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## UKRAINE – THE EUROPEAN UNION



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### ***MERKEL'S ATTEMPTS TO PERSUADE KYIV TO MAKE CONCESSIONS TO MOSCOW RESULTED IN THE INCREASING RUSSIAN AGGRESSION***

Ukrainian authorities tried to present Angela Merkel's visit to Kyiv on August 23, 2014 as a partner support. However, the reality proved that her intention was to persuade Kyiv to reconciliation with Moscow, even if it would require the significant concessions. Chancellor's visit took place on the eve of talks in Minsk, scheduled for the August 26 with the participation of Ukraine, the EU, Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. It is obviously that Putin knew about Merkel's real goals, therefore no wonder that two days after her departure from Kyiv the Russian troops began the massive invasion to the territory of Luhansk and Donetsk regions. This aggression was also aimed at persuading Kyiv to concessions. Against this background, the statements about the 'Merkel's plan' to rebuild the Donbas actually mean nothing, as well as the Chancellor's promises to allocate €500 million for this purpose. If the current trends go on, soon Frau Merkel will have to negotiate on the rebuilding of the region with Moscow instead of Kyiv.

With such a position of Germany, it was not surprising that the draft Conclusions of the **EU summit of August 30, 2014** did not provide the tougher sanctions against Russia.<sup>1</sup> 'Toothless' text with the traditional expression of the EU's "concern" was agreed by the permanent representatives of the Member States on August 27, when Russian troops were invading blatantly to the territory of Ukraine, their troop columns were capturing towns and destroying the Ukrainian army units. **Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko was forced to fly urgently to Brussels and to hold a dozen of meetings with the leaders of the influential European states with aim to make amendments to the text of the final document of the EU summit.** That included the request to the European Commission to prepare within a week the proposals for the further sanctions against Russia. Amended Summit Conclusions also call for the implementation of the President Poroshenko's peace plan, including the ceasefire; the re-establishment of the Ukrainian control over its border; halt of the flow of arms and military personnel from the Russian Federation into Ukraine; the urgent release of all hostages and prisoners, held by the separatists and by Russia.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, ***Russia's actions have not been clearly identified in the document as the military aggression or war.*** Only the Lithuanian President ***Dalia***

<sup>1</sup> Див.: [http://static.euractiv.com/files/euco\\_conclusions\\_financialtimes\\_29-8-14.pdf](http://static.euractiv.com/files/euco_conclusions_financialtimes_29-8-14.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Special meeting of the European Council (30 August 2014) – Conclusions. - [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/144538.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/144538.pdf).

**Grybauskaite** dared to call the things by their names: *"It is the fact that Russia is in a war state against Ukraine. That means it is in a state of war against a country which would like to be closely integrated with the EU. Practically Russia is in a state of war against Europe."*<sup>3</sup>

Petro Poroshenko and President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz agreed that **the Association Agreement and DCFTA between Ukraine and the EU** would be ratified synchronously in the Ukrainian and European Parliaments. The sense of this agreement will become clear on September, possibly during Jose Manuel Barroso's visit to Kyiv, scheduled for September 11/12 (is it a speeding up the ratification or conversely the delaying of it, taking into account the uneasy task to organize the simultaneous ratification?). In Brussels, the President of Ukraine also reached the agreements on financial assistance to Ukraine (€ 1 billion as loan and € 250 million as grant), as well as on the assistance with non-lethal weapons.

There was no answer to the President Poroshenko's request for the information exchange with the EU intelligence services. It is unknown also, how the promise of non-lethal weapons aid will be fulfilled, since the German government has been delaying for the several months its permission to supply 20 thousand armor vests to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense.

