

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

The most numerous (dominant) ethnic groups in Crimea are Russians, Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars, with Russians making the majority of the population in the autonomy, and Russians and Ukrainians together – the absolute majority. The relations among those three groups shape Crimean socio-political situation, and the spirits and views of the two former dominate in Crimea<sup>1</sup>.

The Russian language as the language of everyday communication for the absolute majority of residents, including the absolute majority of Russians and Ukrainians dominates in the region. Exactly that language, not the official Ukrainian, is the language of inter-ethnic communication in the autonomy.

The majority of Crimeans, including the overwhelming majority of Russians and a relative majority of Ukrainians, associate themselves with the Russian cultural tradition. By contrast, the majority of Crimean Tatars reported adherence to Crimean Tatar cultural tradition. A relative majority of Crimeans, including a relative majority of Russians and Ukrainians, believe that the Russian cultural tradition will prevail in Crimea in the future. A relative majority of Crimean Tatars predict the prevalence of their national tradition.

Interestingly, each of the national cultural traditions – Ukrainian, Russian, Crimean Tatar – has more adherents than people believing that it will prevail in Crimea in 20-25 years, and a similar picture is observed in all ethnic groups. Out of all cultural traditions mentioned in the report, only the pan-European one is expected to have more followers in the future than today.

The majority of Crimeans called themselves believers, although many of them could not associate themselves with any confession/church. Only among Crimean Tatars, the overwhelming majority reported belonging to a concrete confession – Islam. Among Ukrainians and Russians, people with a definite confessional and church affiliation are in a minority. Crimean religious space is dominated by Orthodoxy and Islam. The majority of the Orthodox (both Russians and Ukrainians) belong to UOC. The religious situation in Crimea is greatly shaped by the relations between believers of that church and Muslims<sup>2</sup>.

There is a correlation between ethnic and religious affiliation, seen as natural by the majority of representatives of all ethnic groups. It is especially strong among Crimean Tatars, which may be attributed to greater socialisation of Islam, practical identification of the society and community of believers (ummah) there.

The opinion of Crimean residents bears signs of gradual alienation of Crimeans from Ukraine. Over the past two years, the share of those who called Ukraine their Motherland fell nearly two-fold (although they are still in a relative majority), and for the first time in the recent years, patriots of Ukraine appeared in a minority.

The Russians are the least disposed to consider Ukraine their Motherland, and themselves – as its patriots.

The attitude of the overwhelming majority of Crimeans to the Ukrainian citizenship is purely pragmatic. Only a minority reported a value-based attitude – positive (proud of the Ukrainian citizenship) or negative (consider that citizenship as a burden). Nearly half of Crimeans would agree to change the Ukrainian citizenship for some other (the absolute majority in that group would like to change it for the Russian one). Russians are the most desirous of changing citizenship, Crimean Tatars – the least.

The overwhelming majority of Crimeans also support introduction of dual citizenship in Ukraine, and the majority opt for the Russian citizenship. Evidently, it is seen as a way to satisfy their socio-economic needs, widen their opportunities.

The foreign policy preferences of the majority of Crimeans, on one hand, reflect a set of stereotypes partially inherited from the USSR, partially introduced by the Russian media now: perception of the West as potential enemy, NATO – as an aggressive bloc, Russia – as the centre of future integration of the post-Soviet space, seen as the highest good.

On the other hand, those stereotypes rest on the inability of the Ukrainian authorities (both central and local Crimean) to ensure a proper standard of living for the autonomy residents, create conditions for satisfaction of their basic needs, and wide-spread corruption of the authorities.

This conditions the prevalence in the public opinion perception of relations with Russia as the priority line of Ukraine's foreign policy, rejection of Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO, support for joining The Federal State of Russia and Belarus. Meanwhile, one should note serious differences in foreign policy preferences of the dominant ethnic groups in Crimea. Anti-Western sentiments are the strongest among Russians and the weakest – among Crimean Tatars. Ukrainians gravitate to Russians in this respect, although their attitude to foreign political objectives generally looks more moderate: they produced fewer adherents of priority relations with Russia and fewer opponents of accession to the EU and NATO.

