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## Water in Conflict:

Five years after the Minsk ceasefire agreements, the unresolved issue of clean water supply to civilians in Donbas. Adaptation, limitations and outlines of cooperation

# Imprint

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# Contents

Introduction	4
1. Post-electoral overview: military, economic, and political context	5
2. Voda Donbasu: adapting social and occupational ties across the frontline	6
3. Limitations to effective shared water supply operations:	8
4. The stakeholders: an increasingly complex multilevel and multinational interplay	10
5. Trends in the evolution of water management in times of conflict	13

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## Summary

This report marks the fifth anniversary of the Minsk Protocol and memorandum, a first attempt to implement a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine, made by involved parties under the auspices of the international community in September 2014. The goal of this report is to outline and analyze, through the example of the cross-frontline management of critical water infrastructure in Donbas, how international and domestic actors adapt to the realities of a war-torn water supply system and attempts to map some possible pathways for cooperation in the context of war. In eastern Ukraine, the battlefields span intensely industrialized and urbanized areas, disrupting transport, work, and utilities networks that straddle the frontline, affecting several million peoples' livelihoods – including their drinking water supply. Water in most of the Donetsk region stems from a single source, the Siverskiy Donets river, flowing through a system of canals and pipes south of Mariupol on the Azov Sea, supplying on the way about 3.9 million people on both sides of the frontline. Many of the water supply facilities are located near the "Line of Contact" (LoC) that, according to the September and February 2015 Minsk ceasefire agreements, is the baseline from which weapons should be pulled out by both sides. Instead, water supply facilities have been shelled constantly often on a weekly basis in what is colloquially called the "grey zone" around the front line, endangering the lives of water workers and compromising clean water supply. This research focuses on a case study, the operation of the integrated cross-frontline water supply by the Ukrainian municipal state company KP Voda Donbasu ("Water of Donbas"). In face of weekly breakdowns of water supply to populations due to infrastructural and security risks, as well as economic and political pressure, water supply capacities appear to be stretched to the utmost limits. At the same time, the employees of the company have largely lived up to the challenge by adapting to these instable and dangerous working conditions through purposeful cooperation despite the war. This study shows the transformation of infrastructure operations and management brought about by the conflict and its implications and limitations. Finally, it outlines possible public action endeavors that could sensitize decision-makers to ways to improve the situation.

## Introduction

In Donbas, the five-year long war has killed 13,000 and injured 24,000, but it has also, more widely, disrupted the daily lives of millions of families. The territories controlled by the Moscow-backed regimes claiming secession in Donbas in non-government-controlled areas (NGCA), the de facto (self-proclaimed) Lugansk and Donetsk Peoples' Republics (L/DPR), are separated from Ukrainian government-controlled territory (GCA)<sup>1</sup> by a demarcation line (Line of Contact, LoC). This "contact line", established by the Minsk ceasefire agreements (Minsk protocol and memorandum) in September 2014 and between then re-iterated by the Minsk II agreement in February 2015<sup>2</sup>, serves as a frontline, a de facto border and a baseline for a security zone guaranteed by the withdrawal of heavy weapons and troops. The ceasefire agreement, prolonged by the Minsk II ceasefire in February 2015, and the security zone along the contact line, somewhat reduced the violence but is violated on a daily basis<sup>3</sup>, disrupting lives of the populations living near the contact line – about 5.2 million civilians are affected<sup>4</sup>.

In a section running from Lisichansk in the north, to Mariupol in the south, the frontline separating government controlled Ukraine from non-government controlled areas cuts through a typical European conurbation, a succession of interdependent company towns of coal, metal, and chemical industries assisted by water and electricity-producing infrastructure, with integrated labor and trade markets<sup>5</sup>. By analogy, one could imagine the disruptions on trade and infrastructure if a frontline were to split the German Ruhrgebiet or the Black Country of the English Midlands in two. Of the 2 million people exposed to landmines in the Kyiv-controlled areas near the front line, 70% have drastically changed their daily movements to adapt to these risks - not sending their children to school or making detours to work. The on-going violence also has a direct impact on critical infrastructure in this densely urbanized part of the Donbas. Indeed, municipal infrastructure – roads, water, electricity, heating – all the networks that interconnect human activity are intermittently severed by shooting and shelling. Water and electricity infrastructure located along the front line – and often between fighting positions – are damaged on a weekly basis – compromising critical services. The 1949 Geneva Conventions that established standards for humanitarian treatment in war define access to safe and affordable water for domestic and personal needs - 50 to 100 liters a day and collectible within 30 minutes – as a basic human right. But in Donbas these criteria are not systematically met. According to the UNICEF Water and Sanitation cluster which monitors the situation<sup>6</sup>, there were more than fifty violent incidents affecting water infrastructure between January and June 2019, putting the lives of water workers at risk: often they run to sit out their shifts in the relative safety of on-site bunkers. Shelling has caused deaths and injuries and, on

a regular basis, stoppages and damage to water supply, as well as posing environmental risks. For water to flow consistently from one “side” to another, to homes and businesses, would imply systematic cooperation across the frontline, in other words between warring territories. Authorities on Donetsk Peoples’ Republics sides regularly fail to facilitate cross-border communications or to implement ceasefires necessary to complete repairs and maintenance on infrastructure located in battle zones. Thus, international organizations have increasingly taken on a role in mediating or implementing cooperation to ensure water supply. This report will examine how the day-to-day functioning of the Ukrainian municipal public company Voda Donbasu (KP Voda Donbasu) that manages the water supply network across the frontline adapted to the conditions of war, as well as the actors – “stakeholders” – that are involved in cross-border interactions and cooperation. Given the enormous impact of water supply on ordinary livelihoods and its clear benefits for the common good, the report seeks to outline some of the limitations and possibilities for better cooperation.

This paper is based – unless otherwise indicated – on interviews conducted locally in GCA with managers and engineers of the KP Voda Donbasu utilities facilities in Kyiv, Avdiivka, Toretsk, Pokrovsk and Mariupol in May-August 2018, December 2018, and in June 2019, as well as with other actors/stakeholders (the OSCE’s SMM to Ukraine, representatives of international humanitarian organizations, local civilian-military administration officials, and consumers).

## 1. Post-electoral overview: military, economic, and political context

### a. A war severing social and economic ties and circuits

A hardening of the “contact line” has taken place over the past several years, creating legal, economic and physical obstacles for civilian populations living nearby. In 2017, the seizing of most Ukrainian-held assets by de facto authorities in the Donetsk and Luhansk (they were placed “under external control”, according to the euphemism used by DPR authorities) and the embargo on trade towards NGCA by the Kyiv government in March 2017 hit industry and services networks. The introduction of the Russian ruble as a currency in NGCA which prompted Kyiv to ban trans-frontline monetary circulation is another illustration of disrupted economic networks affecting populations. Damages done to water and energy infrastructure (such as pipes and power lines) have had direct social and economic effects. A majority of residents near the frontline have suffered some form of water or electricity breakdown, also fragilizing local income resources when, as a result of breakdowns, industries have to suspend operations.

