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UKRAINE – THE EUROPEAN UNION



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

THE TENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE YALTA EUROPEAN STRATEGY (YES) HIGHLIGHTED THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND EXPOSED THE PROBLEMS ON UKRAINE'S WAY TO EUROPE

The anniversary Yalta European Strategy Meeting (September 19-22, 2013) has become one of the most successful international events held in Ukraine in recent years. It was almost the first time the chief Ukrainian officials and opposition leaders, together with EU officials and famous politicians from the U.S. and other countries, held a public discussion on the conditions of European integration for Ukraine and estimated Kyiv's progress in the implementation of the appropriate obligations. It was significant that **no participant of the discussion doubted the European choice of Ukraine**, except for the Russian president's adviser Sergei Glazyev.

The Yalta meeting provided an opportunity to make a number of conclusions about the trends that will shape the European prospects of Ukraine in the near future:

1. **Russia has demonstrated its unwillingness to maintain a competitive open discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of Ukraine's integration into the European Union or the Customs Union.** In contrast to the EU, represented in Yalta at the highest level, Russia sent only presidential adviser Sergei Glazyev to discuss the integration prospects of Ukraine. The latter narrowed down all his 'arguments' to intimidating the EU with the spurious claim that they would need to spend €25-35 billion to save Ukraine from 'default', which, in Glazyev's opinion, would be caused by the Association Agreement and DCFTA. So it is clear that Russia still relies more on backroom deals, blackmail and threats than on serious arguments that can be objectively and publicly discussed.

2. The high level of EU representatives and their statements **indicated the EU's focus on signing the Association Agreement and DCFTA at the Vilnius summit.** Herewith, EU officials made it clear that **Kyiv still needs to perform its obligations. Significant attention of European**

politicians to the Tymoshenko issue indicated that their willingness to compromise should not be interpreted as consent to remove the issue from the agenda. *French Ambassador to Ukraine Alan Remy* told 'The Day' newspaper that the Tymoshenko case remains a major unsolved problem: "I saw in Yalta the consensus of the Europeans on what should be done for the signing ... And all of them clearly called for permission for Tymoshenko to go abroad for treatment ... If Mrs. Tymoshenko is released to be treated abroad, then everything we have promised will be done."¹

3. Participation of a number of influential Ukrainian oligarchs in YES proved their commitment to the course of European integration. Herewith, the principle position of Petro Poroshenko and his tough discussion with Sergei Glazyev indicated that even big Ukrainian businessmen, for whom the Russian market was very important, no longer wish to adjust to the Kremlin's political demands and prefer to refocus on the markets with more transparent conditions. It is an important change in priorities, because the previous focus of large businesses on the Russian market was exactly the force that had been strengthening the Russian vector of Ukraine's foreign policy during the previous two decades.

4. Viktor Yanukovich's speech at YES, as well as his discussions with European leaders (especially with Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė) **indicated the confidence of the Ukrainian government in signing the Association Agreement in Vilnius.** This should cause concern, because such a position encourages complacency and eliminates vigilance, despite the fact that the opponents of the European integration of Ukraine (both within the country and abroad) might resort immediately to the most radical measures to frustrate the Agreement.

5. A number of Ukrainian opposition leaders demonstrated in their speeches at YES that the internal political struggle and the presidential elections of 2015 were of more priority for them than European integration. Arseniy Yatsenyuk and Vitali Klitschko hinted in their speeches that the current Ukrainian government would be unable to fulfil the terms of the Association Agreement and DCFTA. It seems that the European politicians better understand the importance of constructive dialogue between the Ukrainian government and the opposition. Commissioner Štefan Füle called on the latter for cooperation: "I hope ... that the European agenda will always stand above partisan interests."²

Thus, the premature victorious mood in Kyiv is the main threat to the successful signing of the Association Agreement in Vilnius, because such a mood might prevent those in power from focusing on the implementation of the necessary criteria, and might provoke a false illusion as if some issues (such as the Tymoshenko case) are not too

