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## UKRAINE – THE EUROPEAN UNION



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### ***UKRAINE WITHSTOOD DEFENCE ON THE DIPLOMATIC FRONT OF RUSSIAN HYBRID WAR IN PACE***

Last week in Strasbourg a session of The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) was held. The functioning of the democratic institutions of Ukraine was one of the key issues of the session. Despite the difficulties and the influence of pro-Russian deputies, the Ukrainian delegation was able to withstand the defence on this diplomatic front of the Russian hybrid war against Ukraine and achieve positive results.

On January 24 PACE adopted a resolution drafted by Volodymyr Arieu. The resolution was entitled 'Attacks against journalists and media freedom in Europe'. 25 amendments were suggested to the document. However, in the context of Ukraine, the resolution contains no criticism, notes reforms in the media sector and calls on Kyiv to investigate the murder of Pavlo Sheremeta. This document also urges Russia to release O. Sentsov, R. Sushchenko and drop its criminal charges for 'separatism' against a number of Crimean journalists because of their position on the illegal occupation of Crimea [1]. On January 25 the Assembly adopted a resolution 'Functioning of the democratic institutions in Ukraine'. The resolution draft was prepared by PACE Monitoring Committee reporters on Ukraine Jordi Xucla (Spain) and Alex E Fischer (Germany). 106 of 126 deputies present in the PACE hall voted in favour of the resolution.

Despite the absence of Kremlin representatives in the assembly hall, the Ukrainian delegation had to repel the attacks of the so-called 'friends of Russia'. They suggested 8 amendments including the allegation that Ukraine is now in a condition of civil war. From the side of these radical left-oriented groups arose the initiative to amend the law on de-communization, to found the representation of the occupied territories in Parliament; they also used manipulations of the meanings of the terms. All mentioned above are evidence of an **ideological hybrid war** waged by Russia against Ukraine on all fronts, including diplomatic.

Recall, on January 23, Pedro Agramunt was re-elected for a second term to the presidency of PACE. He encouraged his colleagues to resume the Russian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly. However, he met resistance from the major political forces in Europe. According to the Declaration № 621 'Credentials of the Russian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly' following the illegal annexation of Crimea and military aggression in Donbas, the Parliamentary Assembly suspended certain rights of the Russian delegation and put forward a clearly defined list of demands under which this decision could be reviewed [2]. It is known that none of these claims has been implemented by Russia. In addition, Russia excluded the visits of State Duma deputies

to PACE session in 2017 from the plan of international activity of the lower house of parliament. [3]

As a result of the PACE session, pro-Russian deputies failed to adopt the amendments to the resolution text which could lead to withdrawing the responsibility of the Russian Federation for the armed aggression in the Donbas and reinforce the Kremlin agents of influence in Ukraine. The amendments concerning the Communist Party of Ukraine and substitution of condemnation of Russian aggression in Donbas with the term 'civil war' were not adopted. This fact shows that European political forces are supporting Ukraine. [4]

**However, a number of problem issues are still current for Ukraine, including corruption, and reforming the electoral system.** 'In this context The Assembly is concerned that the pace of the fight against corruption is too slow, and concrete results are too limited', [5] the document says.

In general, this resolution is *quite fair to Ukraine*. It points to a number of specific changes in the implementation of reforms, as well as the main problems. The key resolution statement is '... These reforms are taking place in a challenging environment as a result of the Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea'. [5]

The sequence of PACE in supporting Ukraine is significant, despite the huge turbulence caused by Russia. **However, it is logical to note that the threat from Russia applies not only to Ukraine and for Europe start to understand the situation.** The fact that the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation allowed non-compliance with the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in the case of YUKOS, which was also discussed at the PACE session, once again proves Russian neglect of international law and order. A very important message of the resolution is contained in the last paragraph where the Assembly encourages all relevant bodies of the Council of Europe to further provide Ukraine with necessary expert assistance aimed at strengthening democratic institutions, to continue monitoring the situation in and around Ukraine and to take all possible steps to make the Russian Federation uphold its obligations under international law and international commitments in order to ensure respect for human rights in annexed Crimea and the release of all Ukrainian political prisoners and illegally detained persons. [5]

*Thus, despite the powerful pro-Russian lobby in PACE, the Ukrainian delegation was able to withstand the defence on the diplomatic front of the Russian hybrid war against Ukraine and achieve positive results. Pro-Russian deputies failed to adopt the amendments to the resolution text which could lead to withdrawing responsibility from the Russian Federation for the armed aggression in the Donbas and its substitution for the term 'civil war in Ukraine' and actions which could reinforce the Kremlin agents of influence in Ukraine. Among the delegates to PACE there is a growing awareness that Russian hybrid warfare is a threat not only to Ukraine but also to European values, and in fact the main aim of PACE is to protect these values.*

1. <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2017/01/24/7060625/>
2. <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=23245&lang=en>
3. <http://tass.ru/politika/3947077>
4. <http://dt.ua/POLITICS/parye-priynvala-rezolyuciyu-po-ukrayini-bez-popravok-druziv-putina-231204.html>
5. <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=23453&lang=en>

## UKRAINE – NATO



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### **THE FUTURE OF NATO DEPENDS ON TRUMP'S POSITION**

The activities of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are not under simple terms. Europe and America are currently undergoing profound changes in political preferences. The situation is complicated by events in the Middle East.

