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THE RAZUMKOV CENTRE NEWSLETTER

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NSDC DECISION TO EASE TENSION IN SOCIETY AND POLITICAL CIRCLES

National Security and Defence Council decision to stop the movement of goods across the line of demarcation and transport connection with ORDLO is a mechanism of bringing down the intensity of tension in the society, which developed due to the blockade of railway tracks in Donbas.

Although this decision is long overdue, today it can actually improve the situation in the country.

Besides, now a part of blockade participants in Donbas can disengage. If the demarcation line is not crossed by any means of transportation, there is no longer a need to ensure the blockade of this transportation. However, NSDC decision requires participation of all stakeholders, blockade activists, in monitoring, overseeing and control of this arrangement and the limitations set previously. It would be appropriate

to ensure that the active citizens who wish to control the implementation of this arrangement can do so.

Full [text](#)

Deputy Director, Director of Political and Legal Programmes of the Razumkov Centre
Yuriy YAKYMENKO



THERE ARE TOO MANY POLITICIANS WITH DOUBLE CITIZENSHIP, THIS HAS TO BE REGULATED BY LAW

Commenting on the draft law submitted to Parliament by the President of Ukraine, we can say that the idea of denaturalising Ukrainian citizens who hold passports of other countries is logical given the fact that the Constitution of Ukraine allows to have only one nationality.

Also, there are too many cases of politicians, MPs and other representatives of government agencies turning out to hold another state's citizenship. So, clearly, we need to create a legal framework to ensure abidance by the Constitution of Ukraine, and provide an effective mechanism, where a person acquiring another citizenship would become subject for termination of Ukrainian citizenship. In other words, we need legal regulation of this matter.

At the same time, citizens have the right to choose citizenship of another country. This does not prevent them from living in Ukraine, but restricts certain political rights. In particular, if they choose another citizenship, while living in Ukraine, they cannot participate in elections.

So this restriction is not some novelty – essentially, this is abidance by the requirements set by the Constitution of Ukraine.

Full [text](#)

Deputy Director, Director of Political and Legal Programmes of the Razumkov Centre
Yuriy YAKYMENKO

ONE STEP AHEAD OF THE GAME

Declaration «Unity for Victory», signed by PPB, «People's Front» and the Radical Party, is meant to demonstrate and convince everyone of the presence of the majority, the coalition in the Verkhovna Rada, show that the current Parliament is completely effective. This document was signed to stabilise the coalition, and even broader majority in the Verkhovna Rada. This is done in opposition to those politicians and political forces in the Verkhovna Rada and outside of it saying that this Parliament must be dissolved early and a new election has to be held. Thus, the message is that the current government is stable, has political support and is ready to continue working. Importantly, this message is sent at the

very moment when political environment is growing somewhat more radical at the approach of Maidan anniversary, when protesting usually takes place. As, clearly, this is an opportune moment to destabilise the situation in the country (if certain external influences are applied), potentially leading to another political crisis (even more possible, with the events of DNR/ LNR blockade and other tension factors) and, thus, early parliamentary elections.

Full [text](#)

Deputy Director, Director of Political and Legal Programmes of the Razumkov Centre
Yuriy YAKYMENKO

PEOPLE CARE ABOUT RESOLUTION OF THE DONBAS SITUATION, PRICE REGULATION AND REDUCTION OF UTILITY RATES

Although the government reports that life in 2016 got better, people have a different opinion. 73% of citizens believe that the overall situation in the country got worse.

It turned out that the worst changes took place in relation to prices and tariffs — 88.5% of citizens noted deterioration there. 77% believe there is deterioration in Ukraine's economy, 75% — in the level of stability, 74% — in confidence in the future, 73% — in families' well-being.

So, first of all, people are experiencing financial insecurity, as such is the current balance of people's earnings and expenses. Although the government does state that in the past year the GDP grew 1.8%, it is very

little. Making up for the collapse of the economy in 2013 – 2014 at this pace will take many years. Along with this, utility tariffs are on the steady rise, the inflation keeps growing.