**Among important results of the EU summit was the election of the Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk as President of the European Council.** It provides more opportunities for the Kyiv's European integration plans and should help to shape a clearer position of the EU on the issue of Russian aggression. At the same time, we should not overestimate this appointment, because the decisions of the EU will continue to depend on the positions of Berlin and Paris. **The absence of the clear EU position in favor of Ukraine was indicated by another important appointment – Federica Mogherini was elected the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.** Her recent statement that Russia is no longer the EU strategic partner<sup>4</sup> should not mislead us, since at the position of Italian Foreign Minister Mrs. Mogherini supported the 'South Stream' and didn't express clear position on the Russian aggression to Ukraine.

There was also a disturbing information about the **possible blocking of the tighter sanctions against Russia by the four EU member states.** Apart from **Cyprus** (a favorite place for the post-Soviet criminal money laundering) they are the **three Visegrad Group countries – Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.** Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico stated bluntly that he "reserves a right to veto sanctions", because they are "meaningless and counterproductive."<sup>5</sup> On the one hand, this position indicates the political split in the Visegrad Group and the vulnerability of the post-Soviet bloc politicians to the Russian money. On the other hand, **the sanctions really do not work, because their current truncated form may harm the Russian economy only in the long run,** and they surely can't stop the present Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Polish Foreign Minister **Radoslaw Sikorski** in his interview to the 'Gazeta Wyborcza' told about Germany's responsibility for the EU failures in the **Russian-Ukrainian conflict:** "Germany has taken the responsibility for talks with President Putin, and we should be grateful to the Chancellor of Germany, but it seems that there is no success. This could mean that either the formula is false or there is a lack

<sup>3</sup> Russia 'practically' at war with Europe, says Lithuanian president as Ukraine accuses Putin's tanks of flattening border town. - <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2738356/Ukrainian-fighter-jet-shot-Russian-missile-combat-rebels.html>.

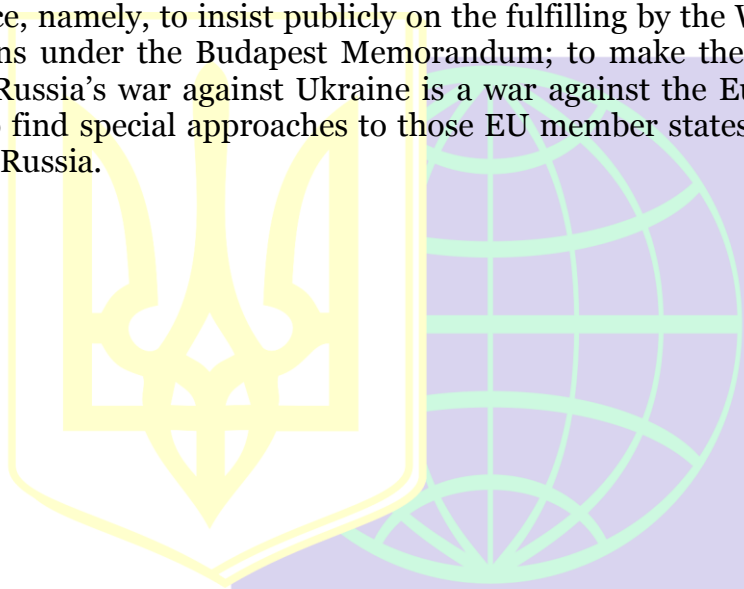
<sup>4</sup> EU decision on new sanctions for Russia by Friday: Italy's Mogherini. - <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/09/02/us-eu-russia-sanctions-idUSKBN0GX0RH20140902>.