The L/DPR regimes – though supported by Moscow, have not been officially recognized by Russia – which would be a breach of the Minsk agreement. However, the integration of L/DPR into the monetary space of the Russian ruble can be construed as an implicit expression of regalian influence. Local political actors are also widely perceived by experts as being under some influence of “Russian curators”, bridging communication and influencing the building and running of quasi-state structures<sup>7</sup>, including official appointments.

In GCA, the recent Ukrainian presidential and parliamentary elections brought to power the political newcomer Volodymyr Zelenskiy with an outright majority in Parliament (254 out of 450 seats<sup>8</sup>) for his “Sluga Narodu” (Servant of the People) party. With this majority, he has in essence, a clear potential mandate over policy making. The new Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers is still in the process of being appointed ahead of the reconvening of the new legislative period at the end of summer, so political strategies remain undefined<sup>9</sup>. However, since his election in April, Zelenskiy has given some signals of a break from the Poroshenko-era securitization policy by proposing measures allowing for intensified cross-frontline human interaction and communication between GCA and NGCA, and Russia-annexed Crimea. For example, Zelenskiy has promised an increase in the number of so-called entry-exit crossing points (four operational at the moment in the Donetsk oblast, and one – a footbridge – in the Luhansk region), a facilitation of travel for family visits for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to their homeland in Crimea, and the development of Ukrainian government-sponsored television and radio programs targeting audiences in NGCA. More to the point of this report, Zelenskiy has also demanded legal safeguards to protect water supply from war-induced revenue losses. It remains to be seen how these declarations of intentions will be implemented.

### b. Infrastructural and industrial context:

A water supply network bridging the frontline between government-controlled and non-Government controlled areas

The territories directly affected by the conflict are water-scarce and rely on one river, the Siverskiy Donetsk river as the primary source of drinking water through a Soviet-era and in parts obsolete infrastructure system. In the Luhansk region, where the contact line runs along the river, two companies control water supply, Popasna Regional Water Utility, based in GCA, supplies the water to consumers but it is a company located in NGCA (Luhanskvoda) that manages the distribution locally and collects all payments. In the Donetsk region, further south, the water system runs 327 km south to Mariupol, supplying water to close to four million people. Contrary to the Luhansk region, in the Donetsk region the management of water supply has not been split in two

but is run by a single company, the public communal/municipal company (Kommunal'noe Predpriatie, or KP) KP Voda Donbasu (in Russian. KP Voda Donbassa). With official headquarters in Donetsk – and secondary management facilities in Pokrovsk and Mariupol – it operates according to Ukrainian legislation and employs 12,500 people, 7500 of which in non-government-controlled areas. Its management runs interdependent facilities cross-border: pumping, filtration and repair stations, as well as the maintenance of canals and lines.

The combined effect of war and decades of neglect has weakened the system making adequate water supply a critical issue for eastern Ukraine, as international organizations have repeatedly noted<sup>10</sup>. This water supply system, developed in the 1930s-50s to serve the Soviet metallurgical and energy plants and their company towns, lacked investment during the post-Soviet period, when profit-oriented business clans controlled the region. The water supply system, including those controlled by KP Voda Donbasu, suffered financially, running up debts towards electricity providers. Almost five years of war have further worn down the equipment because of problems with maintenance and revenue.

Many crucial facilities are located near active battlegrounds and have been damaged, sometimes repeatedly, after having been repaired. In fact, over half of all facilities have been shelled at some point since the beginning of the conflict. For example, the Donetsk Filter Station is within small arms fire range of the advance positions of both the Ukrainian armed forces and the armed formations of L/DPR. In all, over half the facilities have been damaged by shelling at some point during the conflict, and nine employees of Voda Donbasu have been killed during their shift, while dozens have been injured.

Due to the high-level of urbanization in the Donetsk region, homes are reliant on communal water rather than on wells, as would be the case in more rural areas. For this reason, damage to the water system affects large numbers of people. Damage to the Donetsk Filter installations – including power lines – affect both Yasynuvata in NGCA and Avdiivka (GCA) immediately and ultimately affects the water supply to 380,000 people. According to a 2018 report, the Humanitarian Aid department of the European Commission (ECHO) estimated that in Luhansk 51% of the population are using untreated drinking water.

From this epicenter of violence in Donetsk, water flows through two 1.4 meter pipes of the South Donbass Waterway to Mariupol, hugging the contact line along the way. Both these pipes had been cut at the height of the war in June-September 2014, leaving close to a million people dependent on ad hoc resources: bottled water, wells, water trucks provided by humanitarian aid, and, in Mariupol, water from a small alternative source.

When facilities are damaged on or near to the frontline, repairs require ceasefires and demining crews before VD technicians can go in. In 2017, it took close to 8

months to negotiate a “window of silence” to repair a pipeline that leaked 2 million tons of water daily into the environment. Maintenance and repairs require mediation by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission as the warring sides suspect one another of using ceasefires as cover for military operations and agree to windows of silence only under strict conditions. Throughout 2017-18, the SMM organized 1450 windows of silence for repairs and operated 2100 patrols for water security alone in Donetsk and Luhansk regions<sup>11</sup>.

## 2. Voda Donbasu: adapting social and occupational ties across the frontline

### a. Adapting practices within the company KP Voda Donbasu (VD)

Operating on both sides of the frontline requires adapting pre-war operations and management to the political, military and material divide inside an integrated network.

#### **Organizational and administrative adaptation**

The water utilities company Voda Donbasu – established in 1930 under the name Ukropromchermet – was re-organized into a municipal public company in 2007 in Donetsk (now located in NGCA) but functioning according to Ukrainian law. The 30 subdivisions share the complex water supply system that includes pumping, filtration and treatment, repair, transport facilities and distribution to households and companies, as well as measurement of consumption and payment collection. These facilities are located on both sides of the frontline: four regional production facilities are located in GCA (Mariupol, Pokrovsk, Chasiv Yar, Sloviansk) and two regional facilities in NGCA (Donetsk and Horlivka).

#### **Management structure**

According to company statutes, the director of the company is appointed by the Donetsk regional council, a body that has not convened since the start of the war. Consequently, it is the governor of the Donetsk region based in Kramatorsk (GCA) who appoints the director as “an interim” director until the territorial integrity of Donetsk is restored. The director of Voda Donbasu and head management – deputy directors, the chief engineer, chief financial officer etc. – are all based in Donetsk and live in NGCA. The approximately 12,500 employees of the company are employed by the Ukrainian company but more than half live and work in NGCA: these are administrative staff, water technicians, engineers, plumbers, accountants, water meter specialists, telephone dispatcher service employees, security etc.

