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## UKRAINE – THE EUROPEAN UNION



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### ***COUNCIL CONFIRMED THE EU INTENTION TO SIGN THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT WITH UKRAINE, BUT HAS NOT SHOWN A REAL WILLINGNESS TO DEFEND IT***

On June 23, 2014 the Council of the European Union at its meeting in Luxembourg adopted a final decision regarding the signing of the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine on June 27 in Brussels, and promised Russia to hold the tripartite consultation (EU-Ukraine-Russia) on the implementation of the Agreement. It is important that the beginning of such consultations is scheduled for July 11, which is after the signing of the Association Agreement. Thus the EU indicated that Russia doesn't have any kind of veto on the European integration of Ukraine.

Besides, in the **Council conclusions on Ukraine**, adopted at the same meeting, the EU expressed its support for the Petro Poroshenko peace plan on the de-escalation in Eastern Ukraine. The EU called on Russia to support the peace plan of the President of Ukraine and to adopt the effective measures to stop the continued flow of illegal fighters, arms and equipment over the border into Ukraine, to use its influence on the separatists to stop the violence and to lay down their arms, to continue withdrawing and refrain from gathering troops again near the Ukrainian border, and to cancel the mandate of the Federation Council to use force on Ukrainian soil. The Council recalled its non-recognition of the Crimea annexation, and decided to prohibit the import of goods originating from Crimea.<sup>1</sup>

However, there is no guarantee that the declared economic sanctions against the Crimean goods will be properly implemented by all the Member States of the European Union, since the day after the meeting of the Council Austria hosted a visit of the aggressor-state leader Vladimir Putin. **Despite the critical position of the European Commission on the 'South Stream', Austrian OMV signed with Russian 'Gazprom' a contract to construct the Austrian part of the pipeline**, which shall deliver gas bypassing Ukraine. It is clear, that the 'South Stream' has no economic expediency (because the current transit capacity through Ukraine is sufficient with a large margin for the region's needs in Russian gas), but this pipeline has a distinct geopolitical goal – to increase the dependence of Kyiv on Moscow by depriving Ukraine of gas transit. Ignoring by wealthy Austria of the common European interests and values for the dubious unilateral benefits undermines the unity of the European Union and put EU leaders in the awkward position, because just few weeks ago they forced the government of much poorer Bulgaria to submit to the common European

<sup>1</sup> Council conclusions on Ukraine. -

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/143341.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/143341.pdf).

position on the 'South Stream'. **Russia skillfully uses such tools of the 'geopolitical corruption'** to undermine the unity of the EU and thus to weaken its geopolitical rival.

For the sake of the dubious gas contracts, **Austria provided Putin with the opportunity for his ideological manipulations** – he used the press conference in Vienna to lie about Russia's 'not involvement' into the conflict in Eastern Ukraine and about the imaginary violation of truce by the Ukrainian forces, as well as to tell traditional Russian bogeyman stories about the 'rights sector' armed cutthroats. The Austrian side did not refute Putin's statement that he and Austrian President Heinz Fischer had "very similar estimations" about the events in Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> It is to be regretted also that the Austrians allowed Russian President to threaten in their capital another sovereign country. ***In fact Putin's words that Russia "will always protect" ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine, and he "hopes that the armed forces will do not be needed"***<sup>3</sup> **should be taken as a threat.** One should remember that the previous state leader, before Putin, who had threatened with weapon to defend the rights of the compatriots, was Hitler, who justified with such arguments the annexation of Czech Sudeten, inhabited predominantly with the German-speaking population.

