

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



May 7 – 13, 2021

DONETSK AND LUHANSK REGIONS WERE CHANGED TO THE 'YELLOW ZONE'

[According to Ministry of Healthcare of Ukraine](#) as of 13 May, 85,046 COVID-19 cases have been registered in the government-controlled part of Donetsk region (3,052 new cases in one week), and 24,909 – in the government-controlled part of Luhansk region (921 new cases in one week). As of the same date, the self-proclaimed 'republic' 'DPR' has [reported](#) 904 new cases (34,764 cases in total) while 'LPR' [reported](#) 83 new cases during the same week (4,430 in total). Despite the fact this week saw more new cases than the previous one, Donetsk and Luhansk regions were changed to the 'yellow zone' with regards to the epidemiological situation.

PUTIN INTRODUCED A DRAFT LAW WHICH DENUNCIATE THE TREATY ON OPEN SKIES

On 11 May, the president of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin [introduced](#) a draft law which would denunciate the Treaty on Open Skies that allow unarmed reconnaissance flights over the territories of state-participants to the treaty. The reason for this move [was claimed](#) to be the breach of their treaty obligations from the side of the US, but the representative of US Department of State Ned Price [stated](#) that the decision on the US participation to the Open Skies Treaty is pending. Experts [share opinions](#) on whether it will be now possible to track Russia's military movements.

THE EU CONSIDERS RUSSIA TO BE CONDUCTING A "DE FACTO INTEGRATION" OF "LPR" AND "DPR" TO RUSSIA

[According to a document](#) the European Union presented this week to its member states, the EU considers that such actions as the organization of elections in Donbas and the issuance of Russian passports to the residents of the self-proclaimed 'DPR' and 'LPR' are aimed at the *de facto* integration of these areas of Donbas to Russia. Strengthening support for countering hybrid threats, including countering cyberthreats and disinformation, assistance with the COVID-19 vaccination and reinforcement of measures to deny the recognition of Russian passports issued to the residents of Crimea and Donbas were listed among the measures the EU could undertake to 'increase Ukraine's resilience against Russian aggression'. The spokesperson of the Russian president Mr Dmitrii Peskov [stated](#) that Russia does not have such plans with regards to Donbas.

RUSSIAN POLITICIANS VISITED DONBAS

11 May in the so-called 'DPR' marked the 7th anniversary of the 'referendum'. On this occasion, several Russian politicians [visited](#) Donetsk, including the deputy head of the Federation Council, the Secretary of the General Council of the party 'United Russia' Mr Andrei Turchak. The MFA of Ukraine [protested](#) and underlined that such actions violate Russia's obligations under the Minsk agreements and the agreements of the leaders within the Normandy format. A day before his visit, Mr Turchak [stated](#) that Donbas residents who have Russian citizenship will be able to participate in the State Duma elections. [According to the East Human Rights Group](#), polling stations will be organized in the areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions that are not controlled by the Ukrainian government.

MILITARY EQUIPMENT PROHIBITED BY THE MINSK AGREEMENTS WAS USED AT THE PARADE IN THE "DPR"

9 May saw military parades in [Donetsk](#) and [Luhansk](#) to mark the 76th anniversary of the victory in the World War II. The monitors of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission [stated](#) that military equipment and weaponry prohibited under the Minsk agreements were used at the parade in Donetsk.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SIMULTANEOUS RELEASE OF DETAINEES ARE REPORTED TO BE ONGOING WITHIN TRILATERAL CONTACT GROUP (TCG)

Over 100 people, the majority of them are military personnel, are in Ukrainian lists, [according](#) to Oleksii Arestovych, the advisor of Ukrainian delegation. He also said there is still no date for the 'exchange', blaming the delay on Russia. The so-called 'DPR' and 'LPR' have also [provided](#) their lists. A surgeon, a teacher, a coal miner and a Red Cross volunteer: 'Donbas Realii' (Radio Liberty) [talk](#) about people waiting for the release.

PROBLEMS OF INDUSTRY IN DONBAS

Radio Liberty's reports about the [situation with the Donbas industry](#), [changes](#) over the last seven years, and the recent 'decrees' on the confiscation of the 'abandoned property'.