#### **Facing physical danger**

The most striking human dimension of VD's operations in the war zone is the risks faced by its employees.



Technicians and engineers either work at facilities directly affected by shelling or go out into the “grey zone” – an unofficial term used to describe dangerous areas near the front - to make repairs on damaged pipes. For example, during the months of July and August, despite a new ceasefire, the UNICEF/WASH cluster monitoring team recorded at least five cases of fire on water supply facilities<sup>12</sup>: on August 8 a VD crew repairing a section of pipe came under fire near Vasylivka village (Donetsk NGCA) and had to leave the area. As a result, two villages, Verkhniotoretske (GCA) and Vasylivka (NGCA), are cut off from centralized water supply, affecting about 3000 people. On August 1, a pipeline in Popasna was damaged by a shell explosion cutting half of Popasna off from the centralized water supply. During the first week of July, the First Lift Pumping Station, which pumps raw water to five filter stations that provide clean water on both sides of the contact line to more than 1.1 million, including both the cities Mariupol and Donetsk on the South Donbas waterway, was hit by shelling three times in one week, sending shift workers to run for cover. These water engineering professionals risk their lives doing work that was not supposed to expose them to physical danger. The first casualties occurred in June 2014 when a mother and her son, both working their shifts at the Donetsk Filtration Station, were killed by artillery fire. Ten other employees have since lost their lives, and many have sustained injuries, for example, last winter a crew of VD workers were shot at, whilst they were clearing a road from snow. According to VD management, these risks are not compensated financially.

### **Cross-frontline communication**

At the same time, the legal and logistical demands of this cross-border organization resulted in the establishment of de facto procedures set-up to mitigate the coordination problems. While the official central headquarters are located in Donetsk (NGCA), VD set up two parallel subdivisions that took over some of the central management responsibilities on government-controlled territory: one is located in Pokrovsk, the other one located at the local VD subdivision in Mariupol. The Pokrovsk office serves as a second or mirror operational HQ to the Donetsk office. The Mariupol office serves as an official postal address for most correspondence. The director of VD, as well as the deputy director and chief engineer, based in NGCA, travel to Pokrovsk almost every week, as do, in turn the administrative employees from Donetsk. Other management organs are organized across the frontline virtually: for example, meetings of the board of directors are held via a video link between Pokrovsk – where directors of the GCA meet – and Donetsk – where head management and directors of NGCA subdivisions convene. This de facto arrangement, as we will see below, sustains communication within the chain of command vertically and between employees horizontally, despite long waits at border crossings.

However, this de facto re-organization cannot solve specific technical problems. For instance, the workshop for repairs with the equipment and the technical

skills to repair 30-year old pieces of water distribution technology is located in Donetsk. This means that for any repairs to infrastructure located in GCA, spare parts must cross the border twice – once to bring the broken parts to the workshop for repairs and, once repaired, back over the frontline. Also, some of the laboratory testing of water quality is done by facilities in GCA – meaning that water for testing – and the chemical reagents used for this purpose – need to cross the frontline, too. This constitutes an important limitation because the transport of metal and chemicals across the line of contact is banned by authorities on both sides.

### **Financial re-organization**

Another irreconcilable organizational aspect concerns divided revenue flows due to the introduction of the Russian ruble in NGCA and the refusal of the Kyiv government – holder of the sovereign right to issue currency - to allow transactions in rubles. Also, water tariffs are established at “state” and not company level – tariffs were, until recently, thrice lower in NGCA, reducing profitability. As a result, the company’s financial circuits are divided into two unequal parts impacting salary payments, and social benefits for NGCA-based employees. Also, VD has been plagued by bad debt as many consumers near the contact line have difficulties paying, and payments – even at lower tariffs and in rubles – are not always made by NGCA enterprises. At different times, debtors in GCA included regional cities, industrial plants, and independent local water pipeline system companies.

### **b. Adapting work practices to a war zone**

The most visible hurdle to overcome is the physical contact line.

The broad distribution of facilities over a large territory means that VD executive-level managers tend to travel between facilities. As stated above, monthly board meetings bringing together the directors of KP Voda Donbasu’s subdivisions are held “virtually” but the video link with cameras set up in the meeting rooms at Donetsk and Pokrovsk headquarters is unstable, as the observations during a meeting held in August 2018 showed. Also, not all affairs can be settled virtually. In interviews, the managers of VD Donbasu describes how, based in Donetsk, they negotiate long lines at crossing points for meetings at the Pokrovsk office. It can take up to eleven hours to travel from Yasynuvata, on the separatist-held side, to Avdiivka, just 22 kilometers away by direct road before the conflict. These crossings take place on a weekly basis for operational reasons but also to cultivate a sense of corporate culture in a general context of hostility. Many Voda Donbasu employees interact on a weekly basis with the “other side” countering the de-humanized “enemy” prevalent in public discourse. This co-operation across the frontline is most intense in the context of repairs to damaged infrastructure in the dangerous “grey zone” near troop positions and mine fields during a local ceasefire (“window of silence”) is

agreed on. The teams of technicians are surrounded by representatives of the OSCE's mission as well as Ukrainian troops and armed formations. They come from both sides of the contact line.

Voda Donbasu discourages any vocal political affiliation within the company: managers, water engineers and technicians interviewed say that within the company political discussions about the conflict are "officially banned" or simply "avoided" (opinions differ).

As for the company website (<http://www.voda.dn.ua> in Russian) it neutralizes its actions by not referring to the de facto entities. It indicates war-damaged sites in its news section without using any political term for the location of the facilities such as ORDO, GCA/NGCA. The damages caused by shelling and the repairing of facilities are described in detail but are also neutral without indication of the actual culprits. This neutrality applies also more generally: in one interview, a manager in GCA asked not to be photographed with a Ukrainian flag "in order not to create problems 'over there'", implying the L/DPR authorities.

c. The emergence of a war-determined corporate culture: de-politicization, the common good, and corporate identity based on solidarity

The corporate practices that have developed since the conflict began illustrate how de-politicization and occupational identification around the idea of providing water as a neutral and humanitarian mission became an important element of corporate culture in order to "manage" trans-frontline cooperation.

The de-politicized practices of KP Voda Donbasu reflect the development of a sector-specific corporate culture built on the universal value of water. For example, a banner in the auditorium of VD headquarters in Donetsk displays a quotation from the French author A. de Saint-Exupéry as "water is life". Work in difficult and dangerous conditions – wage arrears and operations in battle zones – is often rationalized in terms of "obligations to the community". Many of the employees are locals and locally trained and recruited workforce where trans-generational recruitment is not uncommon, water-management 'dynasties' have carried on through the conflict. For example, the death of a mother and son, both water engineers at a facility near Donetsk in the early months of the war is regularly cited in interviews as a tragic but still a positive symbol of KP Voda Donbasu's corporate culture. Inter-generational and occupational solidarity is promoted while professing political opinions is discredited as being "unprofessional" behavior. Field observations suggest a strong, locally anchored professional social identity as "people from Donbas".

