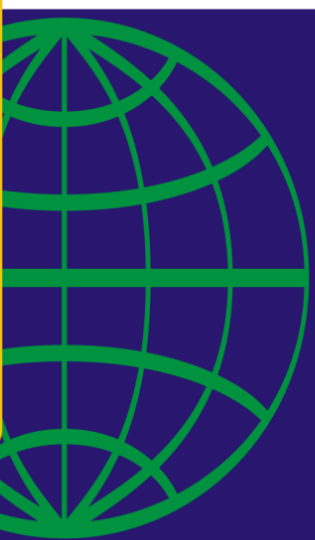


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UKRAINE – THE EUROPEAN UNION**KEY THEME ANALYSIS*****RESULTS OF EU - UKRAINE SUMMIT: EACH PARTY TOOK CARE OF ITS INTERESTS***

On November 24 the Ukraine-EU summit was hosted in Brussels. Once again, Ukraine did not receive a visa-free regime. The rhetoric of senior EU officials confirmed the assumption that Ukraine fully complied with the requirements for getting a visa-free regime. Now the decision is absolutely dependent on the EU.

The summit was characterized by a friendly atmosphere, but it brought no strategic decisions. Donald Tusk even began his speech in Ukrainian. 'Dear Ukrainian friends! I am deeply impressed by the patience and determination of the Ukrainian people in their struggle for sovereignty and territorial integrity. You are a unique example of courage, dignity and practical reason. I know you deserve more, specifically from Europe. You have many friends here. I can promise that we will not leave you behind. We have our own limitations, but we will continue our efforts on the implementation of your faithful expectations. We appreciate the efforts of the Ukrainian government, including of president Poroshenko in implementing the large-scale reforms in extremely difficult conditions. Ukraine's success will be the success of the whole of Europe¹.' Donald Tusk's speech in Ukrainian should be interpreted as follows. Senior EU officials appealed to the Ukrainian people and confirmed their position of supporting Ukraine. At the same time, Donald Tusk tried to transmit the idea that the EU is not yet in a position to provide Ukraine a visa-free regime due to the domestic challenges which Brussels is currently facing.

This outcome seems logical in the context of previous events, when Ukrainian authorities tried to put pressure on the EU, appealing to the people and regularly making public new dates of the visa-free regime on the eve of high-level meetings. The policy of pressure from the Presidential Administration had an effect on the EU. But in the context of the ongoing migration crisis and the rise of right-wing, populist Eurosceptic parties and attitudes within Europe, this effect turned out to be negative. As a result, we have a situation in which a decision on the visa-free regime has become the most important subject both in Ukraine - EU relations and in the national political discourse. The fact that the decision on visa-free travel has been taken at the supranational level (European Commission), but continues to drag at national level,

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9ZyJGsjodQ>

indicates that there is significant difference of opinion between the European bureaucracy and political elites in some EU member states.

The course of the Ukrainian authorities has put the EU in a situation where a positive decision on this issue is either impossible due to a lack of votes, or bears the risk of deepening the split within the EU. *Firstly*, this means that the EU's refusal to grant Ukraine a visa-free regime would demonstrate the complete ineffectiveness of the Eastern Partnership, within the framework of which the visa-free regime together with other instruments should motivate neighboring states to carry out internal reforms. *Secondly*, the determination of the Ukrainian authorities to use a visa-free regime to showcase success is obscure, since the potential advantages of this solution would be available to a lesser number of people.

In this context, the EU decided to develop and implement a visa suspension mechanism. This measure apparently aims to soothe those political groups which are opposing current immigration policy and the prospect of granting Ukraine a visa-free regime.

As a result, it is quite likely that Ukrainian citizens will receive the opportunity to travel to the European Union without visas. Such a decision will be taken after the interest groups in the EU succeed in agreeing on a formula that will stand for the mysterious phrase 'visa suspension mechanism.' One can predict with certainty - this legal mechanism can be used to limit or abolish a visa-free regime. Such developments are the direct result of the actions of the Ukrainian government, which transformed one of the many technical issues into the symbol of Ukraine's European integration. Now when the European side is actually pressed both by the level of publicity and unfavorable political situation, Brussels has no choice but to grant Kyiv a reduced version of the visa-free regime. It should be noted that Ukraine alone has driven itself into a weak negotiating position on this issue, and now actually does not influence its development.