For the majority of Crimeans (including Russians and Ukrainians), residents of Russia are more kindred by temper, habits and traditions than residents of other regions of Ukraine, and the most kindred among residents of foreign countries.

The smallest social distance was mutually reported by Crimean Ukrainians and Russians. Meanwhile, the social distance between both of those groups and Crimean Tatars is greater than between them and residents of Southern, Eastern and Central regions of Ukraine, and residents of Russia. Noteworthy, Crimean Tatars reported greater social kinship with Ukrainians/Russians than the latter – with the former. Furthermore,

<sup>1</sup> This circumstance largely levels the position of Crimean Tatars at analysis of the results of Crimea-wide studies.

<sup>2</sup> Another important factor of Crimean religious situation is presented by internal processes in the Muslim community, including the spread of untraditional for Crimea Islamist trends.

Crimean Tatars see their relations with Ukrainians and Russians as less tense, compared to the assessment of those relations by the latter.

There are serious differences in the opinions of Ukrainians and Russians, on one hand, and Crimean Tatars, on the other, about guarantees of the rights of ethnic and language groups. In the eyes of the majority of Ukrainians and Russians, rights of Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian-speaking population are upheld the best, of the Russian-speaking population – the worst; in the opinion of Crimean Tatars, rights of the Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking population are upheld the best, of Crimean Tatars – the worst.

The majority of all Crimeans as well as the representatives of each of the dominant Crimean ethnic groups to a smaller or greater extent admit problems in inter-ethnic relations in the autonomy. Each ethnic group noted greater tension in the relations of Crimean Tatars with Russians and of Crimean Tatars with Ukrainians than between Ukrainians and Russians. However, the overall level of tension was termed as relatively low.

The vast majority of Crimeans and the majority in each ethnic group did not personally encounter cases of ethnic discrimination, although the share of those who did among Crimean Tatars is much greater than among Ukrainians and Russians.

There are also serious differences among ethnic groups in their opinions of the existence of discrimination of Crimean Tatars and other deported peoples in Crimea. While the majority of Crimean Tatars admit its existence to a greater or smaller extent, the majority of Ukrainians and Russians deny it. Even greater differences are observed with respect to Crimean Tatar aspirations for the status of an indigenous people of Ukraine and official recognition of Crimean Tatar Majlis as their fully legitimate representative body.

By and large, Crimean Slavic community (and especially the Russians) shows inability or unwillingness to notice problems of repatriates, which may give rise to inter-ethnic conflicts.

However, in each ethnic group, only a minority (although rather significant) admit the possibility of an acute inter-ethnic conflict in Crimea in the near future. But even those who deny it do not make a majority – due to the numerous group of those undecided. Such a high degree of uncertainty by itself points to the unsteadiness of inter-ethnic peace in Crimea.

There are substantial differences as to who may be the parties involved into such conflict. While Ukrainians and Russians more tend to admit its emergence between Russians and Ukrainians, on one hand, and Crimean Tatars – on the other, the latter are less disposed to share that opinion.

The majority of Crimeans see the reasons for the existing conflicts in the incompetence or bad will of the central authorities, and in socio-economic, political and cultural inequality of ethnic groups. At that, Crimean Tatars more often than Ukrainians and Russians see reasons for conflicts in the incompetence or bad will of Crimean authorities.

All this presents inter-ethnic relations in Crimea as far from harmonious, although not critically tense. However, significant divergence of opinions of Ukrainians and Russians, on one hand, and Crimean Tatars – on

the other, on fundamental issues, and influences of some internal and external factors may catalyse deterioration of inter-ethnic relations in the autonomy.