The new political leader of the United States is one of the major players in NATO and his commitment to Russia could change the balance of interests within the Alliance. It is known that NATO was founded after World War II to protect the West from the Soviet Union. The unity and solidarity of NATO is based on the key principles of collective defence – ‘an attack on any NATO member is considered as an attack on all’. In the summer, during the presidential election campaign D.Trump said if Russia suddenly invades one of the Baltic countries, the United States will come to help only in the case if defined, ‘whether they have fulfilled their obligations to us’.[1] In addition, Trump has said that NATO is outdated and the state members simply use American protection and power.

Jon Clemmensen, NATO expert from the University of Southern Denmark, mentioned that Trump's reluctance to honour his commitments to the alliance could plunge NATO into crisis. ‘Although NATO is the strongest military alliance in world history, it is basically built on trust – the allies trust that the other allies will honour their commitments. Once that trust is gone, the whole building can come crumbling down...’.[2]

Obviously, the United States has moved away from the main pillar of its foreign policy - supporting EU integration and European security, where NATO plays a key role. After the visit of British Prime Minister Theresa May to the US, the situation with Donald Trump's position to NATO became clearer. After the talks at the White House parties reaffirmed their commitment to the Alliance. However, Trump was not in a hurry to agree with the thesis of May about maintaining sanctions against Russia until the Minsk agreement is fully implemented by Russia. Trump said that it is too early to talk about the prospects for the lifting of sanctions, but added that ideally, it is good to have great relations with all countries, including Russia and China. [3] Perhaps Trump is trying to use NATO as a tool to curb the influence of China and ISIS, because he believes they are the main threat to US national interests and security. And in this sense he sees Russia as an ally in combating Islamic terrorism and confrontation with China.

*Taking into consideration Trump's unpredictability, it is quite difficult to make some forecast about the future of NATO and the role of US there. Hopefully, after a meeting with the British Prime Minister, the US President can realize what can happen in the case of NATO's collapse. In the case of strengthening bilateral relations between*

*the US and Russia, the Kremlin will not miss an opportunity to test the reaction of NATO on solidarity, using their methods of hybrid warfare, propaganda and so on. In addition, it is worth mentioning the study "The top threats to watch 2017", [4] published by the Council for International Relations. According to the American analysts, military conflict between Russia and NATO is in first place on the list of threats in 2017.*

1. <https://politeka.net/ua/398591-stavlennya-trampa-do-nato-poradualo-vyrobnykiv-zbroyi/#>
2. <http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/559324/russia-putin-end-of-nato-donald-trump-us-president>
3. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38777263>
4. <http://www.cfr.org/conflict-prevention/cfr-survey-ranks-russia-nato-confrontation-north-korea-crisis-among-top-potential-conflicts-2017/p38574>





## FOREIGN POLICY OF UKRAINE



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### ***WHAT OUTCOME FOR UKRAINE WILL PETRO POROSHENKO'S TOUR TO EUROPEAN COUNTRIES BRING?***

The beginning of 2017 was marked by a series of visits of the President of Ukraine to European countries, including Estonia, Finland, and Germany. On January 23, during the visit of Petro Poroshenko to Estonia, the President of the Republic of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid stressed that supporting Ukraine remains one of the priorities of the foreign policy of Estonia. Cooperation on the issues of development will continue to focus on promoting good governance and democracy, business environment and education, with an emphasis on information and communication technologies. Humanitarian assistance will continue to focus on the easing of the humanitarian crisis in eastern Ukraine. [1]

On January 24, the President of Ukraine paid a visit to the Republic of Finland. Following the meeting with President Sauli Niinistö, the sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding on energy efficiency, renewable energy and alternative fuels. Poroshenko expressed full readiness for Ukraine's accession to the Centre for Combating Hybrid Threats in Helsinki: 'Unfortunately, daily Ukraine receives the best experience in the world of overcoming the hybrid threat, and it can be useful to our European partners'. During the meeting the issues of flagrant Russian violations of human rights in the Donbas and Crimea were discussed. The President of Ukraine appealed to the President of Finland to increase pressure on the Russian side to release the Ukrainian hostages from the occupied territory and from Russian prisons. [2]

On January 30, the President of Ukraine held an official meeting with the Chancellor of Germany. Angela Merkel emphasised the implementation of reforms in Ukraine. Petro Poroshenko expressed his hope 'to strengthen energy solidarity and energy cooperation between Ukraine and Germany' and to discuss common approaches to projects such as Nord Stream-2 and Opal. The Ukrainian President also stressed the need to discuss the issue of opposition to Kremlin hybrid propaganda which affects not only Germany and Ukraine but also the entire European Union, the United States and other countries. [3] In addition, as one of the leaders of Europe, Germany can be like a unifying mechanism that will meet these challenges.

