

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



June 25 – July 1, 2021

POSSIBILITY OF “THE WALL” IN DONBAS: OPINIONS

Commenting on the likelihood of asking about breaking up the relationships with the parts of Donbas uncontrolled by Ukrainian government that had been admitted by the president Zelenski in an [interview](#), the speaker of Verkhovna Rada Dmitry Razumkov [underscored](#) that it was impossible because the Constitution of Ukraine does not envisage a referendum on issues of the territorial integrity of the country. [According to him](#), the President of Ukraine meant the question of freezing the integration process of Donbas for a certain period of time. The press-secretary of the Russian president Dmitry Peskov [stated](#) that “de facto, Kyiv had already broken up relations with Donbas”. [According to journalist Stanislav Aseev](#), invisible “wall” at the contact line is built with the closed entry-exit points and granting Donbas residents Russian passports, and it is not easy to destroy it.

DISCUSSION ON INCLUSION OF THE US IN THE PEACEFUL PROCESS IN DONBAS

The advisor of Ukrainian delegation in the Trilateral Contact Group Oleksiy Arestovych [believes](#) that Leonid Kravchuk’s plan and peaceful clusters that France, Germany, and Ukraine put forward together for Russia’s consideration are currently specific alternatives to promote implementation of the Minsk Agreements. He added that Western countries had not managed to influence Russia’s position in regards to Ukraine so far. The US State Secretary Antony Blinken [stated](#) the readiness of the

US to start work in the Normandy format in case Russia is ready to be serious about the implementation of the Minsk Agreements: “The real test is whether Russia is serious or not”. [According to Oleksiy Reznikov](#), the Minister of Ukraine on the issues of the reintegration of temporary occupied areas, the US can be engaged in the peaceful process in Donbas through any of the existing negotiation platforms including through having their representatives to any of the TCG groups. He also [underscored](#) that the representatives of the so-called “L/DPR” would not be able to attend the broadened Normandy negotiations with the US’ participation unless they are officially included into the Russian delegation. RFE/RL’s “Donbas Realities” offers their [analysis](#) of the situation.

FINES FOR FORCED EXIT FROM OCCUPIED AREAS THROUGH RUSSIA ARE TEMPORARILY CANCELLED

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [cancelled](#) fines for residents of the uncontrolled areas of Donbas that are forced to leave the areas through Russia. The cancellation is temporarily and is for the period of lockdown or blockage of the entry-exit crossing points. The fines are not applied if the reasons for travelling are humanitarian as [previously identified](#) by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

VACCINATION IS ONE OF THE REASONS TO CROSS THE CONTACT LINE

After cancellation of the obligatory two week self isolation, the number of people crossing the contact line into government-controlled areas at the EECP “Stanytsia Luhanska” [has increased](#). Compared to the previous week, there was 50% increase. This EECP is currently the only one in Donbas that is open every day. One of the aims of [crossing](#) is vaccination against COVID. Over 500 persons crossing the contact line from “LPR” have been vaccinated. However, since the start of the vaccination campaign for residents of the uncontrolled areas of Donetsk region, only one person has been [vaccinated](#). This is caused by blocking of the EECP from the “DPR” side most of the time. Ukraine is not planning to strengthen quarantine measures at the [EECP](#).

OVER 200 THOUSAND PENSIONERS IN DONBAS DID NOT APPLY FOR RESTORATION OF PENSIONS

The number of Ukrainian pensioners that did not apply for restoration of pension payments over seven years of the conflict is around 200 thousand people, [according to the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine](#). The amount of the [pension debt](#) is over UAH 90 billion. Meanwhile in “L/DPR”, the campaign on issuing Russian individual insurance numbers is on-going. One of the voiced reasons for this is the possibility of receiving Russian pensions, however, according to the law, these pensions can be given only to people that reside in Russia. “Novosti Donbassa” offers [their analysis of the situation](#).

THE US AND GERMANY ARE DISCUSSING PLAN OF ACTIONS IN RELATION TO “NORD STREAM 2” LAUNCH

The US and Germany are planning to sign an agreement to strengthen Ukrainian energy sector, minimize geopolitical advantages and restrain the Russian aggression with sanctions after the launch of the gas pipe “Nord Stream 2”. However, the information about the process and its specific outcomes is contradictory, according to the [article](#) published in Bloomberg. Anka Feldhusen, the Ambassador of Germany to Ukraine, [regards](#) the discussions of possible Russian attack against Ukraine after gas transit stops through the country as speculative. However, she stresses the importance to consider the direct military threat posed by “Nord Stream 2” launch, not only to Ukraine, but also to other countries in Europe.