Given the high level of solidarity of Russians and Ukrainians, language and cultural russification of the latter; they may be viewed as one socio-cultural community. Proceeding from the above data, it may be assumed that a pan-Crimean identity, common for all residents of the autonomy, will hardly appear in the nearest future. Preconditions exist for formation of Crimean identity of the Slavic population of the autonomy. However, it will rest on confrontation with Ukraine, on one hand, and Crimean Tatars, on the other.

The religious situation in Crimea may generally be termed as calmer than the ethnic one.

Representatives of all ethnic and religious groups in Crimea highly praise their ability to have their religious needs satisfied. They see the reasons for confessional conflicts mainly beyond religion – in introduction of political and ethnic contradictions into the sphere of religion or clashes of economic interests of representatives of different ethnic groups cloaked under religious slogans.

Among different institutes, organisations and bodies of power, greater responsibility for confessional conflicts is usually vested in the central and Crimean authorities, as well as the leaders of religious organisations and believers taking part in conflicts, smaller – on foreign religious centres, state, political and public structures. Meanwhile, representatives of different ethnic and religious groups differently see the importance of those reasons.

Crimeans in general and representatives of all dominant ethnic and religious groups are generally tolerant to religious organisations confessing a different faith – the majority treats them positively or tolerates them. However, among Muslims, more people negatively treat different faiths than among the Orthodox.

The overall religious situation in the autonomy may be termed rather stable, free of significant internal contradictions, but vulnerable to developments in other sectors – socio-political and economic.

The most urgent for the majority of Crimean residents are socio-economic problems and problems of relations with the authorities. Among socio-cultural problems, Crimeans see as “extremely urgent” the problem of restriction of the Russian language use.

Crimean residents consider it the most important: to ensure economic stability in the region; to secure inter-ethnic peace; not to let Crimea become a zone of an armed conflict; to have an opportunity to find a good job in Crimea for them and their children; to speak and get information in the native language; prevent Ukraine from joining NATO; to have an opportunity to find a good job in Ukraine for them and their children.

The majority of Crimeans demonstrated critically low support for both Ukrainian and Crimean institutes and bodies of power. However, there are significant differences in the opinions of ethnic groups. Ukrainians and Russians (especially the latter) stronger disapprove the central authorities. Crimean Tatars are much more tolerant to the central authorities, although they also mainly disapprove them. However, the level of their disapproval of Crimean authorities is actually the same.

Among all Crimeans and in each ethnic group, people rest the greatest responsibility for economic and political



problems of Crimea on Ukraine's President. So, he is the "leader" of disapproval among Ukrainian institutes and bodies of power.

By and large, the extremely low support for the activity of the central and Crimean local authorities and their leaders and generally negative assessment of their performance by the majority of Crimeans reveal deep estrangement between the authorities and residents of the autonomy, which makes its socio-political stability extremely vulnerable to both internal and external negative influences.

A relative majority of all Crimeans and representatives of each ethnic group are unaware of ideological trends. Those who are, prefer mainly leftist and centre-left ideologies. The least popular are the liberal, nationalist and Christian-democratic ideologies. At that, Ukrainians and Russians, on one hand, and Crimean Tatars – on the other show serious ideological differences.

The most popular political parties and blocs are those strongly opposing the current Ukrainian authorities, first of all, Ukraine's President. The picture generally correlates with Crimean perception of the central authorities and assessments of their work.

Interestingly, poor support for the activity of Crimean authorities, first of all, the Verkhovna Rada of Crimea, where the Bloc "For Yanukovich" has a majority, did not deprive the Party of Regions of the highest rating in the autonomy. The probable reason is that that party and its leader are seen as the most realistic and consistent alternative to the political course pursued by the present central authorities.

Meanwhile, one should note that ideological preferences and political sympathies of Crimean Tatars substantially differ from those of Russians and Ukrainians. Their stronger trust in the ruling political forces (BYuT and "Our Ukraine - People's Self-Defence") rests not only on traditions of support or present-day arrangements but also on their understanding that it will be much more difficult to solve the problems of Crimean Tatar people with the Party of Regions or, especially, CPU, should they come to power.