This de-politicization acts to counter the alienation prevalent in a war-torn community. Moreover, even technical cooperation is interpreted as suspicious,

possibly treacherous, and thus morally and legally condemnable by political authorities in both GCA and NGCA, making trans-frontline cooperation not only uncomfortable but potentially dangerous. For example, some VD managers claim that employees were placed on "Mirotvorets", a "list" of "collaborators" run by a group of Ukrainian vigilantes [see section 3. on limitations].

### 3. Limitations to effective shared water supply operations

a. Institutional limitations: the consequences of a disrupted organizational system

The complex organizational structure of the company and the disruption of its municipal status by war disrupted existing interactions with other state bodies in GCA.

According to its charter, KP Voda Donbasu is under the authority of the Donetsk regional council making it a municipal company with, in principle, little communication with the government in Kyiv. However, the Donetsk council, an elected body in Donetsk, has not convened since secessionist forces took over Donetsk. In the interim, it is the regional governor in Kramatorsk –himself appointed by the president of Ukraine - who appoints the director. The company, at the time of writing, was still under the indirect executive subordination of the Kyiv government's Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories (Min TOT).

Operational management of cross-border water supply necessitates interaction at a political level, i.e. communicating with those authorities that have de facto political and security control over the territories where the water supply facilities are located.

There is little public information available about how VD managers in Donetsk communicate day to day with local powers in DPR. Water management is placed under the authority of the DPR's "Minister for construction, housing and utilities", Sergei Naumets since 2018<sup>13</sup>. But the legal organization regarding water supply in DPR is rendered increasingly unclear by a series of administrative measures creating a parallel structure. In 2017, the DPR created a "state company" "GP Voda Donbassa" (in other words with the same Russian name but a different legal form)<sup>14</sup>. At present, "GP Voda Donbassa" appears to be centralizing assets from NGCA based local water companies (without touching VD for now) under its structure<sup>15</sup>. The website of the DPR's GP Voda Donbassa has a Russian domain name (<http://www.vodadonbassa.ru>) and posts news and information that creates the impression that it is in charge of water supply when in fact the supply network is actually still under KP Voda Donbassa control. While the KP Voda Donbassa is directed by Alexander Evdokimov, a hydro-engineer with many



years' experience in the company, appointed by the Donetsk oblast' governor in Kramatorsk (GCA), the DPR GP Voda Donbassa head is Maksim Leshchenko, a close associate of A. Zakharchenko the commander of DPR who was killed in a bomb explosion in August 2018. Pressure from the side of DPR to take over the KP appears to be mounting, presumably making communication even more difficult: increasingly the OSCE, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Minsk Trilateral group appear to be the platform for communication on water issues in DPR [illustrating the geo-politicization of water management issues as described in section 5].

#### b. Normative limitations: The consequences of a weak legal framework for trans-frontline cooperation

There is no law organizing actual cooperation across the frontline, thus the humanitarian necessity of trans-frontline work is so far not recognized or defined. As a result, KP Voda Donbasu employees and company operations fall under the general legislation commanding trans-frontline activities. For example, there is no special permit system allowing quicker processing at checkpoints and crossing points, nor is there a system of exceptions to the general ban on carrying spare metal parts and chemicals across the contact line. VD employees carry bolts and small valves in their pockets, de facto engaged in "smuggling".

Consequently, there is also no official way of managing the double/divided financial circuit of the company: revenue collected in GCA, where water tariffs are three times higher, cannot be transferred by the company to NGCA where wage arrears go back months. A draft law proposal establishing a special legal regime for cross frontline water utilities companies had been drawn up but has been facing political resistance in Kyiv. This lack of norms to organize and legitimate cooperation within specific frameworks creates vulnerabilities that exposes the company to precarious working conditions and legal liabilities in NGCA. For example, NGCA authorities use the wage arrears to motivate a takeover of the company<sup>16</sup>.

#### c. Political limitations: instrumentalization of water, cooperation and peace

The political charge contained in water supply issues is present in both GCA and NGCA, prompting local actors to identify "political instrumentalization" as a major problem in resolving the problem with drinking water. While VD and its international donors carry the costs of water supply operations, an important part of the revenue is generated in NGCA and inaccessible. There are several reasons for this.

##### **GCA: in government-controlled areas, trans-frontline socialization is labeled as suspicious**

In GCA, the pre-electoral context ahead of presidential, parliamentary and local elections this year had

heightened tensions over the concept of cooperation. Ahead of presidential elections on March 31, the candidates, who had economic ties to Russia framed their programs as being "pro-peace", most notably Yurii Boyko, an energy minister under president V. Yanukovych, Alexander Vilkul running under the slogan of "peace and development". In parliamentary elections to the Verkhovna Rada in July, two political coalitions, the Opposition Front and the Opposition Platform, both lobbied for cross-frontline cooperation and received significant support in eastern Ukraine<sup>17</sup>. Running on a "for life" program, the Opposition Platform that featured Viktor Medvechuk, a Ukrainian lawyer with murky ties to Moscow and personal ties to Russian president Vladimir Putin<sup>18</sup>. The Opposition bloc, featuring mayors of the eastern and southern cities of Kharkiv, Mariupol and Odesa, as well as managers from Donbas-based industrial powerhouses like Rinat Akhmetov's SCM holding, often with ties to ousted president V. Yanukovych or Russian economic groups, put forward an appeal to lift the trade embargo introduced against NGCA by Kyiv. In government-controlled areas of Donbas, populations tend to entertain family and even professional relationships across the line of contact<sup>19</sup>, reflecting persistent, strong cross-border socialization<sup>20</sup>. On the opposite side of the political spectrum, then president Poroshenko's message linked "patriotism" with strongly limited trans-frontline contacts. Thus, talk of peace or peacebuilding tends thus to be discredited nationally in public discourse as "collaborationist" or manipulated by "pro-Russian oligarchs"<sup>21</sup> while locally, in Donbas, it is a pragmatic expectation by civilians touched on a daily basis by the conflict.

##### **NGCA: water supply management issues used by political authorities to pressure Kyiv**

In NGCA, water issues appear to be managed at a high level – in Donetsk and Moscow – as reflected by the appointment of Maksim Leshchenko, reputed to be both a direct agent of the "curators" of LDPR in Moscow<sup>22</sup> and a former Zakharchenko strongman, to the position of director of GP Voda Donbassa. Leshchenko, a pre-war low-level manager at a coal mine, who sided with the secessionist forces, and who became "military commander" of Khartysk and Illovaïsk at the height of the fighting in 2014. He was then promoted to the position of Zakharchenko's chief of staff. Also, the new head of DPR Denis Pushilin, used a public question and answer session with "citizens" to announce a "transfer" of the Ukrainian company to being under DPR control. These statements were echoed by the DPR "Minister for construction, housing and utilities", Naumets, who claimed to justify the seizure due to unpaid wages<sup>23</sup>. He announced the creation of a "state company which will bring together all water ducts and have all personnel registered as its employees". Claims that water supply is at risk of sabotage by the enemy – in January, DPR claimed that Ukrainian forces had laid mines at a water reservoir in LPR<sup>24</sup> – also appear to feed their argument in favor of a takeover.