Thus, the key and common issues during all these visits were: Russian aggression; Kremlin hybrid warfare; the issue of the continuation of sanctions against Russia; Minsk Agreement implementation; the prospects of European and Euro-

Atlantic integration of Ukraine and the process of its internal reforms; cooperation between the countries in the framework of international organizations; and energy issues.

*Several meetings of the President of Ukraine indicate that Ukraine is searching for the support of European leaders with the aim of overcoming the critical issues in the conditions of war with Russia and general instability in the world. Nowadays the Baltic states are the closest allies for Ukraine, who use every opportunity to demonstrate their solidarity in their position towards Ukraine. Estonia has the closest ties with the Nordic countries and can promote Ukraine's interests in this region. Finland is known for being a neutral country. Taking into account the not very clear policy of the new US President, Finland can become a platform for negotiations between Russia and the US. In this context, it is crucially important for Ukraine to enlist the support of the President of Finland Sauli Niinistö. It was also important for the Ukrainian President to get the support and insurance from Germany, as a major European leader, about continuing the sanctions against Russia. The main task for Ukraine is not to become a 'bargaining chip' between Russia and the United States. Thus, a very important task for Poroshenko was to convince Angela Merkel to remain Ukraine's advocate in these global geopolitical games. Taking into account the increasing polarity of opinions inside the EU on the issue of Russia's actions in Ukraine, the main foreign policy aim for our state is to achieve unity and solidarity of European political forces on their solid position of support of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity.*

1. <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/spilna-zayava-prezidentiv-ukrayini-petra-poroshenka-i-estons-39686>
2. <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/zustrich-prezidentiv-ukrayina-ta-finlyandiya-povyazani-isto-39714>
3. <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/partnerstvo-ukrayini-ta-nimechchini-dosyaglo-bezprecedentnog-39830>

## COUNTERING RUSSIAN HYBRID WARFARE



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### ***THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED AREAS OF DONETSK AND LUGANSK REGIONS: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KREMLIN PLAN OR MANIPULATION?***

On January 11 a law entitled 'On approval of a plan of actions aimed at implementing some principles of internal policy on separate areas of Donetsk and Lugansk regions where public authorities temporarily not carry out their powers' was adopted.

The title of the document raises a number of questions. For example, why temporarily occupied territory, named as the specific areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions where the public authorities temporarily not, carry out their authority? Why is occupied Crimea not mentioned? And if Crimea is not mentioned in this document, does it mean the approval of the Ukrainian government that Crimea is Russia? Why do we still not call a war a war? The political and legal consequences arising from all this are rather disappointing.

As the Ukrainian diplomat Boris Yaremenko rightly said: "According to international law, respect for human rights in the occupied territories is for the occupier. The Cabinet of Ministers reaffirmed these commitments among themselves. It means that the part of the East of Ukraine not occupied by a foreign state, and it is an internal conflict which has resulted in the temporary suspension of the functioning state bodies of Ukraine, which restore their activity". [1]

The Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman, on the contrary said, that the words of some politicians on the government decree on the implementation of measures in the temporarily occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, which supposedly is the implementation of the Kremlin plan are untrue and manipulated people. [2] But, according to Putin's plan, [3] Luhansk and Donetsk regions get an autonomous status within their administrative boundaries; the 'local authorities' provided with guarantees of security and immunity in the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics, and Ukraine have to provide guarantees for the implementation according the law 'On special procedure of local governments in some areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions', [4] where a part of implementing measures are also provided by this new plan of action adopted by the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers.

The document contains 17 tasks, [5] and includes ensuring the payment of wages at enterprises of all forms of ownership, providing opportunities to purchase essential



commodities, reducing the incidence of HIV / AIDS, establishing relations of mutual religious and ideological tolerance, the promotion of 'people's diplomacy', promoting healthy life, ensuring the rights of citizens residing on the uncontrolled territories in the area of education, social benefits, ensuring the right of citizens to freely choose the language, information products for media consumption and others.

*How realistic implementation of the action plan is and this Regulation is hard to forecast, at least this year. Implementation of all tasks requires at least the cessation of hostilities. The content and wording of the document contradicts the Ukrainian positioning of Russia in the international arena as an occupier, thereby undermining Ukraine's efforts to adequately highlight the state of things in the East and in Crimea. However, as Putin wanted, the burden of losses in the Donbas are borne by Ukrainian taxpayers. In addition, the following statements in the document are favourable for oligarchic circles which are interested in trading in the occupied regions.*

1. <https://www.facebook.com/bohdan.varemenko/posts/1360714293992689?pnref=story>
2. <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-politycs/2158652-grojsman-sprostuvav-zaavu-berezuka-pro-plan-reintegracii-donbasu.html>
3. <https://news.online.ua/685778/putin-vystupaet-za-avtonomiyu-dnr-i-lnr-v-ramkah-admingranits-donetskoy-i-luganskoy-obl-smi/>
4. <http://zakonO.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1680-18>
5. <http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/cardnpd?docid=249657353>

