

Tymoshenko's Lawyer Released on Bail

By [The Moscow Times](#)

November 12, 2013



Yulia Tymoshenko standing near her lawyer at a court hearing in Kiev. **Gleb Garanich**

KIEV, Ukraine — A top lawyer for jailed former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko was released on bail Tuesday a day after being charged with beating his ex-wife, a move supporters saw as a possible attempt to derail a landmark agreement with the European Union.

Serhiy Vlasenko, Tymoshenko's long-time lawyer and ally, was charged Monday with assaulting his former spouse and was being questioned late in the evening, prosecutor Ruslan Demyanyuk said, according to the Interfax news agency.

Vlasenko dismissed the accusations as "absurd" and aimed at depriving Tymoshenko of competent defense.

The opposition saw Vlasenko's questioning as a sign of President Viktor Yanukovich's reluctance to fulfill the EU's demand to free his arch-rival Tymoshenko, a condition for signing an association agreement with Ukraine, a precursor to eventual EU membership.

In a statement read by her daughter Eugenia on Tuesday, Tymoshenko said Yanukovych is "kicking the Association Agreement to death" by prosecuting Vlasenko.

Kiev hopes to sign the free trade and political association accord with the EU at the end of November.

Tymoshenko, who is serving a seven-year sentence for abuse of office, insists she is innocent and accuses Yanukovych of ordering her imprisonment in order to bar her from challenging him in the 2015 presidential election.

Parliament is scheduled to vote Wednesday on a bill that would permit Tymoshenko to travel to Germany for medical treatment, but Yanukovych's allies have opposed it. Two top EU envoys are set to deliver a crucial report on the case in Brussels on the same day.

Yanukovych may hope that the EU will drop its demand for Tymoshenko's release out of fear that Ukraine would opt for closer ties with Russia.

Over the weekend, Yanukovych made a surprise trip to Moscow for talks with President Vladimir Putin. Recent comments made by Ukraine's Prime Minister Mykola Azarov on the importance of good economic ties with Russia also suggest that Kiev is considering a tilt toward Moscow.

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