- d. Economic limitations: revenue losses as new sources of vulnerability

The implementation of the energy sector reform (law “On the electricity market”) that has imposed market rules since July 1, in compliance with EU partnership and conditional to IMF funding, implements strict measures to industry-consumers: the selection of a private supplier, of pre-payment of electricity and the right for electricity suppliers to shut down power for unpaid debt. Having run up debts for years (see section above), VD facilities were shut off repeatedly by electricity suppliers at several key facilities in May-June, leaving parts of towns near the contact line without water (Kostyantynivka, Bakhmut, Lysychansk, Sloviansk). In its assessment, UNICEF’s Water and Sanitation cluster that monitors the situation, remarked that energy market reforms fail to make provisions for the protection of vulnerable communities, too poor to pay. In one case, local inhabitants gathered to block a local thoroughway to attract attention to their situation. Voda Donbasu apparently attempted to adapt to the situation by acquiring the status of energy supplier itself (it provides hydroelectricity) which allows them more rights, but on conditions of pre-payment.

## 4. The stakeholders: an increasingly complex multilevel and multinational interplay

The complexity of trans-frontline cooperation is reflected by the development of increasingly complex networks of stakeholders whose political and economic interests sometimes overlap and sometimes clash. Common sense would appear to dictate that providing water for the population in L/DPR is a guarantor of social stability and thus a common interest that authorities in both GCA and NGCA – as well as their agents should be interested in upholding. If water were cut - or of bad quality – in NGCA one could expect an exodus towards GCA and social dissatisfaction, as several experts familiar with GCA argued in interviews. Alternately, inadequate water supply could antagonize a population, either indigenous or IDPs, where reprimands towards the Kyiv and local governments are framed in terms of discrimination and ostracization. Economic actors, in particular those of the water-hungry agricultural, metals and chemical industry sectors – linked with political elites due to the hybridization of economic and political power in Ukraine – would also converge on these interests. The existence of such shared “humanitarian” interests is mobilized by some diplomats involved in the Minsk and Normandy formats as potentially confidence-building, through shared nonpolitical concerns, as a first step towards political negotiations, according to interviews. However, a more detailed stakeholder analysis reveals that rational choice logics only rarely supersede the other needs, demands and motivations of these political and economic actors.

- a. Micro-level stakeholders on both sides of the line of contact: consumers and employees

Populations and companies near the frontline, as consumers of water, are both the direct beneficiaries of the water supply system and essential economic actors. Their payment or non-payment for utilities has a direct influence on revenue. In 2016, the accounts of Voda Donbasu and other municipal companies had been frozen for non-payments of electricity bills. Their satisfaction or not with the services provided affects consumers’ willingness to pay in the broader context of a much-debated reform and price increase on utilities in GCA as part of the IMF reform recommendations. By law, water utilities companies are not permitted to cut off ordinary consumers from cold water supply for non-payment. The impact of consumers on the company differ in NGCA where for many months payments for water utilities could be made only in cash. Also, tariffs established by the local authorities in NGCA were until recently three times lower and payable in rubles.

**The employees** of the water utilities company KP Voda Donbasu. Their work involvement and readiness to take on permanent or intermittent risk, their expectations regarding salary payments and social services from the company have an immediate effect on operations. They cross the frontline both virtually and physically by working cross-border, some even commuting across home to their families. In this they embody the social ties that remain an aspect of everyday lives that characterizes the lives of the populations in both GCA/NGCA<sup>25</sup>. Both these categories of stakeholders tend to identify more closely with the “other side” because of pre-existing family, friendship or occupational ties, fitting the general picture of intensified cross-frontline interaction in communities living near the frontline.

**The managers of KP Voda Donbasu:** The executive managers of Voda Donbasu increasingly reach out to actors at an international level. For example, they communicate directly not only with international aid organizations but also with the OSCE SMM’s representatives and with the Trilateral Contact group in Minsk, for example to request the organization of windows of silence.

- b. National-level state institutions in GCA

While all representatives of legislative (Verkhovna Rada) and executive (Presidential Administration and Cabinet of Ministers) have a potential interest in ensuring the safety of water supply, there are three line ministries with more immediate responsibilities: the Ministry of Temporary Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons until August 2019<sup>26</sup>, the Ministry of Regional Development, and the Ministry of Ecology. However, with the new Ukrainian government in place, some changes are to be expected.

**Local stakeholders include municipal authorities in GCA and NGCA.** Because water supply infrastructure is economically and technically connected to electricity, heating, and fuel grids, local authorities act as civilians' most immediate interlocutors in water supply issues. There are deputy heads responsible for housing and utilities who serve as intermediaries with political and even military actors, especially in the towns that are included in the anti-terrorist operations, set-up where appointed civilian-military administrations replace elected bodies. These self-proclaimed authorities in LDPH are L/DPR exercising de facto control compete with Ukrainian legitimacy.

The distinction between local and national-level stakeholders in GCA is blurred by on-going reforms and by conflict-induced special laws. The current decentralization reform in GCA where state financial resources are being transferred to the district-level is not yet completed and it is only partially implemented in Donetsk oblast. Law No. 7163 "On special aspects of state policy to ensure Ukraine's state sovereignty in temporarily occupied areas in Donetsk and Luhansk regions" of February 2018 (commonly referred to as the "Donbas reintegration law" reframed the former Anti-Terrorist Operation under the authority of Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) into the Joint Forces Operations under the Ukrainian high military command with extended rights over territories within a unilaterally declared "red zone" near the contact line, placing them under military administration.

In NGCA, municipal authorities interact with VD, for instance as shown when over 87 people were affected by contaminated drinking water in Makiivka in 2018.

### c. Power and electricity grid providers

A recent development – resulting from the implementation of the energy market reform is the increased leverage of electricity providers who have cut off VD facilities due to bad debt. The issue of ensuring that water utilities companies be guaranteed power on humanitarian grounds – with the establishment of state-owned company *Ukrenergo* as provider of last resort – was, at the time of writing, being worked out at Cabinet level with input from international stakeholders (see section above). Until it is settled, however, vulnerabilities remain. Also, it should be noted that the grid operator DTEK who has switched off VD facilities in May-June belongs to the private SCM industrial holding that also owns companies that rely on VD water. This web of interactions and dependencies illustrates one of the complexities of stakeholder analysis in the case of infrastructure.