<sup>5</sup> Slovak PM Slams Sanctions on Russia, Threatens to Veto New Ones. - <http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/slovak-pm-slams-sanctions-on-russia-threatens-to-veto-new-ones-584447>.

of arguments."<sup>6</sup> ***Such statements of Sikorski make Berlin consider the resolution of the current crisis as a matter of its reputation as well as a test for the Germany's ability to be the leader of the EU.***

Overall, despite the remaining strong pro-Russian lobby in the EU, **there is a trend to gradual strengthen of the Ukrainian position.** This occurs as a result of Ukrainian diplomatic activity, led by President Petro Poroshenko and by Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin, as well as a result of Putin's impudent actions, which confound his European counterparts and force them ***to 'recover their sight' after the previous blind Russophilism.*** The failure of talks in Berlin on August 17 with the participation of Ukrainian, Russian, German and French foreign ministers, as well as the large-scale invasion of Russian troops two days after the Merkel's visit to Kyiv and just in time of the negotiations in Minsk – all these actions put the supporters of the reconciliation with Russia in a very awkward position. Frau Merkel was eventually forced to admit publicly that "Russia tries to alter existing borders through threat of violence or even through use of violence";<sup>7</sup> and German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said about the inadmissibility of Russia's intention to annex a part of Ukrainian territory to ensure land access to Crimea.<sup>8</sup>

Kyiv still has to do some work to turn the growing EU political support into the effective assistance, namely, to insist publicly on the fulfilling by the Western countries of their obligations under the Budapest Memorandum; to make the European public understand that Russia's war against Ukraine is a war against the European Union at the same time; to find special approaches to those EU member states, which block the sanctions against Russia.



<sup>6</sup> Sikorski: umiemy zarządzać naszymi ambicjami. -

[http://wyborcza.pl/politykaekstra/1,140551,16574116,Sikorski\\_\\_umiemy\\_zarzadzac\\_naszymi\\_ambicjami.html](http://wyborcza.pl/politykaekstra/1,140551,16574116,Sikorski__umiemy_zarzadzac_naszymi_ambicjami.html).

<sup>7</sup> GermanForeignOffice. - <https://twitter.com/GermanyDiplo/status/506431357820866560>.

<sup>8</sup> Штайнмаєр застеріг Росію від анексії сухопутних коридорів до Криму. -

[http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/russia\\_may\\_continue\\_attempts\\_to\\_annex\\_ukrainian\\_territory\\_\\_steinmeier\\_325794](http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/russia_may_continue_attempts_to_annex_ukrainian_territory__steinmeier_325794).

## UKRAINE – NATO



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### ***WILL THE WALES SUMMIT FORCE NATO TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE SIMULATED SOLIDARITY AND REAL SECURITY?***

The NATO summit in Wales on September 4-5, 2014 will be a turning point in the history of the Alliance: it will be either reinforced, or will publicly show its inability to protect the member states. The main theme of the summit is Russian aggression against Ukraine. But the main question is not the assistance to Ukraine, but the strengthening of the NATO eastern borders, especially the Baltic States and Poland. The latter hoped that the NATO military bases will be established on their territories, but it seems that the 'old' Europe would not dare to take decisions contrary to the NATO-Russia Founding Act, despite the violation by Moscow of all the agreements and of the international law.

**On August 18, German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited Latvia with official aim to express the support, but in fact – to convince this Baltic state not to request for the founding of the NATO military bases on its territory.<sup>9</sup>** We can assume that the similar 'preventive' conversations were held with the Polish leaders also, as two days later the Polish Defence Minister Tomasz Siemoniak expressed his doubts that in Wales NATO could take a decision to establish the permanent base in his country due to "the reluctance of NATO to be involved in Eastern Europe at that level."<sup>10</sup> Besides Germany, such countries as France, Italy and Spain don't want to 'tease' the Kremlin.

**So, it is likely that instead of the expected bases, the summit will bring a decision to create the weapons warehouses and other infrastructure in the Baltic States, Poland and Romania,** sufficient to place several thousand of the **NATO rapid reaction force** in two days. The difference between the military bases and the weapons warehouses is clear, especially given that Russian army can get to Warsaw in three days (according to the opinion of the former Polish Deputy Defence Minister General Waldemar Skrzypczak).<sup>11</sup> Poles and Balts are probably bothered with the question of how quickly could NATO take the decision on sending its rapid reaction force in case if Russia launches a hybrid and undeclared war, disguised as a peoples uprising? The Poles remember how France and Britain 'fulfilled' their ally obligations in 1939, as well as they see how the Western countries 'fulfill' their commitments to

<sup>9</sup> Новая база НАТО: Меркель не переубедила Латвию. - <http://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/novaya-baza-nato-merkel-ne-pereubedila-latviyu.d?id=44865202>.