**Austrian authorities' warm welcome to Putin was rightly criticized by the European press**, in particular, by German 'Die Welt' and 'Frankfurter Rundschau', by Swiss 'Neue Zuercher Zeitung', by Polish 'Gazeta Wyborcza' and etc. 'Gazeta Wyborcza' rightly called on the EU ***"to remind Vienna that membership in the EU envisage some duties as well"***, and that the disruption of the common position towards Russia may negatively affect Austria."<sup>4</sup>

It is obvious, that the Vienna's decision to make separate agreement with Moscow resulted from the absence of strong EU policy on sanctions against the aggressor-state. Despite the endless stream of statements by the European politicians (including Angela Merkel) with threats to introduce the third level sanctions against Russian, one should agree with the expert of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies ***Taras Kuzio, that "the response of the EU, Canada and the United States was pretty poor."***<sup>5</sup> Swedish Foreign Minister ***Carl Bildt in his interview to «Die Welt» also admitted: "The fact remains that we still have not imposed real sanctions."***<sup>6</sup>

**The Kremlin skillfully manipulates with the European policy of the 'last warning', the deadlines of which are constantly moving ahead.** When the escalating of Russian aggression leads to the real threat of sanctions, Russia is making a small concession, and the sanctions are not imposed. Then Russia continues to escalate its aggression with a vengeance, being sure that there is nothing to fear until the next meeting of the EU governing bodies. At the eve of such a meeting Russia will make another small digression and thus will avoid sanctions again. Thus, on June 23 British Foreign Secretary William Hague threatened with sanctions if till the end of the week Russia does not show the support of the Poroshenko peace plan. The next day, on June 24 Mr. Putin asked the parliament to recall his right to bring troops into Ukraine. De facto, this decision does not mean anything, because Russia continues to send

<sup>2</sup> Путін заявив, що під Слов'янськом триває бій, і 7 днів для перемир'я замало. - <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/06/24/7030018>.

<sup>3</sup> Путин в Вене заявил о необходимости продления перемирия на востоке Украины: сделанного недостаточно. - <http://www.newsru.com/russia/24jun2014/putinprodlen.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Austria wycięła brzydki numer. - [http://wyborcza.pl/1,75968,16210524,Austria\\_wyciela\\_brzydki\\_numer.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,75968,16210524,Austria_wyciela_brzydki_numer.html).

<sup>5</sup> Тарас Кузьо: Порошенку нічого запропонувати Путіну. - <http://ukrainian.voanews.com/content/kuzio-peace-plane/1944126.html>.

<sup>6</sup> "Ganz einfach, Europa muss liefern". - <http://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article129387167/Ganz-einfach-Europa-muss-liefern.html>

unofficially the militants and heavy weapons to Ukraine. However, one can be sure that the European officials will be glad to take advantage of this pretext to postpone again the imposing of sanctions. Although the very fact of the presence of Russian tanks and 'Grad' weapons in Ukraine should be enough to impose the toughest sanctions against Russia.

The Association Agreements between the EU and Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova was signed at the Brussels summit on June 26-27. However, one may be also confident that **Russia will not stop its efforts to bring to naught all the potential benefits of these agreements for the signatory states, destroying their economies and undermining their sovereignty.** And it's not just about the geopolitical competition for the influence in the Eastern Europe, which takes place regardless of the European officials' unwillingness to admit it publicly. The question is whether the EU will continue to indulge the formation of a new fascist-like empire, which might be able soon to return Europe to the Middle Ages.



## UKRAINE – NATO



## KEY THEME ANALYSIS

**RUSSIAN AGGRESSION HAS CHANGED RADICALLY THE ATTITUDE OF THE UKRAINIANS TO THE ISSUE OF NATO MEMBERSHIP**

**Russian aggression against Ukraine was the main topic of the meetings of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on June 25, 2014 in Brussels.** The ministers agreed to set up three trust funds to support the security sector of Ukraine and to increase its defence capacity, particularly in the fields of command and control.