### d. Large businesses and their owners

The specific economic model of the industrial Donbas built on company towns makes the local industrial business an important stakeholder – as consumers but also as holders of potential political leverage<sup>27</sup>. The coke

factory in Avdiivka – which is connected to the Donbas water network- and is part of the industrial metals group Metinvest of Rinat Akhmetov, a politically influential businessman in Kyiv and the south-east of Ukraine, that, for a long time, received coal from Russia. This oligarchic ownership model means that local affairs are also highly integrated into the political-economic playing fields in both GCA and NGCA. Regarding water supply, these industrial interests appear to play out differently in GCA and NGCA. In GCA, industries can be cut from the water supply network for non-payment (whereas ordinary consumers are guaranteed at least cold water supply even if they don't pay). This means that companies in GCA, tend to pay their water bills. However, KP Voda Donbasu's own debts towards electricity producing companies – sometimes controlled by related economic groups – create a web of debts – and power plays - that is difficult to untangle with threats and, sometimes, actual power cuts. This power and financial interplay spills over into rumors of threats of power cuts, or attempted takeovers of water supply infrastructure. In NGCA, local sources claim that industries, often in crisis, (in the hands of local separatist authorities since the expropriation process in 2017) do not always pay their bills for public utilities. These losses in revenue can have political consequences for Voda Donbasu as reflected by recent statements made by the DPR authorities, which threaten to "nationalize" VD for unpaid salaries (see below for more on this).

### e. Armed stakeholders

Both Ukrainian armed forces and the armed formations of L/DPR constitute key stakeholders on the ground as they determine the level of violence.

The Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) brought together Ukrainian armed forces, armed formations of NGCA, and representatives of Russian armed forces (until December 2017). The JCCC is a body that was established informally by the presidents of Russia and Ukraine during the Minsk II negotiations as a cooperative organ to oversee the implementation of the ceasefire through 24/7 shifts of a mixed team of Ukrainian/Russian officers living and working from a sanatorium at Soledar (GCA) with representatives of the de facto L/DPR authorities as observers. But in December 2017, Moscow pulled out its officers. The JCCC, now staffed exclusively by Ukrainian officers, coordinates with representatives of the L/DPR armed formations via OSCE mediation. The absence of the Russian side poses problems for the implementation of de-mining and the implementation of ceasefires<sup>28</sup>. The shelling of water infrastructure takes place almost daily. While the location of some facilities like the Donetsk Filter Station between two frontlines makes them into a "natural" object of collateral damage, many incidents indicate that VD facilities, transport, or workers were actual targets, as in April 2018 when a bus transporting employees of the Donetsk Filter station was hit by small arms fire, or also the case earlier this year concerning the road cleaning crew.



## f. International stakeholders

### **The OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine:**

In most scenarios to secure water supply, the OSCE's SMM – representing its 57 member states including Russia – has played a key role as a mediator and an implementor of security conditions on the ground. Water supply issues are regularly the object of concern and discussions at the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk where Russia is a representative and can thus directly intervene in discussions.

The OSCE's role as monitor and mediator in providing security guarantees for establishing windows of silence and patrols to increase the safety of water utilities employees is mentioned throughout this report. However, its efficiency is largely dependent on the willingness to cooperate by the parties involved in the conflict. After five employees of the Donetsk Filter Station were injured by small arms fire during a bus commute from work, the facility shut down for several days causing shortages to 380,000 people. For water supply to resume, the OSCE engaged in dialogue facilitation between the sides and organized 515 patrols over 130 days to secure employee access to the facility. However, these security guarantees remain largely ad hoc management of ceasefire violations rather than solutions (that can only be provided by the warring sides). In addition to the security aspects analyzed above, the OSCE has been involved in organizing the transfer of funds from GCA to NGCA<sup>29</sup>.

### **The Trilateral Contact group:**

Within the Minsk Protocol set-up, the Trilateral Contact group (Russia, Ukraine, and OSCE) is the framework for facilitating a diplomatic resolution to the conflict in Ukraine. Since the Russian withdrawal from the JCCC, the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine remains the only institutional stakeholder where Russia is present: Boris Gryzlov (a former speaker of the Duma, the Russian lower chamber of Parliament), Vladislav Surkov (an influential advisor to V. Putin widely believed to be the curator of L/ DPR affairs in the Kremlin). Ukraine's representative was Yevheniy Marchuk (a former Prime Minister of Ukraine and former head of the security services, since replaced by former president Leonid Kuchma who had held the position in 2014-2017) and OSCE's representative Austrian diplomat Martin Sajdik. The de facto authorities are present, though not as official members. Two sub-working groups address more specifically issues of infrastructure security and economics. The Working Group on Security Issues (WGSi), chaired by the SMM Chief Monitor discusses security issues that affect civilians – for instance protecting populations through demining, protecting infrastructure and so on. The economic aspects of water supply are becoming a concern of the Trilateral Group's Working Group on Economic Issues (WGEI) such as the organization of transfer of funds. Based on official statements by the de facto authorities, recent decisions made by the WGEI on KP Voda Donbasu

were utilized by the DPR's de facto authorities as a legitimization platform, for instance by advertising their "minister for foreign affairs" as a representative in Minsk. A recent WGEI proposal to organize an international audit of KP Voda Donbasu was interpreted by DPR as their political success<sup>30</sup>.

### **International humanitarian aid agencies and organizations:**

As reported throughout this paper, the role of international aid organizations in ensuring that water supply is sustained has also been essential. The UNICEF-coordinated Water and Sanitation (WASH) Cluster monitors the situation and coordinates actions of different agencies and shares the info with relevant actors; UNICEF provides in kind aid to water supply organizations, and facilitates coordination between organizations providing aid. In kind aid includes equipment and spare parts as well as purifying reagents such as chlorine and aluminum sulphate. It also provides water cisterns and other technical support to respond to water supply breakdowns.

### **Civil society initiatives:**

The strong social links between populations on both sides of the frontline described by polls and ethnographic research<sup>31</sup> are built on family and friendship ties as well as shared concerns about safety and access to basic services. Ad hoc popular initiatives such as the barring of roads in demand for better water supply like last May on the Kostyantynivka-Pokrovsk road following the power cuts due to debt did appear to spur reactions in Kyiv with the adoption of a protective Cabinet of Ministers directive a few weeks before elections<sup>32</sup>. However, community solidarity does not necessarily transform into civil society activism. Some of the shared security demands are formulated by Civil Society Organizations, for instance improved checkpoint crossing rules, demining and general appeals for a respect of the Minsk ceasefire demilitarized zones.

While some organizations (national and international) have also made efforts to mobilize themselves and the population calling for increased access to water in Donbas, success has been limited.

