

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



August 20 – 26, 2021

UKRAINIAN "(NOT) WAR ..." IS IN FRANCE: THE WAR IN DONBAS WAS ON THE AGENDA AT THE SUMMER UNIVERSITY IN NANT

A discussion on the war in Ukraine took place on August 27 in the French city of Nantes as part of the Summer University of Social Movements and Solidarity. Ukrainian activists and human rights defenders spoke about the prerequisites for the outbreak of the armed conflict in Donbas, human rights violations, economic and social consequences of the war, and the restoration of the region.

Also, within the framework of the university, the exhibition "(NOT)War: Realizing oneself and boundaries in "Donbas Diaries" dialogues" was opened. The exhibition is an artistic expression of the dialogue process that lasted over two years between young Ukrainians and Russians: about the war and its perception, about history and personal experiences. At the last stage of the dialogue process, the participants were joined by artists and designers; together they created the artworks. The exhibition caused a great response; many activists have expressed a desire to show it in other cities in France as an excellent example of the power of dialogue and human communication during a war. This Ukrainian presence in France was made possible by the CivilMPlus platform. The event was coordinated by the French member organization Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (AEC). The exhibition was presented by Svitlana Krot from the Ukrainian NGO "Country of Free People".

FIVE COUNTRIES CREATE A PARTNERSHIP FUND FOR A RESILIENT UKRAINE

The United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Sweden, and Switzerland are creating a [fund](#) aimed at supporting Ukraine's fight against destabilization by Russia in the south and east of the country. It is scheduled to begin operations by December 2021, with up to 35 million pounds sterling to be contributed to the fund over three years. The fund will reportedly support a range of initiatives to improve the resilience of conflict-affected regions – in particular by providing technical advice to regional authorities and providing investment to create new economic opportunities. This should lead to improved public services, higher incomes and stronger links between communities divided by conflict.

ORDLO PREPARES FOR ELECTIONS TO THE RUSSIAN STATE DUMA

More than 100,000 residents of certain districts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, who had received Russian passport, obtained also the right to vote remotely in the elections to the State Duma of Russia – [says](#) “Echo Moscow”. At the same time, it is [reported](#) that in the so-called “DPR” free trips to the Rostov region will be organized to bring people to vote in the elections to the State Duma of the Russian Federation. [According to a Russian economist](#), head of the Center for Research on Post-Industrial Society Vladislav Inozemtsev, the participation of residents of the so-called “D / LPR” in the elections is unconstitutional, since these territories are not recognized by Russia. Konstantin Skorkin, an expert at the Carnegie Moscow Center, [notes](#) that the development of the election situation is increasingly moving the conflict in Donbas away from the possibility of being resolved in accordance with the Minsk agreements.

SUMMIT OF THE CRIMEAN PLATFORM

On August 23, Kyiv [hosted](#) the founding summit of the Crimean Platform, an international format for consultations and coordination of Ukraine's partners in order to counter the consequences and threats of temporary occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. The summit was attended by 45 delegations - all member-states of the EU, NATO and G7 countries, as well as all the countries of the Normandy format, with the exception of Russia. [In the declaration](#), adopted at the end of the summit, Russia was internationally recognized as an occupying state. Russian MFA [called](#) the participation of countries and organizations in the Crimean Platform summit an encroachment on the territorial integrity of Russia. Commenting on this reaction, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky [urged](#) the Russian side to join the Crimean platform to work out steps to de-occupy the peninsula. Despite the fact that the main focus of the platform's work is on the situation with Crimea, it can

also become a tool for influencing the situation in Donbas. Thus, [the resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine](#) in support of the Crimean platform calls on foreign partners to increase pressure on the Russian Federation demanding to stop illegal passportization in Donbas. [A trilateral meeting of the energy ministers of the United States, Germany and Ukraine](#) was timed to coincide with the summit, the topic of which was the threat of the implementation of the Nord Stream 2 project. Donbas was also mentioned in a number of statements - the most important of them are [quoted](#) by Radio Svoboda.

NEW WAVE OF SANCTIONS IN UKRAINE AND RUSSIA

Russia has [expanded](#) the list of Ukrainian citizens against whom sanctions are being imposed, adding 73 people to the list. The new list includes, in particular, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, the Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine Oleksiy Danylov, and the Ombudsperson Lyudmila Denisova. Thus, 922 Ukrainian citizens are under the sanctions of Russia.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine [objected](#) to the decision, referring to the sanctions as to the continuation of aggression against Ukraine and promising retaliatory measures.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy [introduced](#) the decision of the National Security and Defense Council on sanctions against a number of people, including the "head" of "DPR" Denis Pushilin, as well as against certain organizations, including Russian media. OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Teresa Ribeiro, while stressing that Ukraine has the right to protect its national security, [expressed concern](#) about sanctions against a number of media outlets: "The authorities should find a balanced and proportional solution to the problems related to the media, which preserves media pluralism, free flow of information and diversity of opinion."

WORK OF THE POLITICAL SUBGROUP IN THE TRILATERAL CONTACT GROUP IS UNBLOCKED

Regular meetings of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) took place on August 25-26. The resumption of the work of the political subgroup became possible after a citizen of Ukraine, a resident of the Donetsk region Maya Pirogova, convicted in absentia for terrorism in Ukraine, left the meeting's videoconference, as stated in the [message of the Ukrainian delegation](#) on the results of the meeting.

Noting that the Russian side is trying to include Pirogova in the humanitarian subgroup of the TCG, the Ukrainian delegation stated that it regards this as an attempt to block the exchange of detainees and the opening of the crossing points.

Also, the Ukrainian side reports that it has continued to develop tools for remote verification and identification for the payment of pensions to people with limited mobility in Ukraine in non-government-controlled territory and has sent notes to the OSCE on violations of the ceasefire by the Russian Federation.

DONBAS MINES: RISKS AND MANAGEMENT

The first meeting of the expert group on the flooding of mines along the contact line in Donbas is scheduled for September 2 within the TCG. The meeting will be [chaired](#) by an international mining expert Professor Karsten Drebenstedt. [As noted by a Ukrainian hydrogeologist Ekaterina Boyko](#), Ukraine has had obligations to shut down the mines, and this process is irreversible. 40 mines located in non-government-controlled territory of Ukraine should have been closed even before the war. The Ukrainian Foundation “Right to Protection” announced that it will [conduct](#) an analytical study of the environmental, social and economic consequences of uncontrolled flooding of mines. The closure of mines in the part of Donbas controlled by Ukraine will have consequences in the social sphere – about 30 thousand people involved in the coal industry will lose their jobs, [comments](#) “Donbas News”.