¹ Алєн Ремі: «Що рішучіше діятиме Україна, то кращими будуть її відносини з Росією...». - <http://www.day.kiev.ua/uk/article/den-planeti/alen-remi-shcho-rishuchishe-diyatime-ukrayina-krashchimi-budut-yiyi-vidnosini-z>

² Європейська повістка дня вище вузьких політичних амбіцій, - Штефан Фюле. - <http://yes-ukraine.org/ua/news/evropeyska-povistka-dnya-vishche-vuzkih-politichnih-ambitsiy-shtefan-fyule>

significant anymore. The EU's favourable attitude should not be incorrectly read as a willingness to give up on the fundamental issues. Having won the elections in Germany, Angela Merkel no longer needs urgently victories in the international arena; therefore *Berlin's position on the Tymoshenko case is likely to become more rigid*. And after *Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made a statement in September concerning the intention to implement a package of democratic reforms* (required by the EU to continue the negotiations on integration) – the EU no longer needs to prove its attractiveness even to partners with a strong economy like Ankara. Therefore Kyiv should not count on any further concessions.

Kyiv should not exclude the possibility that *Moscow might find arguments for a number of Ukrainian MPs (both from the ruling Party of Regions and the opposition parties) to disrupt further voting on European integration laws*. The competent Ukrainian authorities should also be ready to prevent possible provocations on the most sensitive issues for the EU, such as intolerance of racist or sexual orientation. In late September, Ukraine already became the subject of a 'neo-fascist' scandal: based on the information of FARE (Football Against Racism in Europe), FIFA issued a decision to punish the Football Federation of Ukraine and the national football team for using allegedly Nazi symbols during the match Ukraine versus San Marino in Lviv. Strict penalties for not too convincing evidence of guilt of the Ukrainian fans has already provoked anti-European statements from some Ukrainian politicians.³ In turn this may lead to a critical reaction in Europe, especially if the hysteria around the so-called 'neo-fascism' is heightened by the so-called 'anti-fascists' from among the Customs Union supporters.

³ Україну покарали у футболі через сплановану провокацію? - <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/25122541.html>

UKRAINE – NATO



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

WILL THE INCREASING PRACTICAL COOPERATION BETWEEN UKRAINE AND NATO LEAD TO A NEW KIND OF POLITICAL COOPERATION?

Sending the ‘Hetman Sahaidachny’ frigate, Ka-27 helicopter and a special purpose Ukrainian Naval Force group towards the Horn of Africa to join NATO’s operation Ocean Shield – was one of the key themes of Ukraine-NATO cooperation in the second half of September. According to the decision of the North Atlantic Council, Ukraine is the first partner nation – contributor to this counter-piracy mission.

Ukraine’s participation in operation Ocean Shield helps to achieve several goals:

- The Ukrainian Naval Force gets important experience of participation in international security operations;
- The Ukrainian Naval Force strengthens in practice the level of interoperability with NATO and EU Navies;
- Ukraine significantly increases its international prestige, because not every country is able to participate in such an operation.

In addition, Ukraine assumes all costs associated with its participation in this operation (USD 11 million)⁴, and thereby is a full contributor.

In September, servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine together with their colleagues from NATO countries Canada, Poland and Lithuania – took part in **multinational tactical exercises ‘Maple Arch 2013’**, held at the International Peacekeeping and Security Center of the Hetman Petro Sahaydachnyi Army Academy in Lviv.