[Full text](#)

*Director of the Sociological Service of
the Razumkov Centre
Andrii BYCHENKO*



National Security and Defence

FREEZING THE ARMED CONFLICT IN THE EAST OF UKRAINE IS THE MOST REALISTIC SCENARIO

Ukraine should not be choosing the option of prolonging the conflict in the East in the undefined mode or format, – this cannot go on for a long time. Especially as parties' positions are fundamentally different and the roadmap is frozen. The only possible option for today is freezing the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine. I mean, implementing the first three points of the Minsk Agreements that can be approved in a separate Memorandum. This is the most realistic scenario, as Russia's demands are completely unacceptable for

Ukraine, while Ukraine's demands are being blocked by Russia.

[Full text](#)

*Co-director of Foreign Policy and
International Security Programmes
of the Razumkov Centre
Mykhailo PASHKOV*



LEGALISING "DNR/LNR". MOTIVES AND GOALS OF PUTIN'S DECREE

On 18 February 2017, Russian President signed Decree No. 74 on recognising «documents» issued by the local government in ORDLO («DNR/LNR») – from passports to vehicle license plates. Now, for Moscow, a «DNR/LNR» passport is a completely valid document, which legalises these «republics'» citizenship and allows entry and exit to/from Russia's territory. This presidential decree is an act of acknowledging authority of «DNR/LNR» government by Russia, and it should be construed accordingly, without regard to any «humanitarian» explanations or «temporary» nature of the document («valid until political resolution of the situation in ORDLO»). Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity seem to be fictitious for Russian leadership, a sort of «historical incident».

In other words, Russia essentially legalised the illegal armed formations (two army corps fighting against Ukrainian army) on Ukrainian land. Russia recognises fake «government bodies» created in ORDLO by the occupation regime, and legalises militants who crashed Ukrainian cargo plane (49 killed) and Malaysian Boeing MH17 (298 killed), who organised a shooting in the Eastern neighbourhood

of Mariupol (31 civilians killed, 117 – wounded), who organised the Avdiivka tragedy, and many more.

Although Kremlin denies this, it is an indirect step to recognising «DNR/LNR» in the future according to a modified Ossetia-Abkhazia scenario of September 2008, i.e. recognising the independence of the «republics» and signing agreements on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance. For Russia, this would mean assuming responsibility for another depressed, destroyed region. Obviously, this option is extremely disadvantageous for Kremlin, and is currently not considered. (Although, let us not rule out that such a decision can be made prior to the oncoming election of Vladimir Putin. Just as we should not rule out the military escalation of the Donbas conflict.) Today, Russia's main objective is to «shove» DNR/LNR back into Ukraine in its current form, legitimised by Russia and protected by the «special status».

[Full text](#)

*Co-director of Foreign Policy and International Security
Programmes of the Razumkov Centre Mykhailo PASHKOV*

WHERE DOES THE MAIN THREAT OF RUSSIAN INVASION IN UKRAINE COME FROM?

In my opinion, the most alarming area is still the East. The fighting is already taking place there, so Kremlin has the opportunity to use «rebels» as the cover. There is a real danger of an attack from Crimea, where Russia has accumulated significant armed forces, but it would be hard to repeat the trick with «rebels» and «little green men» there. Of course, Kremlin's strategists never lacked creativity. Aggression can be served under the sauce of «humanitarian peacemakers» coming at the request of another newly proclaimed «republic». Russia is unlikely to be able to make exact predictions as to Europe's and America's reaction to such actions.



*Co-director of Foreign Relations
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Oleksi MELNYK*

Regarding Trans-Dniester, the potential of Russian contingent is limited. There is not enough troops and equipment for a large-scale offensive, to say nothing of logistic restrictions posed by the isolated territory.

At the same time, we should not ignore the possibility that Russia will use Trans-Dniester as a distraction, an additional area of tension at Ukraine's border, as part of its plan for a larger operation. However, there is no capacity there for a military offensive in Ukraine. Given the current state of Ukraine's Armed Forces, our country will have no problem localising this threat, as long as it is coming from Trans-Dniester alone.

Regarding Belarus, Lukashenko is hardly ready to provide his territory, even less so – armed forces, to attack Ukraine.