<sup>10</sup> Szef MON: Baz NATO w Polsce nie będzie. -

[http://wyborcza.pl/1,75478,16506702,Szef\\_MON\\_Baz\\_NATO\\_w\\_Polsce\\_nie\\_bedzie.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,75478,16506702,Szef_MON_Baz_NATO_w_Polsce_nie_bedzie.html).

<sup>11</sup> Gen. Skrzypczak: Polska nie ma Naczelnego Wodza. - <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/464715/Gen-Skrzypczak-Polska-nie-ma-Naczelnego-Wodza>.



Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum. Therefore Radoslaw Sikorski has ground for his suspicion that "some Western European countries perceive us as their anti-tank mine".<sup>12</sup>

**It is also unclear why NATO is preparing to defend against potential Russian aggression only in Eastern Europe, when we see a clear Kremlin's preparations for the future military confrontation with Canada in the Arctic?** Lack of the strategic planning is the obvious weak link of NATO, which deprives the Alliance of the ability to act proactively, and the block just responds tardily to the existing crises.

It is expected that at the Wales summit **Sweden, Finland, Australia, Georgia and Jordan will receive the status of NATO special partners**, providing the possibilities of enhanced intelligence cooperation and increasing participation in the joint trainings and in the rapid reaction force. At the same time, there are serious doubts that Georgia will receive the Membership Action Plan, despite its consistent fulfillment of the Alliance requirements and its significant contribution to the NATO missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, where Georgia did more than a number of existing member states.

**Ukrainian delegation, headed by Petro Poroshenko, will participate in the NATO summit.** A joint statement should be taken after the meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission, and support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine is likely to be expressed. The decisions on the advisory and technical assistance to strengthen Ukraine's defense capability are also expected, mainly through the mechanisms of the trust funds to improve the communication and information sharing, the retraining and resettlement of the military personnel, the logistics and standardization, and the cyber-security.

Ukraine has not officially declared its intention to become a NATO member, therefore it can't expect more help now. **Six months happened to be not enough for the new government to abolish the non-aligned status** (Ukrainian government finally prepared the relevant draft law just a few days before the Wales summit). **Even the Annual National Plan of NATO-Ukraine cooperation for the 2014 was approved only on September 2, 2014**, when the ANP for the 2015 had to be elaborated already. **Obtaining the status of the principal US ally outside NATO is delaying** and is expected to be adopted only by the end of the year<sup>13</sup>, while this status could deter further Russian intervention just now.

**Extraordinary meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission on August 29**, after a sharp rise of Russian aggression, resulted just in the next statement, condemning the actions of the Kremlin. However, an important signal was made by Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the press conference, when he commented on the Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk's statement on **Ukraine's intention to abolish the non-aligned status. NATO Secretary General said that NATO would respect the decision of Kyiv**; he also recalled the decision of the Bucharest Summit of 2008 that Ukraine would become a member of NATO, if it has the appropriate intention and meets the criteria.<sup>14</sup> The majority of Ukraine's population already supports the course for NATO membership, and the issue of meeting the criteria must be assessed with regard to the force majeure, as it was at the time of Greece and Turkey accession to NATO. That time these two countries quickly joined the Alliance to be protected from the possible Soviet aggression. The combat readiness of the Ukrainian

<sup>12</sup> Sikorski: umiemy zarządzać naszymi ambicjami. -

[http://wyborcza.pl/politykaekstra/1,140551,16574116,Sikorski\\_\\_umiemy\\_zarzadzac\\_naszymi\\_ambicjami.html](http://wyborcza.pl/politykaekstra/1,140551,16574116,Sikorski__umiemy_zarzadzac_naszymi_ambicjami.html).