Ukraine continues also to work closely with NATO on military reform. In the second half of September, a series of measures took place in this respect:

- On September 16, in Kyiv, under the chairmanship of the First Deputy Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine Oleksandr

⁴ Участь українського фрегата в операції НАТО коштуватиме 89 мільйонів. - <http://www.unian.ua/news/596545-na-uchast-ukrajinskogo-fregata-v-operatsiji-nato-pide-89-milyoniv-griven.html>

Medvedko, there was held a Coordinating Council for implementation of the NATO Program for Professional Development of Civilian Personnel of the security sector in Ukraine;

- On September 17-20, NATO experts on the Planning and Review Process (PARP) visited Ukraine to discuss the draft Concluding document (Assessment) on Ukraine's participation in PARP in 2013 and on the implementation of the defense and security parts of the NATO-Ukraine Annual National Program;

- On September 26, at NATO headquarters in Brussels, under the chairmanship of the Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy James Appathurai, a meeting was held of the NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group on military reform; the Ukrainian delegation was headed by the Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Admiral Ihor Kabanenko.

So, the NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow was correct in his video address to the International Conference "The Role of International Organizations in the National Security of Ukraine", held on September 17, at the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine. **Mr. Vershbow said that despite the Ukrainian government's decision of 2010 to no longer seek to join NATO, "over the past three years, our cooperation has become arguably more intensive and productive than ever before."**⁵ The NATO Deputy Secretary General also named Ukraine "a major contributor" to security operations led by NATO, the UN, the EU and the OSCE.

Such appreciation, made by the Deputy Secretary General of the world's most powerful security organization, is very important. However, Kyiv should also take into account reasonable opinion of the Ukrainian expert **Volodymyr Horbach, who said at the same conference that Ukraine did not use the international instruments to ensure its own safety:** *"The Alliance benefits mostly from Ukraine-NATO cooperation, that's why they appreciate this cooperation and emphasize this each time. But this in no way makes Ukraine closer to the benefits of full membership in NATO, because the contributor to security is not always its recipient as well, and the Ukrainian case is a striking example."*⁶

Let's illustrate the expert's opinion with a fresh example: at the 68th session of the UN General Assembly Viktor Yanukovich, the President of Ukraine with its 46 million people, made a number of important proposals for global security; while the Prime Minister of Montenegro, which has only little more than half a million people, said that his country expects to become a

⁵ Video address by NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow to the Conference on International Organisations and the National Security of Ukraine (Kyiv, Ukraine). - http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_103022.htm

⁶ Інструментарій для гарантування національної безпеки. - <http://www.day.kiev.ua/uk/article/den-planeti/instrumentariy-dlya-garantuvannya-nacionalnoyi-bezpeki>

member of NATO soon.⁷ The contribution of these two countries to global and regional security is disparate; but in a few years the Montenegrins will enjoy the security guarantees of the strongest armies in the world, while the Ukrainians will continue to count only on their own armed forces, the reduction of which goes on.



⁷ Черногория рассчитывает на скорое вступление в НАТО. - http://rian.com.ua/world_news/20130928/338682467.html

FOREIGN POLICY OF UKRAINE



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

THE HIGHLIGHTS OF UKRAINE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE 68TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Ukrainian issues were not among the key questions of the 68th session of the UN General Assembly (September 24 – October 1, 2013), but still some moments of the Ukrainian delegation's visit to New York were worth noting.

1. Viktor Yanukovich took advantage of his speech at the General Debate of the UN General Assembly, on September 24, to convey to the world's public some important messages, including:

- To confirm the European choice of Ukraine and to assure the audience that the issue of signing the Association Agreement has almost been resolved. In support of this message he said: *"I strongly believe that the signing in the coming November of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU including creation of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area will become an important tool in raising the welfare of Ukrainian citizens..."*;

- Trying to reassure Russians that European integration is not aimed against them, and that *"Ukraine makes its contribution to the project of the Greater Europe that unites the interests and development goals of the countries from the West to the East of our continent"*;

- To remind the nuclear states on the security assurances, provided to Ukraine by Russia, the US and Britain in the Budapest Memorandum, and "confirmed later by France and China";

- To call for support for Ukraine's non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council for the period of 2016-2017; and to *call for providing the Eastern European countries with one additional seat of non-permanent membership if the Security Council is reform^{ed} and enlarged⁸*.