In 2018 a coalition of NGOs (including *Mama 86*, *ADRA Ukraine*, *People in Need*, *Polish Humanitarian Action*, *Première Urgence Internationale*, *Terre des Hommes*, and *Proliska*) did initiate a national "right to water" in Donbas appeal. It was formulated as a petition distributed through the platform of the Presidential administration<sup>33</sup>. However, the signing of the petition required internet access making it not very user-friendly for those most directly affected by the problem: poor and (not IT savvy) elderly populations in towns with bad internet connections near the line of contact. As a result, the petition has received only 440 signatures.

The advocacy efforts of this coalition of NGOs had more success with mobilizing international actors -for

instance, with an exhibition in Kyiv, opened by the Head of the European Union who called on the government of Ukraine to take all measures to mitigate the impact of the Energy Market Reform on access to water in the Donbas-, than the government of Ukraine itself.

Other examples of advocacy include the actions of Mama 86, an NGO that addresses environmental issues in reaction to the long-term aftermath of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident, one of the few specifically targeting water, although mostly from a general perspective on the right to safe, affordable and equal access to drinking water. It does some advocacy actions at Parliamentary level (for instance lobbying the inclusion of Water quality in Donbas" as a target of the national framework on access to water.

Another example is NGO *Alternativa*, that included water infrastructure in its report on housing and utilities infrastructure in the conflict zone and recommendations to cease attacks on civilian infrastructure. Another example is initiatives such as the development of independent water resources for rural areas near the line of contact, for instance the construction of a water tower in Volnovakha.

Indeed, addressing cross-border water supply directly at a civil society level is difficult because, as demonstrated above, cross-border infrastructure management issues result from a variety of stakeholders and causes that are highly geo-politicized where civil society has had little leverage over influential actors so far. A case in point is the difficulty with which even persistent demands by civil society backed by international humanitarian organizations for the establishment of safe zones from shelling around critical infrastructure near the frontline in order to protect both facilities and workers have not resulted in any measures by either of the warring sides.

## 5. Trends in the evolution of water management in times of conflict

### a. Internationalization of water management as a means for improved water distribution

Many of the contingencies of cross-border cooperation are increasingly addressed at an international level, as seen above through the role of the OSCE in mediating local truces. As both water supply and quality has been compromised by the conflict, international cooperation has become a lifeline for civilians. International actors – UNICEF, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the Swiss government just to cite a few examples– supplement the loss of revenue through in kind donations.

The internationalization fueled by a need for water security has also been taking place at a corporate level within VD. Just five years ago, KP Voda Donbasu did not have a department for external relations, because, as a local company it had no transnational activities: even electricity was provided locally. Since 2014, international relations have become a main strategic focus with a deputy director specifically appointed to fulfill this mission.

More recently water supply developments have an added international dimension with the entry of private actors. In 2019, the French government agreed on a 64 million euros soft loan to Ukraine for an upgrade and diversification of the water supply system to Mariupol by a consortium of private French companies Stereau, a daughter of the water supply company Saur, specializing in water treatment engineering<sup>34</sup>, and Beten International, a private engineering company specialized in projects in the post-Soviet space<sup>35</sup>. Located at the very end of the KP Voda Donbasu supply chain, Mariupol's water supply is particularly vulnerable to disruptions. The city of 500,000 has switched 70% of water resources to a local reservoir, the capacity of which, however, is reaching its limits. The implementation of the French plan would change the infrastructure system by introducing foreign ownership into the water supply management system near the conflict zone.

### b. Limits of civil society's role

In the context of this highly geo-politicized conflict, the scope of action for civil society organizations appears small. Indeed, broad transnational studies show the overall difficulties of civil society's role in peacebuilding: though potentially relevant, civil society is difficult in a context of intense violence<sup>36</sup>. However, civil society's role could perhaps be used to engage other stakeholders in more collaborative efforts through advocacy of problems and needs:

- at a consumer level, public civic campaigns on timely payment for water as a common responsibility and civic position;
- possible avenues for civil society actions could include developing requests underlining the non-controversial character of water supply, by encouraging a de-politicization of very concrete matters of shared interest such as water quality and ecological safety;
- it could also pick up on recommendations brought forward by international actors such as the establishment of "safe zones" around pumping stations and filter stations on the front line and guarantees for water technicians of their safety while working in dangerous locations;
- the development of early-warning collaborative social network platforms on breakdowns in water supply could also ensure a politically neutral approach towards water supply issues.

## Endnotes

1 In this report, we use several terms to describe the main protagonists in the conflict according to context. We designate the Moscow-backed rebels as the de facto authorities of the self-proclaimed “peoples’ republics” of Lugansk (LPR) and Donetsk (DPR) or L/DPR when referring to their powers and actions, otherwise as non-government-controlled areas (NGCA) v. government-controlled Ukraine – which is the internationally accepted terminology. Also, Ukrainian legislation refers to NGCA as “temporarily occupied territories”, a terminology that this report uses to reflect Ukrainian government positions.

2 On September 5, 2014, the Minsk Protocol – an agreement to halt the war in Donbas was signed by representatives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the L/DPR, under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as a result of long difficult talks held in Minsk, Belarus. Its main purpose was the introduce an immediate ceasefire that, however, did not halt the fighting. A follow-up to the Minsk Protocol was agreed to on 19 September 2014 with concrete peacekeeping measures listed including for belligerents to pull heavy weaponry 15 kilometres back on each side of the line of contact. In face of continued fighting, another pack of measures was agreed to on 12 February 2015 (Minsk II), by the leaders of Russia, Ukraine France, and Germany under the auspices of the OSCE. New peacekeeping measures included pulling out all heavy weapons by both sides with the aim of creation of a security zone on minimum 50 kilometres for artillery, and up to 140 kilometres for multiple rocket launchers.

3 See the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine’s reports on the situation, including ceasefire violations: <https://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/reports>

4 UNOCHA/ reliefweb 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview for Ukraine. <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-2019-humanitarian-needs-overview-hno>

5 See for example the re-organization of employment networks in Yasynuvata district in GCA along the contact line 2013/2018 according to the Capacity and Vulnerability assessment for Yasynuvata rayon by the REACH consortium, p. 12, 01/2018. [reach\\_ukr\\_situation\\_overview\\_cva\\_yasynuvata\\_raion\\_january\\_2018.pdf](https://reach-ukr.org/raion_january_2018.pdf)

6 See UNICEF Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) cluster webpage outline of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene situation. <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/water-sanitation-and-hygiene-wash>.

7 Fischer, Sabine. 2019. “The Donbas Conflict: Opposing Interests and Narratives, Difficult Peace Process.”. Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik. SWP Research Paper 5 April 2019. [https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/research\\_papers/2019RP05\\_fhs.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/research_papers/2019RP05_fhs.pdf)

8 26 seats were left vacant because located in areas under the rule of de facto authorities where elections couldn’t be held.

9 At moment of editing a new Cabinet had just been appointed but developments remain unclear.

10 See UNICEF Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) cluster webpage outline of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene situation. <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/water-sanitation-and-hygiene-wash>.