<sup>13</sup> Статус союзника США поза НАТО Україна може отримати до кінця року – міністр. -

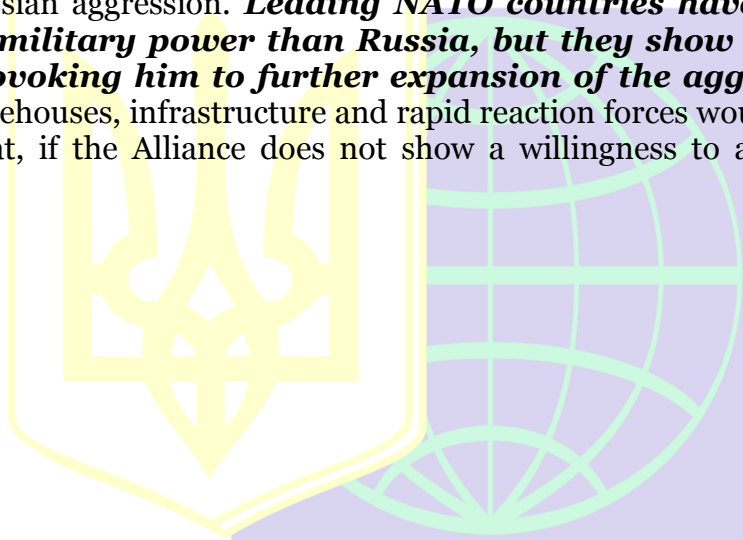
<http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/09/2/7036541>.

<sup>14</sup> NATO Secretary General statement after the extraordinary meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission. - [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-CF62A753-8C9B5BDA/natolive/news\\_112210.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-CF62A753-8C9B5BDA/natolive/news_112210.htm?selectedLocale=en).

army was proved in the unequal battles against the elite Russian forces; and not every current member of NATO can do that.

The request of the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin for the **military assistance from NATO members has got a positive answer only from Croatia**, which expressed its willingness to provide Ukraine with 14 Mi-8MTV-1 military helicopters. **Poland** reported that it can provide military assistance after the Wales Summit. In contrast, Angela Merkel once again said against the providing military assistance to Ukraine, despite the fact that **Germany** provides such assistance to the Iraqi Kurds. Obviously, the problem is not only about the fact that Ukraine is not a member of NATO (Iraq is not a member of the Alliance also). The main problem is the 'Berlin Wall', which still stands in the minds of the leaders of 'old' Europe, and everything to the East of this 'wall' they still consider to be a Russian zone of interest. But ***if NATO doesn't help Kyiv to stop Russian aggression in the Ukrainian land, then a year or two later the Alliance will face the question of how to stop Putin's troops on the territory of the Baltic States***. And then Germany and France will have to sacrifice not only some economic interests, but the lives of their citizens also.

The main question of the Wales Summit will obviously remain unanswered. It is whether the NATO countries have sufficient political will and solidarity for a decisive rebuff to the Russian aggression. ***Leading NATO countries have several times stronger total military power than Russia, but they show a panic fear of Putin, thus provoking him to further expansion of the aggression***. All that new weapons warehouses, infrastructure and rapid reaction forces would not reduce the level of the threat, if the Alliance does not show a willingness to act decisively and hardily.