At the opening of the **NATO-Ukraine Commission meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers**, with the participation of the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin, the **NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said that "Ukraine is now at a historic turn, and NATO in this difficult time is on its side."**<sup>7</sup> Mr. Rasmussen said also that Russia "destroyed the trust" and "created a threat to the international order". He called on Moscow to stop destabilizing Ukraine, to create conditions for the implementation of the peace plan, to stop supporting armed separatists and to stop the flow of weapons and fighters through its borders.<sup>8</sup>

The words of support and the promises to help strengthening the defense – are important for Kyiv during the Russian aggression. However, Ukraine should join the mechanisms, which will minimize the very likelihood of the large-scale attack on it. On June 25, in Brussels, **Anders Fogh Rasmussen said that "NATO's door remains open and no third country has a veto over NATO enlargement."** Mr. Rasmussen said also that at the upcoming September's Wales Summit the NATO's Open Door Policy will "maintain its momentum". At the Summit the progress made by four current states aspirants – Georgia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia will be assessed. Allies will also develop a substantive package for Georgia that will help it "come closer to NATO". At the latest by the end of 2015 the Alliance will assess whether to invite Montenegro to join the NATO.<sup>9</sup> Despite the due respect to these countries, it is clear that Ukraine is much more important to the security of the region, and it makes greater contribution to the peacekeeping mission in the world.

**After the Russian aggression and the obvious incapacity of the Budapest security guarantees, Ukraine has every reason (and even obligation) to abandon its non-alignment policy and to look for more reliable security mechanisms. In today's world there are only two reliable**

<sup>7</sup> НАТО – на боці України, яка «перебуває на історичному зламі» – Расмуссен. - <http://ukrainian.voanews.com/content/nato-supports-ukraine/1944480.html>.

<sup>8</sup> НАТО на боці України, а Росію вважають загрозою для світу. - <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/25435248.html>.

<sup>9</sup> NATO Foreign Ministers agree Alliance's door to new members remains open. - [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-CF62A753-8C9B5BDA/natolive/news\\_111257.htm?selectedLocale=en..](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-CF62A753-8C9B5BDA/natolive/news_111257.htm?selectedLocale=en..)



**security mechanisms: the nuclear shield or the NATO membership.** Kyiv doesn't have real opportunities to resume the nuclear arsenal in the nearest future, moreover, such a decision would be critically perceived by the U.S. and the EU, and without their support Ukraine has almost no chances to withstand the Russian aggression. So the only option is a membership in the **North Atlantic Alliance, which, despite all the difficulties and partial loss of solidarity, still remains the only military-political bloc, against whose members Russia would not dare to start an open war with a large-scale invasion.**

The relevance of the Euro-Atlantic integration course is indicated by the sharp change of public opinion in Ukraine. If before the Russian aggression only about 20% Ukrainians supported joining NATO, but **in May 2014 for the first time the number of supporters for joining the Alliance (47.3%) predominated over those, who would vote against at the possible relevant referendum (36.2%).**<sup>10</sup> And one should keep in mind that the Ukrainian government has not started yet the informational campaign in favor of joining NATO. Such the public support is enough to abandon the policy of non-alignment and to restore officially the Euro-Atlantic integration course. The argument that such decision might irritate Moscow has no sense anymore due to the Russian war against Ukraine.

Of course, Germany and France might again speak out against Ukraine's joining NATO (German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said in June that he "doesn't see Ukraine as a part of the Western alliance in the foreseeable future"<sup>11</sup>), but in such a case Ukraine will at least have a good reason to demand from these countries a more decisive support against the current Russian aggression. Anyway, after the official announcement of the Ukraine's willingness to join NATO, any Russian invasion would be perceived as a definite challenge to NATO and would require more decisive actions to protect the partner state.

**At the same time Ukraine should increase the practical military cooperation with the countries, which also consider Russian as a threat.** Namely, they are some NATO member states – Poland, Romania, the Baltic States, a candidate for membership Georgia, as well as neutral states, in which after the Russian aggression the discussions on the necessity to join NATO were intensified – Sweden and Finland. Ukraine should also intensify the military and technical cooperation with the NATO members.