[Full text](#)

CONSIDERATION OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT EXPERIENCE IN DEVELOPING UKRAINE'S MODERN DEFENCE SECTOR

Lecture of the Director of Military Programmes of the Razumkov Centre M. Sunhurovskyi presented at operational assembly of Ukrainian Army officer corps.

Issues raised:

- Why did Ukraine become the target of Russia's aggression, what are the reasons of Russia's aggression?
- What is the core of the «hybrid war» phenomenon, what can be considered a victory in such a war?
- What are the characteristic features of a «hybrid war» on the global, regional and local levels?

- What requirements should be set for the defence sector and the Armed Forces of Ukraine, what capabilities do they need to have?

[Full text](#)

*Director of Military Programmes
of the Razumkov Centre
Mykola SUNHUROVSKYI*



CRIMEA HAS ALREADY BEEN TURNED INTO A MILITARY BASE

It is difficult to assess the extent of militarisation of Crimea, just as it is impossible to assess the extent of militarisation of a military base. And the peninsula has long been turned into a military base – huge and self-sufficient. There are over ten military-industrial complex enterprises in Crimea, which are already part of Russia's MIC. And if we also consider supplies coming from Russia, we can state that today Crimea is a powerful military base, an unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Black Sea.

Thus, Russia positions itself as the country that opposes NATO in the Black Sea basin. Moreover, its strength is comparable to NATO force in the region, while also laying its claim to the Mediterranean.

[Full text](#)

*Director of Military Programmes
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Mykola SUNHUROVSKYI*

WHAT PREVENTS UKRAINE FROM OBTAINING LETHAL WEAPONS

Deliveries of arms is a special issue for many countries. It is even more special for arms markets, as there is a code of conduct regarding military and political issues. One of provisions is to avoid delivering arms to conflict areas. Determining these conflict areas and reaction of the rest of the community to such deliveries, especially in regard to lethal weapons, – are politically sensitive topics. This is why to avoid misunderstandings or confusion, many countries are trying to simply stay away from this matter, without delving too deep into the conflict – who is guilty, who is the aggressor, and who – the victim. So bringing some clarity into the matter would help Ukraine strengthen its defence capabilities.

In principle, there is no official ban on the supply of lethal weapons to Ukraine. In international practice, there

would have to be some sort of sanctions for this, a U.N. or separate organizations' embargo, banning the supply of such weapons.

At the moment, the level of conflict in the East allows us to deal with it without lethal weapons. Speaking of lethal weapons, they are necessary to prevent an increase of the scale or intensity of military operations coming from Russia, not the separatists. The latter are not capable of this. Firstly, this would be a deterrent for the enemy: they would understand that they would suffer heavy losses. Secondly, this would be a way to prevent our losses, should such military actions start

[Full text](#)

*Director of Military Programmes
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Economy

UKRAINE HAS INTRODUCED SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIAN BANKS. WHAT IS NEXT?

On 16 March, President P. Poroshenko has approved sanctions against five Russian banks for the period of one year. How painful is it for Ukraine itself?

Overall, there are such practices in the world when restrictions are introduced in regard to foreign state banks in certain periods of time. And when it concerns large state-owned banks, this is only natural, as such banks can conduct aggressive or unfriendly policies through their main shareholders (and in our case, Russian state banks are the main shareholders). If there are no complaints against other foreign banks, they continue to operate normally.

Despite the fact that Russian banks take up a significant place in Ukraine's banking system, I do not

think this will be a major complication for crediting or operating services for Ukrainian enterprises. Rather, we should talk about transfer of accounts to other national banks. This is certainly a complicated process, as businesses often work with those banks, where they already have long-term agreements. Besides, if Russian bank capital is extracted, there may be difficulties in services, crediting, protection of private deposits. But so far, there are no critical risks.

[Full text](#)

*Director of Economic Programmes
of the Razumkov Centre
Vasyl YURCHYSHYN*



CONTACTS WITH THE AGGRESSOR ARE UNACCEPTABLE

National Security and Defence Council decision to stop the movement of goods across the line of demarcation and transport connection with ORDLO has been brewing for a long time.