## FOREIGN POLICY OF UKRAINE



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### ***WILL THE MINSK TALKS LEAD TO PEACE WITHOUT THE SURRENDER OF UKRAINE?***

In August 2014 Ukraine significantly surpassed the separatists in Donbas and had a chance to start talks in Minsk, scheduled for August 26, from the strong positions. However, the Kremlin's steps to strengthen its own negotiating position turned out to be better armed. **After testing the U.S., EU and NATO response to the invasion of the 'humanitarian convoy' into Ukraine on August 22, Putin became convinced that he could safely increase the scale of aggression.** The Kremlin crossed the next 'red line' by direct invasion to Ukraine of hundreds of Russian military tracks, accompanied by a dozens of the armored vehicles. The Western traditional 'response', consisting in the "concerned" statements, was correctly considered by Mr. Putin as the lack of the intention to actually support Ukraine (e.g. by weapons supply of or at least by increasing sanctions against Russia). Consequently just in a few days later thousands of Russian soldiers and hundreds of armored vehicles and tanks with air support launched a massive offensive against the Ukrainian armed forces on several directions at once.

Under such conditions **the negotiations in Minsk** started. Petro Poroshenko offered Vladimir Putin to support his peace plan, but Russian president answered that Moscow is not involved in the events in Donbas. Mr. Putin also complained that Ukraine's Association Agreement with the EU harms the Russian economy, and insisted on changes to the text of the Association Agreement. Putin said that Ukraine should negotiate a ceasefire with the representatives of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk 'republics'. Such position is very comfortable for Moscow, because the decisions for the separatists are taken in the Kremlin, but the responsibility for the failures of the agreements lies on the Donetsk and Luhansk 'republics'.

**The real results of the Minsk talks are the following: the agreement to resume the functioning of the trilateral contact group to address the situation in the Donbas, and the agreement to resume the gas negotiations. In fact, it is a return to the status quo, which existed at the beginning of summer.**

'Peaceful' statements of Putin were accompanied by the massive attacks of Russian regular army, and before the meeting of the **Ukraine and separatists contact group in Minsk on September 2**, the Ukrainian troops had lost several towns and hundreds of dead, wounded and prisoners. Leaders of the Donetsk and Luhansk



'republics' said to the ex-President Leonid Kuchma, who represented Ukraine in Minsk, that the territories, controlled by them, would never be a part of Ukraine, even in the form of federation. Perhaps such position is an element of bargaining with the expectations that Kyiv answers with the proposition of federalization, which was the original requirement of Russia, because the Kremlin considers the Donbas as a source of destabilization, the economic burden and factor, which prevents Ukraine's integration to the EU and NATO.

**We should also keep in mind that the ultimate goal of Russia is the overland route to Transnistria or at least to Crimea.** That is why the Russian army breaks the way to Mariupol, preparing attack on the city from the land and from the sea. So the Minsk talks can be just a red herring on the eve of the NATO summit, while the Russian army is preparing to attack.

**The so called 'Putin's peace plan', proposed by him on September 3, in a telephone conversation with Petro Poroshenko, may be a red herring also.** Seven points of the Putin's plan include: the cessation of active offensive operations of the Donetsk and Luhansk 'republics' (actually of the Russian Army); the withdrawal of the Ukrainian armed forces from Donetsk and Luhansk; the cease-fire; not using of the combat aircraft; the exchange of all prisoners; opening of humanitarian corridors for refugees and humanitarian goods (presumably Russian); sending repair crews to restore the infrastructure of Donbas. **And Putin, of course, assumes no responsibility for the fulfilling of these agreements by the separatists.**

**When you negotiate with Putin you should be prepared for the worst scenario.** Therefore the statement of the French President Francois Hollande on the suspension of the 'Mistral' supply to Russia is the first serious step in the right direction. Only the threat of real sanctions, which could collapse the Russian economy in the short term (e.g., to exclude Russia from the international payment systems and to deprive ruble of the convertibility), and rapid strengthening of the Ukrainian army with the modern weapons – can stop the Russian aggression. Kyiv also need to conduct more realistic policy: to consolidate on the existing positions; to delimit the Ukraine-controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions from the territories, captured by Russian troops; to strengthen the Ukraine-Russia borders with the help of the EU and NATO; and to prepare for the long and difficult process of the regaining control over the rest of Donbas.