

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



June 18 – 24, 2021

EU-RUSSIA SUMMITS: DISCUSSING POTENTIAL RECOMMENCEMENT

German Chancellor Angela Merkel [considers](#) it necessary to establish mechanisms of EU joint reaction to the hybrid attacks from Russia, as well as to hold negotiations between EU and Russia to prevent further deterioration in relations, she said on 24 June giving a speech in Bundestag. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Mr. Dmytro Kuleba [said](#) he was against the renewal of the EU-Russia summits, noting that the suspension of a high-level political dialogue between the European Union and Russia has been a part of the sanctions policy since 2014. The same day the EU summit started where the issue of its relations with Russia would prevail. As an outcome of the summit's first day, however, the suggestion to recommence negotiations [was excluded](#) from the communique. 'European Truth' [analyzes](#) the change in the EU strategy towards Russia.

WAYS TO OVERCOME THE CRISIS OF MINSK AGREEMENTS

One of the key reasons for the crisis of the Minsk agreements in their current shape is that Russia has *de-facto* modified their conditions, including via issuing passports for the residents of the Donbas territory that is temporarily not controlled by the Ukrainian government, [said](#) the Secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council Oleksii Danylov. According to him, the passportisation issue should be brought to the negotiations' agenda. The Head of the Ukrainian delegation in the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) Leonid Kravchuk [stated](#) that the Minsk agreements require radical changes, being ineffective in their current format. A political analyst Vitalii Portnikov offers his analysis of how Minsk agreements are perceived in Ukraine, Russia and in other countries in his [piece for Radio Liberty](#). [According to the OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid](#), the signatories to the Minsk agreements should reconfirm their commitment to fulfil them. "I will do all I can to support the peaceful resolution of the conflict. Yet, this would not be possible unless

all the parties that signed the Minsk agreement reconfirm their obligations and start fulfilling them with a new wave of diligence”.

'BORDER' OPENED BETWEEN 'L/DPR'

On 19 June, the crossing of people and goods across the so-called 'border' between the two self-proclaimed 'republics' was [renewed](#), after one year of being blocked. [According to Pavlo Lysianskyi](#), the Head of the Ukrainian 'East Human Rights Group', there are political reasons behind this. In particular, the 'borders' may have been reopened to mobilise the electorate in the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions for their participation in the elections to the Russian State Duma, and to reduce negative attitudes towards Russia. A human right NGO Truth Hounds has presented the [analysis](#) of the operations of the entry-exit crossing points between the so-called 'republics' and government-controlled territory. The report looks into the crossing conditions from the 'L/DPR' side during the pandemic.

FLOODING DONBAS WITH RUSSIAN DOCUMENTS

A simplified procedure [was introduced](#) in the so-called 'L/DPR' to receive Russian insurance number of a personal account and to register at the Unified portal of the state serviced of Russia. Ukrainian experts [commented](#) to Radio Liberty about the purposes of Russia's flooding with its documents the territories of Donbas that are not controlled by the Ukrainian government.

RUSSIA ATTEMPTS TO ACCUSE UKRAINE OF PROVOKING THE CRISIS IN DONBAS

During a Moscow conference on international security, the Ministry of Defence of the RF Sergei Shoigu [referred](#) to the situation in Europe as 'inflammable' and to the one demanding taking decisions for de-escalation. He also blamed Ukraine for 'provoking' the crisis in Donbas ahead of the NATO summit in Brussels. Russian delegation to the UN made a similar [statement](#) calling the UN Security Council to condemn the actions of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Ukrainian military expert Igal Levin [analyzes](#) the statements from the side of Russia: their aim is to discredit Ukraine against the backdrop of the maritime military exercise Sea Breeze-2021.

MEETING OF THE TRILATERAL CONTACT GROUP: NO AGREEMENT ON SECURITY MEASURES

On 23 June, a Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) had its regular meeting to discuss the ceasefire, the 'exchange' of detainees, water supply, pension payments and property rights. A special representative of the OSCE Chairperson in Ukraine and in the TCG Ambassador Heidi Grau [underlined](#) that clear measures to improve the security situation, including demining, were not agreed. Environmental challenges had a special place in the agenda, in particular the establishment of the expert group on flooded mines. In his comments about the meeting, the Head of Ukrainian delegation in TCG Leonid Kravchuk [stated](#) that Russia is violation the International Treaty on

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by blocking the access of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors to the nuclear materials in the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk region that is temporarily not controlled by the Ukrainian government.

LAW ON WAR CRIMINALS: IMPLEMENTATION PERSPECTIVES

According to the deputy Prosecutor General of Ukraine Mr Gunduz Mamedov, Russian Federation and illegal armed formations have committed over 30,000 crimes in Crimea and Donbas. Together with the representatives of human rights organizations, he [published](#) an Op-ed about the possibilities to implement in Ukraine the norm of international humanitarian law and international criminal law, and the adoption perspectives for the law draft No.2689.