

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



15–21 October, 2021

OSCE SMM HEADQUARTERS IN DONETSK REMAIN PARTLY BLOCKED

After the incidents last week (please, see the newsletter No.56), the OSCE SMM headquarters in Donetsk remains partially blocked until now, and the monitors ran out of COVID-19 tests, according to the [SMM report](#) as of 19 October.

Ukrainian human rights organizations [note](#) that following these events, conditions for other international organizations to stay and work in ORDLO may also be tightened. Radio Liberty collected [expert opinions](#) about the situation. .

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry [called](#) on Russia to stop provocations against OSCE observers in Donbas.

On October 19, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Special Representative for Eastern Europe, Daniela de Ridder, [described](#) undue restrictions on the OSCE SMM's freedom of movement as a worrying trend, noting that the SMM has so far remained the only mechanism for ensuring transparency during the seven-year conflict that has claimed over 14,000 lives.

The German government called on Russia to use its influence over "L/DPR" groups to lift the blockade on the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, [according to German Cabinet spokesman Steffen Seibert](#).

In a [joint statement](#), OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ann Linde and OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid expressed deep concern over the continued restrictions on the freedom of movement of the OSCE SMM and called on all sides to resolve the situation constructively.

VENICE COMMISSION SHARED CONCLUSIONS ON UKRAINE'S LAW DRAFT ON TRANSITION PERIOD

The Venice Commission [released](#) its conclusions on the draft law "On the foundations of the state policy of the transition period". The conclusion contains both criticism and support for certain aspects of the draft law. It is noted that the draft law is largely based on the principles of international law and takes into account the needs of vulnerable groups, while offering only a general legal framework for transitional activities. It is impossible to predict the impact of this law if it is adopted, as its implementation will largely depend on the laws and regulations that are yet to be developed. The Commission has made a number of [recommendations](#) on certain points of the draft law, in particular to bring in line with international law the provisions on responsibility for crimes committed in connection with temporary occupation, to narrow the provision on lustration in accordance with international standards, limiting it to the most important public positions in the state, as well as to provide for the possibility of its judicial control.

Commenting on the conclusion of the Venice Commission, Minister of Ukraine for Reintegration of the Temporary Occupied Territories Oleksiy Reznikov [noted](#) that almost all recommendations can be addressed during the preparation in the relevant committee of the Verkhovna Rada. He stressed that the commission confirmed the fact that Russia has effective control over the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

DONETSK REGION IN THE "RED" ZONE

Donetsk region has been in the ["red" quarantine zone](#) since October 18. [The load](#) of beds in hospitals allocated for the treatment of COVID-19 patients is almost 90%. There are plans to [increase](#) the rate of vaccination against COVID-19, checkpoints to [check](#) vaccination certificates at the entrances to the region started operating in accordance with the new rules of passenger transportation. The transition of Donetsk region to the "red" zone [will not affect](#) the rules of entry-exit checkpoints located in the region.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION HAS ALLOCATED ADDITIONAL 3.5 MILLION EUROS (106 MILLION HRYVNIAS) FOR HUMANITARIAN AID TO RESIDENTS OF EASTERN UKRAINE

The European Commission [has announced](#) the allocation of additional 3.5 million euros in humanitarian aid for victims of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine. This funding will help provide access to medicine and basic necessities, as well as prepare for the approaching winter for the most vulnerable people on both sides of the contact line, especially elderly and people with disabilities. European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič noted

that the EU will continue to support the people of eastern Ukraine, but only permanent peace can provide a real solution.

UKRAINE'S NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE COUNCIL ADVISED ON TERMINOLOGY AROUND THE CONFLICT IN DONBAS

The National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine [has developed](#) a glossary of names and terms that are recommended to use in relation to the occupation of Crimea and certain territories of Donbas. It is [recommended](#) for state and local authorities, diplomatic missions of Ukraine, media and NGOs to use the suggested terminology. As reported, the aim of the glossary is to counteract the propaganda discourse promoted by Russia.

VIRTUAL MUSEUM OF RUSSIAN AGGRESSION OPENED

The Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance [created](#) the Virtual Museum of Russian Aggression. This is Ukraine's first web-portal about the key events and crimes committed as a result of Russian aggression in Crimea and Donbas. Well-known Ukrainian non-governmental organizations that document crimes and other important information about the events and consequences of the armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine and provide assistance to victims [joined](#) the work on the project.