

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



July 30 – August 5, 2021

UKRAINE TIGHTENS RULES FOR EECP CROSSING DUE TO COVID-19

On 5 August, the [tightened rules for crossing of the state border](#) and entry-exit crossing points (EECP) entered into force in Ukraine. In particular, they define who among persons arriving from uncontrolled areas must undergo self-isolation that ceases in case of the negative result of rapid test taken after crossing the border or an EECP. At the same time, it is noted that persons crossing EECPs with the aim of vaccination against COVID-19 are not subjected to self-isolation if they show an invitation to vaccination with a unique identifier.

The Head of Donetsk Regional State Administration Pavlo Klymenko [reported](#) during a briefing that the regional COVID-19 vaccination plan is being implemented in two communities only. However, there are a sufficient number of vaccines, vaccination centres, and mobile brigades. [Only five persons](#) with registration in the certain areas of Donetsk region have been vaccinated against coronavirus at EECPs in Donetsk region. Another 4,615 persons have taken rapid tests when crossing the contact line. Ukrainian citizens that entered through Russian territory and had stayed there more than seven days within the two weeks period must self-isolate for 14 days with no possibility to stop the self-isolation earlier. Earlier, the Ukrainian State Border Service speaker [elaborated](#) that responsibility for proving that the period of stay in Russia does not exceed seven days lies on the travellers. This applies also to inhabitants of certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions that are forced to travel through Russia due to the closed EECPs at the contact line. At the same time, the Ukrainian human rights organization “Right to Protection” [notes](#) that before the law on

cancellation of fines for inhabitants of certain areas of Donbas had entered into force, at least 33 thousand persons were fined for entry through Russia. At the moment, fines are not applied only in case of humanitarian reasons for travel listed by the Cabinet of Ministers, although this list is not comprehensive.

TEMPORARY BAN FOR OFFICIALS TO VISIT JOINT FORCES OPERATION AREA

3 August, the Commander-in-Chief of Ukrainian Armed Forces Valeriy Zaluzhnyy [took a decision](#) on temporary ban for officials to visit the area of Joint Forces Operation in Donbas due to handover process of the position of the Commander of the Joint Forces Operation. Due to this, the planned visit to Donbas of the Verkhovna Rada's speaker Dmytro Razumkov has been [cancelled](#). The [publication](#) by "Donbas Realities" tells about expectations in relation to Valeriy Zaluzhnyy's appointment as the Commander-in-Chief of Ukrainian Armed Forces.

THE DRAFT LAW ON THE STATE POLICY FOR TRANSITIONAL PERIOD HAS BEEN APPROVED IN UKRAINE

The Ukrainian government approved the draft law "[On Foundations of the State Policy for the Transitional Period](#)". The document suggesting securing definitions of the Russian Federations as a country-aggressor and country-occupier defines the basic principles of de-occupation and reintegration of Donbas. The peaceful settlement process is divided into conflict and post-conflict periods in order to define the algorithms for the state's actions including issues of disarmament, solving humanitarian problems, restoration of justice etc. The document envisages introduction of transitional justice elements, particularly accountability for offenses related to the temporary occupation and limitations for election and appointment for positions of Ukrainian citizens that were involved in the so called "L/DPR" activities. The draft law will be submitted to Verkhovna Rada's consideration.

INTERVIEW OF VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY

The President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy gave an [exclusive interview](#) to the *Dom* TV channel, touching upon many aspects of the conflict in Donbas. He underscored the first step to establish peace must be cessation of fire. Volodymyr Zelenskyy noted that it was dangerous for dwellers of the areas temporarily uncontrolled by the Ukrainian government to sympathize with Ukraine. However, he believes that they "should not agree with what is happening there". Commenting on the situation with receiving Russian passports by inhabitants of certain areas of Donbas, he underscored this often happened in hopeless situations, however Russia's actions must be regarded unequivocally as violating the international law. President Zelenskyy noted that occupied areas of Donbas would never become

Russian and called upon inhabitants of these areas that consider themselves and the region Russian to go and “look for a place for themselves in Russia”. The text version of the interview is available at this [link](#).

DISCUSSION AROUND PROPAGANDISTIC NARRATIVE ON “THE UNITY OF RUSSIANS AND UKRAINIANS”

The *Foreign Affairs* published the [article by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine](#) Dmytro Kuleba where he answers the points of the Russian president Vladimir Putin on the “historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians”. He suggests stopping using the term “post-soviet space” to describe the region from Central Europe to Central Asia as after the USSR’s collapse, the countries went their own ways, they have different political regimes, social status and cultures. At the same time, the use of this term encourages politicians and societies beyond the region to look through the single prism at all the countries, this simplified approach supports Russian propagandistic narrative. Also, the MFA Head described his vision of the geopolitical situation around Ukraine. According to Kuleba, Europe and the US should develop a strategy for the whole region of the former USSR that would envisage specific policy taking into account the conditions of certain countries and blocs. In case of Ukraine and Georgia, this would be moving towards entering the EU and NATO. The article mentions that this year, the MFAs of Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine founded an “Associated trio” declaring countries’ intentions to join the EU. With deepening cooperation with this group of countries, Europe would receive the possibility to strengthen its global influence and widen the space for democratic values and the US would approach its aim to support the transatlantic unity and strengthen the eastern border of democratic Europe. The analytical centre “Ukrainian Institute of the Future” published the [results of the social research “Who we are?”](#) aimed at describing the reflection of Ukrainians about themselves. According to the research, a solid layer of individuals, who do not just differ themselves from Russia (or Russians), but have fundamentally different views on the phenomenon of power, has formed.

The journalist Stanislav Aseev [believes](#) this research is a quality answer to the Russian propagandistic narrative on the unity of Ukrainians and Russians. Reflecting on the identity of Ukrainian residents, he names scepticism towards authorities as such a distinguishing trait.