Kyiv should also make conclusions from the information wars against it, conducted by Russia, and to make sufficient efforts both in the international arena and in domestic politics – to convince the politicians and the public with reasonable arguments that Ukraine's membership in NATO will strengthen the security of the entire region. Ukrainian diplomats should convince their European colleagues to abandon the false stereotypes, imposed by Moscow, that NATO's enlargement policy provokes the Russian aggression. On the contrary, the compliant policy of Berlin, Paris and Washington, and their refusal to the give Membership Action Plans to Georgia and Ukraine in 2008 – generated in Moscow a feeling of the all-permissiveness, including the right to interfere in the internal affairs of these countries. Thus the impetus to the Russian revanchist policy has been given, and now it poses a danger to the whole Europe.

<sup>10</sup> «От революции к новой стране». Результаты социологического опроса Института Горшенина... - [http://institute.gorshenin.ua/researches/131\\_ot\\_revolyutsii\\_k\\_novoy\\_strane\\_.html](http://institute.gorshenin.ua/researches/131_ot_revolyutsii_k_novoy_strane_.html).

<sup>11</sup> Німеччина не бачить України в складі «західного альянсу». - <http://ukrainian.voanews.com/content/steinmeier-on-ua/1940362.html>.

## FOREIGN POLICY OF UKRAINE



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### ***MOSCOW ANSWERED TO THE KYIV'S CONCESSIONS WITH THE BUILDING-UP OF ITS TROOPS ON THE UKRAINIAN BORDER***

**On June 20, 2014 President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko presented his peace plan to resolve the situation in the East of the country.** The plan consists of 15 items, which provide the security guarantees for all the negotiating parties; the exemption from criminal liability of those who lay down arms and didn't committed serious crimes; creating a corridor for the Russian militants to return home; creating a 10-kilometer buffer zone at the Ukrainian-Russian border; release of the hostages; the decentralization of the authority; the early local and parliamentary elections; protection of the Russian language; job creation; restoration of the industry and of the social infrastructure in Donbas region.<sup>12</sup>

It should be noted that Poroshenko peace plan was more positively estimated by the EU, U.S. and the OSCE leaders than by Ukrainian politicians and experts, some of whom said that the plan includes too many concessions to separatists and to Moscow. The difference in the estimations of the peace plan resulted from the more realistic understanding by the Ukrainian politicians of the plan feasibility, given the apparent lack of Kremlin's interest in the de-escalation of the conflict.

**The first days after the unilateral suspension of the anti-terrorist operation by the Ukrainian side (on June 20) confirmed the fears of skeptics that only Kyiv was going to actually carry out the peace plan.** During the first three days of the promised ceasefire, the separatists 44 times violated the ceasefire regime by making attacks on the positions of the anti-terrorist forces.<sup>13</sup> Pro-Russian terrorists shot down MI-8 helicopter with 9 people being killed. The railway bridge near the Orehov city in Zaporizhzhya region was undermined, and the railways in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions were undermined for the several times.

Under the pretext of the new so-called 'sudden inspections' of the armed forces, Russia continues to accumulate its troops and armament at the border with Ukraine, and simultaneously to throw hundreds of militants with the heavy weapons into Ukraine, including tanks, armored vehicles, 'Grad' BM-21 vehicles and anti-aircraft installations. It should be noted that Ukraine had ceased fire without taking control over the significant part of the state border with Russia (eight checkpoints in Luhansk and

<sup>12</sup> Петро Порошенко представив в Донбасі мирний план з врегулювання ситуації на сході України. – <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/30566.html>.

<sup>13</sup> За три дні бойовики 44 рази порушили режим ненападу – Селезньов. – <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/06/25/7030041>.

Donetsk regions). This 'hole' is used every day by Russia to reinforce the militants, while their representatives pretend trying to negotiate a peace with the Ukrainian authorities.