Initiative on Ukraine's non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council for the period of 2016-2017 is especially important with regard to the presidential elections in Ukraine to be held in 2015, because every winner will inevitably face the pressure of Moscow, testing

⁸ Statement by President of Ukraine at General Debate of 68th session of UN General Assembly. - <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/28866.html>

his/her readiness for unilateral concessions (as it was in 2010-2012). Even non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council significantly enhances the opportunities to protect national interests. And the initiative to provide the Eastern European countries with one additional seat of non-permanent membership might significantly help to counter the attempts to turn the region into a 'buffer zone' or a 'zone of Russia's privileged interests'.

Yanukovych's statement on the final choice in favour of Association with the EU might contribute to the achievement of the several objectives:

- To convince the political opponents in Ukraine (including some members of the ruling Party of Regions), that the final choice has already been made and it is not a subject to revision;
- To make it clear to Moscow that Kyiv has already made its choice and has announced it before the whole world, so further pressure is meaningless;
- To affect psychologically the EU member states, shaping world public opinion that the issue of the Association Agreement has already been positively resolved de facto, and in Vilnius this decision will simply be fixed de jure.

2. The facts, which Viktor Yanukovych could not afford to say at the General Assembly session, for obvious reasons, were stated in **Mikheil Saakashvili's** speech: *"I spoke yesterday to my colleague Victor Yanukovych; his government is under constant attack and pressure from Russia and that's what's happening on a daily basis ahead of the European Summit in Vilnius"*. The Georgian President sharply criticized Russia for the "pressures and threats" against Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan and Armenia aimed at persuading them to join the Eurasian Union, while this *"Russian project is doomed to fail"*⁹. The resentful Russian delegation left the General Assembly conference room, but nobody supported this demarche.

3. At the meeting with the 'Group of friends of Ukraine' – the Presidents of Poland, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Slovenia, which took place within the UN General Assembly session, **Viktor Yanukovych made it clear that the Tymoshenko issue might be resolved in October**. In particular, he said: *"The (Cox-Kwasniewski) mission is working right now, and it is very important ... Today, there is a common viewpoint on many issues. It will be known when the mission draws its conclusions, closer to the meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on October 21."*¹⁰

4. Viktor Yanukovych, at his meeting with NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in New York, confirmed that "Ukraine fulfils all obligations on cooperation with NATO", and discussed preparations

⁹ Saakashvili's Speech at the UN General Assembly – 2013. - <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=26491>

¹⁰ Yanukovych promises Ukraine's friends to solve the issue with Tymoshenko by October 21. -

<http://ukrainianweek.com/News/90107>

for the NATO-Ukraine Summit to be held in 2014.¹¹ The fact that the chief Ukrainian officials have ceased the practice of timidly concealing the cooperation with NATO, and begun to speak openly about fulfilment of the corresponding obligations – indicates the readiness to develop cooperation which might eventually get political formalization. And given the increasing pressure and threats from Moscow, Kyiv would appreciate it if the Alliance expresses at the Summit of 2014 its full support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

5. The meeting of the GUAM Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and the GUAM – USA Ministerial Meeting took place within the framework of the 68th Session of the General Assembly (the United States was represented by Victoria Nuland, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs). The GUAM – United States Joint Statement was issued, in which "parties emphasized the significance of the Eastern Partnership Vilnius Summit (November 28-29, 2013) and expressed their support of the European aspirations of the GUAM member states."¹² Given the common desire of the GUAM member states to deepen cooperation with the EU, as well as their common problems with pressure from Russia, cooperation within the organization should be intensified.

Thus Ukraine is gradually moving away from the strategy of asymmetric double integration to Russia and Europe, declared by Viktor Yanukovych in 2010, and is returning to the traditional Euro-Atlantic orientation in its foreign policy, while trying at the same time to recover its lost influence in the Black Sea region.

¹¹ President: Ukraine fulfills all obligations on cooperation with NATO. - <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/28876.html>

¹² GUAM – United States Joint Statement (New York, September 26, 2013). - <http://guam-organization.org/node/1498>