11 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. “SMM Facilitation and Monitoring of Infrastructure Repair in Eastern Ukraine – January 2017–August 2018,” December 6, 2018.

12 See the reports at: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/water-sanitation-and-hygiene>

13 Decree by DPR head 15.10.2018 [http://www.vodadonbassa.ru/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Ukaz\\_N32\\_15.10.2018.pdf](http://www.vodadonbassa.ru/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Ukaz_N32_15.10.2018.pdf)

14 Decree by DPR head “On the creation of the State company “Voda Donbassa”, Decree N329, 30.11.2017. <http://www.vodadonbassa.ru/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Приказ-о-созд.с-ред.-уставными.pdf>

15 DNR LIVE, 6.07.2019. <http://dnr-live.ru/pravitelstvo-peredalo-gp-voda-donbassa-beshoznyie-obektyi-vodosnabzheniya-v-elenovke/>. Ministry of communal services and construction of the DPR, directive “№48, 05.07.2019 authorizes the transfer of. <https://minstroy-dnr.ru/48-ot-05-07-2019-o-zakreplenii-za-gp-voda-donbassa-imushchestva-na-prave-hozyajstvennogo-vedeniya>.

16 [ostro.org](http://ostro.org) 29.01.2019. V ORDO podgotovili “dorožnuú kartu” po otžimu časti KP “Voda Donbassa” and my dolžny obespečit’ sotrudnikov KP “Voda Donbassa” stabil’noj zarplatoj”

17 In the last election, Opposition platform-For life list passed the threshold under the party list voting and hold the second largest faction with 43 deputies. The Opposition Bloc received 6 deputies in first-past-the post single-mandate constituencies.

18 V. Putin is the godfather of one of V. Medvechuk’s children.

19 The employees of VD are not an isolated case. For example, some of the employees at Avdiivka coke-producing plant (AKKhZ) in GCA, are bussed in shifts from NGCA where they reside.

20 Cross-frontline affinities see ZOIS Sasse, Gwendolyn. “The Donbas – Two Parts, Or Still One?,” Report 2/2017.

21 See for example the statements by former president V. Yushchenko (who is not a candidate in the election). Mir’ Mnogih Kandidatov Označæt Kollaboracionizm – Ŭsenko”. 28.02.2019. <https://observer.net.ua/politics/46230/>.

22 “‘Otžavšie’ Doneck. Kto rukovodit v ‘DNR’ — ОстроВ.” <https://www.ostro.org/general/politics/articles/496569/>.

23 “DPR Ministry Draws ‘Road Map’ to Transfer Part of Voda Donbassa Company under State Control | DAN.” 209.01.2019 <https://dan-news.info/en/economy/dpr-ministry-draws-road-map-to-transfer-part-of-voda-donbassa-company-under-state-control.html>. (DPR news site)

24 <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/592903-lnr-minirovanie-vodohranilišhe> RT 16.01.2019 V LNR soobšili o minirovanii VSU vodohraniliša v Donbasse

25 Sasse, Gwendolyn. “The Donbas – two parts or still one?,” ZOIS report # 2/2017. [https://www.zois-berlin.de/fileadmin/media/Dateien/ZOIS\\_Reports/ZOIS\\_Report\\_2\\_2017.pdf](https://www.zois-berlin.de/fileadmin/media/Dateien/ZOIS_Reports/ZOIS_Report_2_2017.pdf)

26 The new Ukrainian Cabinet (September 2, 2019) features a new ministry merging with Ministry of Veterans. The new responsibilities are unclear.

27 Welle (www.dw.com), Deutsche. “‘Коксовый пирог’: как переживает войну коксохимический завод в Авдеевке | DW | 20.09.2016.” DW.COM. Accessed February 23, 2019.

28 See OSCE report, op.cit. p.3

29 For example in August 2017, the OSCE’s SMM monitored a transfer of funds over a bridge in Shchastiya <https://www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine/335496>



30 DPR official website : “A project note to carry out an international audit at Voda Donbassa Public Utilities Company has been agreed upon in Minsk” <https://dnr-online.ru/v-minske-soglasovali-proektnuyu-zapisku-provedeniya-mezhdunarodnogo-audita-kp-kompaniya-voda-donbassa/>. 17.01.2019

31 See ZOI report, 2017

32 “Жители одного из районов Константиновки перекрыли дорогу на Бахмут из-за отсутствия воды — ОстроВ.” 14.06.2019 <https://www.ostro.org/donetsk/society/news/570541/>. It should be pointed out that these protective measures involved only the Ukrainian Government, necessitated no trans-frontline cooperation and were related to the electricity market reform and not to the conflict.

33 [https://petition.president.gov.ua/petition/47447?fbclid=IwAR2ueb6X-ZuXDWsjKicFOK2Nt4HpIL3sLk4eZCsPtxIJT\\_tgFvaZgQ-qlqhA](https://petition.president.gov.ua/petition/47447?fbclid=IwAR2ueb6X-ZuXDWsjKicFOK2Nt4HpIL3sLk4eZCsPtxIJT_tgFvaZgQ-qlqhA)

34 Saur website. gestion des services publics des collectivités. <https://www.saur.com/en/core-business/engineering/stereau-processes/>.

35 “Historique – Beten Ingénierie International.” Accessed February 27, 2019. <https://beteninternational.com/history/>.

36 n.d., 2016. “Civil Society in Peace Processes at a Glance”, Geneva: Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies), April 2016.



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## Water in Conflict:

Five years after the Minsk ceasefire agreements, the unresolved issue of clean water supply to civilians in Donbas. Adaptation, limitations and outlines of cooperation

This report shows how the supply of safe and reliable drinking water is becoming more acute – not less – as the war\*, even at lower intensity levels, continues. Lack of maintenance due to lack of financing and safe access, the complexity of setting up local ceasefires, dependency on external international aid to supplement revenue losses are all factors that, combined, add to the depreciation of infrastructure. In this context, international actors play a crucial part – due to their political and financial leverage – to establish safe water supply as a shared interest for all parties. However, while water needs are covered in different ways thanks to the intervention of donors, NGOs (local and international) and UN agencies, the scope of the needs is very large (Voda Donbasu's needs of capital investments, for example), too large for these actors to be able to provide for it in a sustainable manner. Civil society advocacy can draw attention to the issues. Though quite unsuccessful so far to reach government, it has been more successful in further engaging external actors.

This publication is developed in the framework of the activity of CivilM+ platform.

CivilM+ is an independent international civil society platform, which mission is to active integration of civil initiatives to restore the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts as peaceful, integrated and developed regions as part of a democratic Ukraine and a united European space, with the active participation of the region's population and those who have left the region due to the conflict.

More about the platform and it's members on the website [civilmplus.org](http://civilmplus.org)

\* <https://www.clovekvtisni.cz/en/dear-mr-president-ensure-that-all-of-ukraine-west-to-east-enjoys-access-to-water-5397gp>

