

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



June 11 – 17, 2021

MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTS OF THE US AND RUSSIAN FEDERATION: AMBIGUOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR UKRAINE

On 16 June, the US President Joe Biden and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin met in Geneva. As was stated at a [press conference](#) afterwards, Ukraine was on the agenda, and the US reaffirmed their support to Ukraine's territorial integrity. The ways to unblock the [Minsk process](#) were also discussed. According to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba, neither the course nor the conclusions of the negotiations [raised concerns](#) in Ukraine. The spokesperson of the Russian president Dmitrii Peskov [stated](#) that the parties did not discuss the potential inclusion of the United States to the Normandy format.

'Donbas. Realii' presents the analysis of the key Donbas-related summit [results](#). While commenting on the summit results for Ukraine, the [Atlantic Council experts note](#) their ambiguity. On one hand, the US demonstrated their interest in putting the Russian aggression in Donbas to an end, on the other hand, only the next months will give clarity as to whether this will change anything in Russian politics and whether the US and Europe will be more willing to use their powers to counter Russia. According to the article in [Kyiv Post](#), another problem could resurface from the discussions about fighting corruption as a precondition for Ukraine to join NATO. Russia could take it as a signal to apply more efforts to encourage corruption in Ukraine.

RESTRICTIONS ON THE EXIT FOR CHILDREN FROM UNCONTROLLED AREAS OF DONBAS VIOLATE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The Prosecutor General's Office in Ukraine started an [investigation](#) into restrictions of exit for children older than 14 years old from the areas of the so-called "DPR". It has been established that the only possibility to exit the areas for those who did not manage to receive Ukrainian passports is getting Russian passports or the "DPR" "documents". As the higher education institutions' [admission campaign for school graduates](#) from temporary uncontrolled by the Ukrainian government areas has been started, these restrictions constitute, among others, violation of the right to education. Due to this, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine [turned to the State Border Service of Ukraine](#) with a proposal to consider elimination of fines for school graduates that are forced to enter Ukraine through Russian territory, adding that the mechanism for remote university entry for students is lacking. A coalition of Ukrainian NGOs dealing with issues of internally displaced people and victims of the conflict urges lawmakers to adopt the respective amendments to the legislation, having addressed the [request](#) to Verkhovna Rada.

OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE SAID THAT FULLY OPERATIONAL CROSSING POINTS IN DONBAS WERE HER PRIORITY

On 14-15 June, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden Ann Linde [visited](#) Ukraine to understand the situation in Donbas. Linde visited an entry-exit crossing point (EECP) Novotroitske. Currently, this is the only operational EECP in Donetsk region, while all the others are being blocked by the so-called 'DPR'. The 'authorities' of the self-proclaimed 'republic' [say](#) they do not even consider reopening the EECPs because of the "situation with COVID-19 and vaccination" in government-controlled territory.

At the same time, on 17 June, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine [cancelled](#) the requirement for citizens of Ukraine arriving from temporarily occupied territory of Donbas to go on a self-isolation or to the observation sites. Starting from the same date, all territory of Ukraine has been recognized as the 'green zone' with regards to the epidemiological situation. Ann Linde said it was her [priority](#) to see the full-fledged operations of the EECP at the contact line in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. She underlined that the situation requires the ongoing attention from the OSCE.

G7: RUSSIA IS A PARTIE TO THE CONFLICT IN DONBAS

In a [communiqué](#) issued after a three-day G7 summit, the leaders of the United States, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan reaffirmed the position that Russia is a partie, and not a mediator, in the armed conflict in Donbas. The G7 group expressed its support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. The communiqué underlines that Russia must withdraw its military forces from Ukraine's eastern border.

TRIAL IN THE CASE OF MH 17 PLANE CRASH

[Hearings on the merits](#) continue in the Netherlands in the case of the MH17 plane crash in Donbas in 2014. During the first four days, photo and video evidence were presented and witnesses heard. The prosecution was talking about the artillery fire from the territory of Russian Federation near Ukrainian-Russian border in summer 2014. The State Prosecutor Ward Ferdinandusse noted that in a number of tracked phone conversations there are requests from 'DPR' for the artillery support from Russia. Numerous sources in the case confirm that such a support was granted, despite the fact that Russia denies it. He also said that the facts of shelling have been confirmed by the Bellingcat investigations, Dutch military intelligence (MIVD) and a British analytical center RUSI. [Written broadcast](#) of the hearings is available from the Ukrainian media 'Graty' that does judicial reporting.

UKRAINE AND NATO RAPPROCHEMENT: OPINIONS

NATO leaders called on Russia to stop destabilizing Ukraine and to abide by the Minsk agreements. This was [stated](#) in a communique adopted at the summit on 14 June. [For the first time](#) since 2008, the document mentioned that Ukraine would become a NATO member by implementing the Membership Action Plan. The president of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy [welcomed](#) this communique and noted that Ukraine already contributes to ensuring security in the region. He also [stressed](#) the importance of having a more specific timeline for the rapprochement with NATO. Russia, meanwhile, is concerned with the possibility of Ukraine being granted the NATO Membership Action Plan, according to a [comment](#) by Dmitrii Peskov, a spokesperson of the president of the Russian Federation. Expert [opinions](#) on the perspectives of this rapprochement are presented in a publication by 'Donbas. Realiï'.

At the press-conference concluding the NATO summit, the US president Joe Biden [said](#) that Ukraine would be given the Membership Action Plan when it would fit the criteria of the Alliance. He noted that everything possible will be done for Ukraine to be able to withstand Russia's physical aggression.