The majority of all Crimeans, the majority of Ukrainians and Russians either do not trust Crimean public organisations, or cannot formulate their attitude.

The attitude of Ukrainians to Crimean public organisations is the same as that of Russians: both groups trust the same organisations of the pro-Russian trend – first of all, the Russian Community of Crimea. Meanwhile, those organisations are mistrusted by Crimean Tatars. On the other hand, Crimean Tatar Majlis, trusted by Crimean Tatars much stronger than the Ukrainians and Russians trust pro-Russian organisations, is actually not trusted by the Slavic population.

Crimean Tatars strongly trust Crimean Tatar Majlis because they see it, first of all, not as a public organisation but as a body of national self-government, a tool of defence of their interests.

Substantial ideological distinctions and differences in political sympathies between the Slavic population and Crimean Tatars present additional factors of mutual estrangement of those ethnic communities.

Crimeans have no steady idea of the desirous status of the autonomy. Their assessments reveal confusion and inconsistency, as they sometimes support mutually excluding alternatives for Crimean status. Such uncertainty is specific of actually all ethnic, confessional (church) and socio-demographic groups.

Less than a quarter of those polled support only the options of the future status of Crimea involving its cessation

from Ukraine. Meanwhile, the majority of Crimeans would support preservation of the current status of the autonomy with expanded rights and powers.

The most threatening variants of change of the administrative or national status of Crimea presume its transformation into a Crimean Tatar or Russian national autonomy as a part of Ukraine, or change of its state affiliation. However, since representatives of different ethnic groups report readiness for radical counteraction in case of implementation of such options, this may be used as a safeguard against a change of Crimean status.

The desire of more than half of all Crimeans and representatives of all ethnic groups to preserve the current status of the autonomy, on the condition of expansion of its rights and powers, should be the reference point for the state policy towards Crimea. Meanwhile, Crimean views on the desired status of the autonomy may let concerned parties in Ukraine and beyond make use of this problem.

The public opinion in Sevastopol is basically the same as in the rest of Crimea. Sevastopol residents are generally concerned about the same problems as all Crimeans, they share the same assessments of the main life needs, problems and prospects of inter-ethnic relations in the autonomy.

In some issues, however, the public opinion in Sevastopol demonstrates some differences. For instance, Sevastopol residents worse than other Crimeans treat the central and local authorities, they are more disposed to pro-Russian spirits, as witnessed, first of all, by greater popularity of the ideas of Crimea's annexation by Russia or transformation into a Russian national autonomy as a part of Ukraine. They pay more attention to the problem of guarantee of Crimea's Russian-speaking population rights. Sevastopol residents demonstrate a more sensitive attitude to foreign policy issues, including the prospects of Ukraine's accession to NATO and stationing of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol.

Said differences have roots in the specific ethnic composition of the population of Sevastopol, its socio-cultural preferences (compared to Crimea, Sevastopol has more adherents of the Russian and Soviet cultural traditions, fewer – of the Ukrainian and pan-European, and much fewer – of Crimean Tatar), and some socio-demographic features.

By and large, the survey demonstrated a number of problems that require deeper study, in particular, using methods of qualitative analysis (e.g., focus groups).

Those problems include:

- processes of formation of Crimean regional identity and its model;
- the character of communication among the dominant ethnic groups of the autonomy;
- ways of solution of political and legal problems of Crimean Tatars and their possible consequences under the present inter-ethnic relations;
- the situation in the Muslim community of the autonomy, spread of the influence of Islamic trends not traditional for Crimea.

Those problems will be examined during the second phase of the project, with the end goal to generate recommendations intended to prevent escalation of the existing and emergence of new inter-ethnic and inter-confessional conflicts in Crimea. ■