Ultimately, the interest of the EU at the summit was not in granting Ukraine the visa-free regime, but signing a number of agreements in the field of energy, anti-corruption, and cooperation with Europol and to further support the EU Special monitoring mission of the OSCE, which was actually achieved. In the presence of President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, President of the European Council Donald Tusk and President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, the sides signed a number of bilateral documents on cooperation between Ukraine and the EU. Energy Minister of Ukraine Ihor Nasalyk and Vice-President of the European Commission for Energy, in charge of the Energy Union, Maroš Šefčovič, together with the European Atomic Energy Community signed the Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Energy Partnership between the EU and Ukraine. Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine Ivanna Klymush-Tsintsadze and EU Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn signed an agreement on the financing of the 'EU Anti-Corruption Initiative in Ukraine².'

²http://zaxid.net/news/showNews.do?ukrayina_ta_yes_pidpisali_ugodi_pro_antikoruptysiyne_spivrobitnitstvo_ta_energetichne_partnerstvo&objectId=1410579

UKRAINE – NATO



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

NATO RECOGNIZED ARMED AGGRESSION, BUT IS EVERYTHING GOING SMOOTHLY?

On November 20, the **NATO Parliamentary Assembly officially recognized Russian aggression, and Russia's war against Ukraine was declared a major factor of destabilization in the world**. According to the information of MP Iryna Friz, the decision was voiced in the resolution 'Support the Post-Warsaw Strategy of Defense and Deterrence', which was approved by the NATO Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security in Istanbul³. The Ukrainian delegation headed by Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Andriy Parubiy participated in this meeting. The Ukrainian side presented video material with a review of Russian arms which were documented in Donbas⁴.

In our opinion, **this decision by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly is the first sign of change in the political position of the Alliance regarding the conflict in Donbas**. Statements by representatives of NATO over the past two years indicated that the Alliance was ready to assist the Ukrainian side, mainly in the area of security sector reform. At the same time, the Alliance took a wait-and-see attitude regarding Moscow and stated that it supports the idea of dialogue. Recent comments by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg indicate that NATO's interpretation of the war in eastern Ukraine is changing. NATO qualifies the events of the last years as aggression and argues its support to Ukraine will never recognize the violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine⁵.

These positive changes for Ukraine could not go unnoticed, but the main theme of the last two weeks has been Turkey's foreign policy. Last week the President of Turkey stated that he did not reject the option of joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization⁶. This statement was made in the context of Turkey's frustration with the dynamics of its relations with the EU. It should be recalled that Turkey first applied to join the European Economic Community back in 1959. In 1999, Turkey became a candidate for EU membership. In 2005 negotiations on this issue commenced. However, political repressions, continuing in Turkey after a failed coup attempt, are likely to delay a visa-free regime for an undefined period. The statement on a possible accession of Turkey to the SCO should also be considered in the context of Turkey's

³ <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2016/11/20/7127414/>

⁴ <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2016/11/19/7127331/>

⁵ <http://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-defense/2120894-stoltenberg-nato-responds-to-russias-military-aggression-against-ukraine.html>

⁶ <http://thediplomat.com/2016/11/will-turkey-join-the-shanghai-cooperation-organization-instead-of-the-eu/>

participation in NATO. If Ankara wants to join the SCO, it will have to withdraw from NATO, as Russian officials said that they do not expect a NATO member to join the SCO.

Implementation of Turkey's intention to join the SCO is unlikely, as its relations with Russia resemble a situational alliance. In addition, the parties have different interests in the Middle East. A few days ago the Turkish president said publicly that Turkish troops were intervening in Syria to end the reign of Bashar Assad. Although in the coming days Turkish troops fought predominantly against the Islamic state and Kurdish rebels⁷, the Russian authorities demanded explanations for such statements⁸.

In our view, recent statements by NATO representatives indicate that the *Alliance's political interpretation of the war in Eastern Ukraine is under change. But along with these processes, one of the key NATO member states in the context of NATO Middle East policy - Turkey – is giving out contradictory foreign policy signals. This hardly has a significant impact on the unity of NATO, but it will definitely have a negative effect on its abilities in the short term.*



⁷ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/president-erdogan-turkey-syria-assad-intervention-comments-kurds-isis-a7446956.html>.

⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-erdogan-idUSKBN13P136>

FOREIGN POLICY OF UKRAINE



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

WHAT SHOULD UKRAINE EXPECT FROM ELECTIONS IN FRANCE?

On Thursday, December 1, Francois Hollande said he would not run for a second term in the presidential elections in 2017⁹. This step can be attributed to the very low popularity of the president of France. The level of popular support in the recent period fell to a critical 4%. This makes him the most unpopular French president since the Second World War. Obviously, Hollande withdrew from the race to allow other members of the Socialist Party to participate in the elections, although recent polls show that any candidate of the Socialists has poor chances of getting to the second round of presidential elections in France¹⁰.

The front-runners in the elections are Francois Fillon, who in late November won the right-of-centre primaries, and the leader of the 'National Front' Marine Le Pen. The popularity of both right candidates is explained by the same political tendencies that applied to the US elections and Brexit - the fear of Islamic fundamentalism and globalization, as well as a return to traditional values. In the case of Europe, there is another important stimulus, represented by the migration crisis.

Analysts say that both right-wing leaders have quite a loyal attitude towards Russia. Bilateral relations with Moscow and European sanctions have become a major topic of recent debate among center-right politicians. Francois Fillon called Hollande's policy towards Russia 'absurd'¹¹. According to him, the policy of sanctions has 'failed.' Fillon supports the lifting of sanctions against Russia and normalization of relations with Russia. He also announced that he is ready to cooperate with Russia and its ally Bashar Assad in order to combat 'Islamic state'¹². Rumor has it that Fillon has a personal relationship with Vladimir Putin, formed at the time when both were prime minister. At that time France and Russia stepped up their own business contacts - the parties agreed on the 'Mistrals', 'AvtoVAZ' modernization and on the sale of the Russian space launch vehicle 'Soyuz'¹³. Moreover, Fillon opposed granting Ukraine and Georgia

⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/01/francois-hollande-not-seek-second-term-president-france>

¹⁰ <http://dw.com/p/2Tbh2>

¹¹ <http://dw.com/p/2TMnC>

¹² <http://dw.com/p/2TLY9>

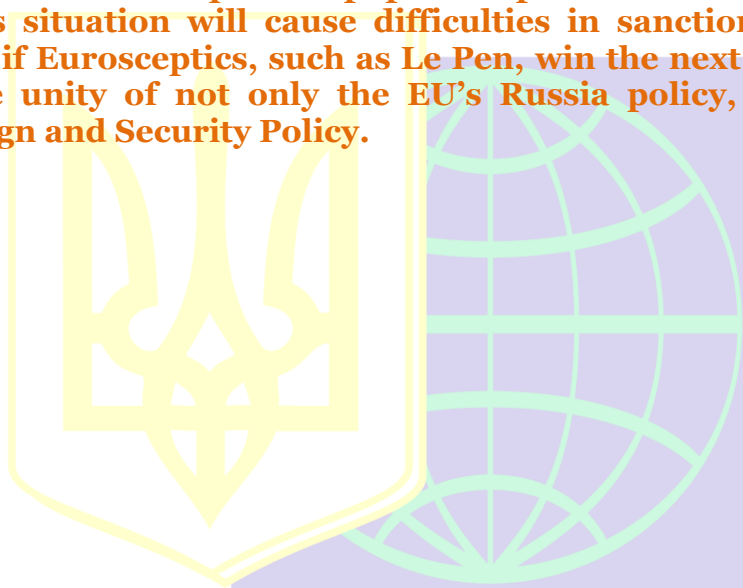
¹³ <http://dw.com/p/2TM4U>

an Action Plan for NATO membership in 2008 and was one of the honored guests of 'Valdai Club' in 2013¹⁴.

As for Le Pen, she is known to be one of the most loyal politicians to the Kremlin. The Russian Federation under the leadership of Vladimir Putin is a role model of 'reasoned protectionism' for Le Pen¹⁵. Her ideology's is rather close to that used by Donald Trump during his election campaign - populism, the criticism of the political establishment, anti-migration rhetoric and defense of traditional values.