**On June 23, in Donetsk, the negotiations started** with the participation of the representative of Ukraine (ex-President Leonid Kuchma), the self-proclaimed leaders of the Donetsk and Luhansk 'people's republic' (who are in fact the citizens of Russia), Russian Ambassador to Ukraine Mikhail Zurabov, representative of the OSCE Chairman Heidi Tagliavini, and pro-Russian politicians Viktor Medvedchuk and Oleh Tsarev. The very composition of the negotiating group indicates a clear dominance of the Russian part (actually its position is represented by all the participants, except for Mr. Kuchma and the OSCE representative). The greatest disadvantage is that by starting this unpromising venture the **Ukrainian side de facto recognized the Russian terrorists a party to the talks – it is merely what Moscow demanded for a long time.**

The only Russia's 'concession' in return was the decision of the Federation Council of June 25 to cancel the right of Vladimir Putin to bring the armed forces to Ukraine. However, this decision was most likely motivated not by the Ukrainian peace plan, but by Putin's reluctance to bring the situation to the third level sanctions. Besides, **the decision of the Federation Council in no way limits the Russia's mass transfer of militants to Ukraine, and after all it does not even prevent the full-scale invasion**, because the decision of the Federation Council of 2009, which gives President the indefinite right to use the force abroad, still remains in force.<sup>14</sup> The Federation Council is totally controlled by Mr. Putin, so it might give his any permission he wants just in a few minutes. One should not also exclude the probability of the invasion of Russian troops without any formal parliament permission, for example, if Russian militants, disguised in the Ukrainian uniform, carry out a provocation on the border, simulating an attack on the Russian territory. Then the invasion would be interpreted as a response to the aggression – under such pretext Hitler began his war against Poland.

**However, the most desirable scenario for the Kremlin is apparently the one, tested in Transnistria, Abkhazia and Ossetia, namely – the occupation under the pretext of the 'peacekeeping forces'.** No wonder that the so-called 'Peacekeeping brigade of the Central Military District' also took part in the last 'sudden inspection' of the Russian armed forces.<sup>15</sup> And the head of the State Duma Defense Committee Vladimir Komoyedov announced a proposal to introduce the so-called 'disjunctive forces' between the warring parties in Eastern Ukraine, apparently bear in mind the Russian 'peacekeepers'.<sup>16</sup>

The Kyiv peace plan can be successful only if the Ukrainian government is fully aware of the fact that the Kremlin uses talks only as a mean to win time for the reinforcement of the separatists. Putin's goal is to turn Donbas into a long-term conflict area, which would destabilize the entire Ukraine, and from the territory of which the separatists would carry out the attacks and bombings across the whole country, spreading the panic. The Kremlin hopes to ruin the Ukraine's economy and to eventually make the country so onerous and unwelcome partner for Europe, that the latter would ask Russia to take Ukraine under its control. Former Georgian President **Mikhail Saakashvili recalled that during the conflict in Abkhazia in 1992-1993 "Shevardnadze (the first president of Georgia) signed three peace agreements, and every time Russia used them to regroup the forces and to**

<sup>14</sup> «Ведомости»: Путин не лишится права ввода войск на территорию Украины. - [http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2014/06/25/n\\_6256945.shtml](http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2014/06/25/n_6256945.shtml)

<sup>15</sup> Миротворческая бригада ЦВО приведена в боевую готовность в рамках внезапной проверки. - <http://itar-tass.com/politika/1273203>.

<sup>16</sup> У Держдумі виступають за введення в Україну "роз'єднувальних сил". - <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/06/25/7030089>.



***capture the new territories."***<sup>17</sup>

Moscow respects only strength and bewares of only really tough economic sanctions. The Ukrainian side with the European partners should show the Kremlin that if its puppets don't respect the peace plan, including the release of hostages and laying down arms by the militants, Kyiv will have enough political will to carry out fast military operation, and Brussels and Berlin will have enough political will to introduce the sanctions, which will make the Russian intervention unnecessarily expensive.



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<sup>17</sup> Саакашвілі: Путін використає перемир'я для захоплення нових територій. - <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/06/24/7029932>.