volleyball, free running, parkour, skateboarding, and dirt jumping come here, too. Almost two weeks of unending extreme in one of the most beautiful spots in Crimea will ensure that both the participants and spectators leave with unforgettable impressions.

Adrenaline fans never miss two iconic events: Crimea High Diving World Cup, which attracts the strongest athletes from all over the world, and the EXTREME Crimea International Youth Festival of Extreme Sports



EVERYONE TO CRIMEA!



Around heritage sites

But tourism in Crimea is not fuelled only by sports and food. The peninsula is known above all for its history and heritage, which it carefully preserves. The memory of the past is cherished here and passed on from one generation to another. This is why fans of historical reconstruction like Crimea so much: in the summer, fans of the knight era gather in Sudak for the Genoese Helmet festival, and in early autumn Crimea hosts such iconic events as the Battle of the Alma Festival and the Fedyukhin Heights Crimean Military History Festival.

Then there is also the Road to Yalta International Music Festival, a military song contest which brings together participants from Austria, Argentina, Canada, China, France, Great Britain, India, Italy, Israel, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey, and the United States. It took just a couple of years for the festival to become a cultural phenomenon of the global level. Great Patriotic War songs performed in English, French, Italian, Latvian, Polish and other languages, win the listeners' hearts from the first notes and unite people from various countries better than any high-level treaties, agreements or summits.

«By gaining an insight into our culture, both musicians and their fans back home begin to realise the main thing: Russia is not a monster led by an even bigger monster threatening everyone and everything. Russia is a great peacemaker, a big, peace-loving and at the same time very strong and powerful country. Our culture is the same: it lacks aggression but knows how to make you fall in love with it,» Festival President Andrey Kondrashov says.



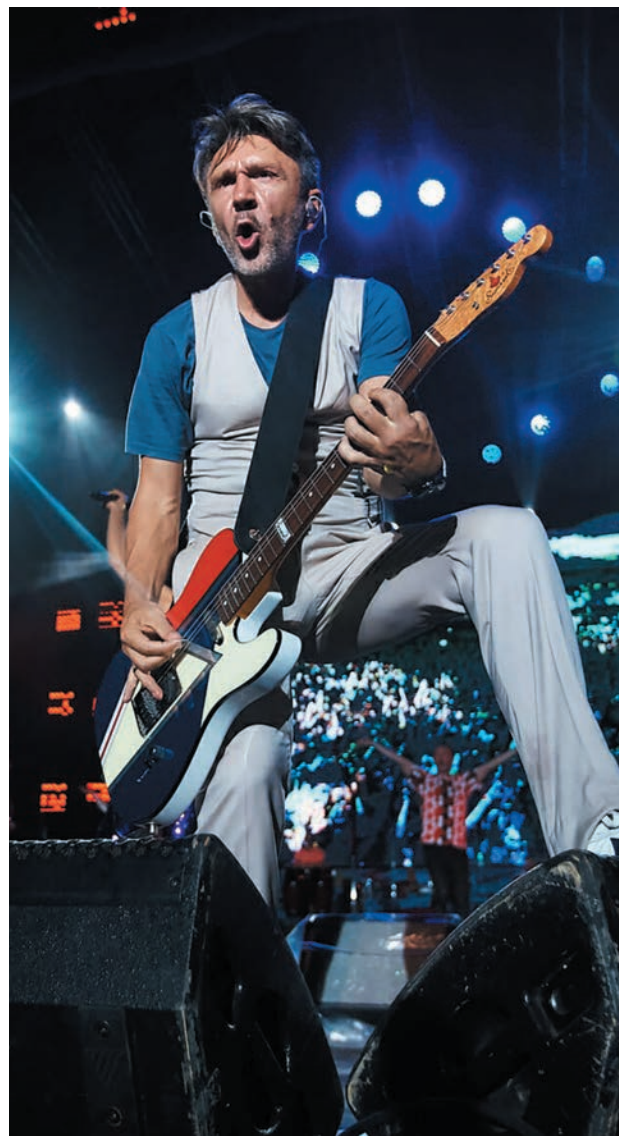
EVERYONE TO CRIMEA!

Music has brought us together

In fact, Crimea has become a real home for all kinds of musicians. Rock fans travel to the bike show on Mount Gasforta or to ZBFest; fans of contemporary music choose Z.Fest, and those who enjoy improvisations prefer the Live in Blue Bay festival or Koktebel Jazz Party. There also are events for rap and pop fans. Creators of the Tavrida.ART festival went further and united representatives of various genres on one stage. However, Tavrida.ART is not just a festival but an entire art cluster on the Crimean coast near Sudak.

The Tavrida art cluster is a platform of opportunities that helps young people discover their professional potential in culture, art, and creative industries. Tavrida's education races are the largest gathering point for creative youth in Russia. Since 2015, more than 20,000 young professionals employed in the creative industries and more than 2,500 experts and guests of honour have taken part in the races. Online broadcasts from the Tavrida.ART festival website attracted record-breaking 30 million views. In addition, the festival won six Global Eventex Awards. The Global Eventex Awards jury chose winners from 561 applications representing 37 countries. In particular, Tavrida.ART events won the first two places in the Concert category: the opening ceremony won gold and the music show of the Tavrida art cluster residents won silver.

This list is far from being full: there are almost no free dates in Crimea's festival schedule. Undoubtedly, the peninsula had to adjust to the pandemic, just as every other place in the world. Some events were cut short, others were cancelled. However, it did not decrease tourists' interest in the peninsula, because a holiday in Crimea is always a holiday on the bright side.



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