There are five months left before the elections. Currently, analysts continue to discuss how likely it is that one of the right-wing candidates will fulfill the campaign promises, especially on improving relations with Russia. It should be recalled that a similar situation happened after the elections in the US, where Donald Trump significantly changed his program, leaving behind its most populist appeals.

One can state say with certainty that ***it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain that relative consensus on the question of the Russian aggression against Ukraine that has existed within the European Union over the last three years***. The election outcomes in Germany and France are unknown. **But Ukraine should understand that normalization of relations with Russia has become quite a popular option in European political discourse. This situation will cause difficulties in sanctions negotiations next year. And if Eurosceptics, such as Le Pen, win the next election it may undermine the unity of not only the EU's Russia policy, but the whole Common Foreign and Security Policy.**



¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37964776>

COUNTERING RUSSIAN HYBRID WARFARE



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

PLAN 'SHATUN'¹⁶: PRODUCT OF A HYBRID WAR OR HYBRID PEACE?

The second half of November, apart from the Ukraine - EU Summit was marked by a face off in Ukraine's information space, the uncovering of a planplan codenamed 'Shatun', launched by the Russian secret services to destabilize the country. According to the conspiracy plan 'Shatun', according to the correspondence made public of assistant to the Russian President, Vladislav Surkov, the Kremlin planned a 'popular uprising', which was to be supported the Ukrainian opposition leaders, who are known as the Kremlin's 'canned food'¹⁷. The primary version of the correspondence concerned subversive operations designed to stimulate separatism in Transcarpathia, which appeared quite plausible. Subsequently this text has undergone a substantial correction and it turned out that in this plan, Russia intends to organize mass protests in the centre of Kyiv using the anniversary date of Euromaidan. This interpretation of Surkov's letter immediately aroused a strong reaction from Ukrainian experts who reacted ironically to the publication of 'Shatun' and suspected the Kyiv authorities of trying to discredit any anti-government actions¹⁸.

In reality, these suspicions are not unfounded, as in the hybrid war to preserve their power; the ruling post Maidan elite applies the same methods of information war as the aggressor, but these methods are not directed against the aggressor, but against Ukrainian society's unmet expectations of the existing oligarchic-kleptocratic regime. These methods allow the government to mislead public opinion - to impose a favourable interpretation of what is happening as sabotage and subversive actions of Russia, or 'collaboration with the enemy'. **These interpretations are all the more dangerous because in terms of Moscow's real large-scale sabotage operations, Ukrainian society will be disoriented and not be able to distinguish the true enemy from its 'native' government.** This will create a situation of chaos in the country, leading to the defeat of Ukraine in the war.

This state is also one of the effects of a hybrid war, when not only does the population begin to become hostile towards its own authority, but the government loses faith and is in opposition to its own people. It was with these effects that Putin hoped to

¹⁶ *Shatun - bear awakened from hibernation*

¹⁷ <http://www.056.ua/news/1447536>

¹⁸ Ibid.

start hybrid war against Ukraine. This contributes to the Ukrainian government itself trying to interpret the Russian aggression and Russian-Ukrainian war as a 'hybrid peace'. Thus, the hybrid peace establishes the internal legitimacy of the hybrid war, because it brings this war discourse from being an external, international issue to being an internal one, allowing you to interpret this war as a domestic conflict – the 'Ukrainian crisis'. Accordingly, it enables Putin to use a wide arsenal of non-military means against Ukraine.

Hybrid peace is treated as a state of intangible war, when society psychologically and physically experiences this condition and continues to live a peaceful life without noticing losses and serious consequences, including severe social upheavals, mass impoverishment and total corruption of the current government, when all these social ills caused by the authorities can justify the failed plan 'Shatun'. At the same time, Putin could have a chance of success for 'Maidan – 2016' as the Ukrainian authorities interpret, but on one condition: "If he withdraws Russian troops from Donbas and passes to Ukraine as a whole the 'DNR' and 'LNR'". Afterwards only Ukrainian patriots, real and imaginary, get rid of the shameful stigma 'agents of Moscow'. But apparently, when it does, going with the theme of the Maidan Ukrainian political agenda, it will naturally happen because the time will come for the next elections to parliament. "