Any contacts with the aggressors and their supporters are unacceptable, at least morally.

By the way, I am surprised when we talk about the potential damage caused to Ukraine by the blockade

or actions to limit relations. If such actions could really cause Ukraine some irreparable damage, Russia and the militants would be sure to welcome these decisions, instead of issuing ultimatums.

[Full text](#)

*Director of Economic Programmes
of the Razumkov Centre Vasyl YURCHYSHYN*

CENTRAL AND COMMERCIAL BANK FUNCTIONS ARE FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT

NBU head V. Hontareva stated that she can leave her post once the IMF Memorandum is signed. But not everything in the context of resignation depends on Hontareva. This requires the President to initiate the procedure, the Parliament to be prepared to approve this decision, and it must be clear at once who the new NBU head will be.

As for the work of NBU itself, for over two years it has been conducting rather nontransparent monetary policy, justified by targeting inflation. What this is, who needs it and profits from it, is unclear. First example: restrictive monetary policy that inflicted damage on Ukraine's economy. Yes, this restriction was necessary for a short period of time to stabilise the situation, but it does not lead to growth if it lasts for two or three years. Also, not all failed banks had bad balance sheets, not all small

banks had to grow – this concerns regional financial institutions. Not to mention the fact that such excessive number of failed banks led to loss of many deposits, loss of resources for business.

We can definitely say that the new NBU head should not be someone, who has worked only in business their entire life, as central bank's functions and those of a commercial or financial organisation are fundamentally different. The main performance indicator of a commercial bank is profit, which does not apply to the National Bank, as it is entrusted with the regulatory function aiming to strengthen the financial system.

[Full text](#)

*Director of Economic Programmes
of the Razumkov Centre Vasyi YURCHYSHYN*

LARGEST “DONORS” OF THE UKRAINIAN BUDGET IN 2016

Taxes are one of the main sources of government revenues, since it is through them that the state ensures redistribution of social income between different sectors of economy, territories and population groups. In 2016, the largest share of state tax revenues (consolidated) – 44% – was brought by Top-100 companies. The total amount of their withholdings was 231.7 billion UAH, which is almost 32% (74 billion UAH) more than in 2015.

According to 2016 results, the leader in providing revenues to the state budget among Top-100 companies was PAT Ukgazvydobuvannya (Ukrainian gas production company), which increased its payments to over 38.5 billion UAH. Other «donor» companies contributing to the state budget were PrAT Naftogazvydobuvannya (Oil and gas production company), PAT Ukrnafta (Ukrainian oil company), SE NNEGC Energoatom (State enterprise national nuclear energy generating company

Energoatom), NJSC Naftogaz of Ukraine and a number of international tobacco industry companies.

Typical characteristics of tax revenues coming from Top-100 companies are consistency, continuity and long-term character, which ensure stability of budget mechanism and a real possibility for targeted allocation of state funds. State budget revenues and profitability of «big» taxpayers are connected, which proves the need to establish strong partnerships between the state and these companies, as they produce the major part of the country's GDP and create new workplaces.

[Full text](#)

*Expert of economic programmes
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Kateryna MARKEVYCH*



Energy Sector

ENERGY SECTOR OF UKRAINE: ACHIEVEMENTS, MISSED OPPORTUNITIES AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Year 2016, just as the two years before it, was not an easy one for Ukraine's energy sector and other related sectors of economy. Also, this past year was momentous for Ukraine, and the country had some major achievements while continuing to reform its energy sector. Some of the key events in 2016 included: ceasing natural gas procurements from Russia. On 25 November 2016, NJSC Naftogaz of Ukraine stopped purchasing natural gas from its neighbour, which allowed Ukraine to terminate its gas dependence on the aggressor country. In the past year, Ukraine was importing natural gas exclusively from the West – Slovakia, Poland and Hungary. The country has achieved considerable success in intensifying cooperation with major EU gas traders, having signed on



24 November 2016 three contracts with Engie, DufEnergy Trading SA and TrailStone Energy LLC for transportation and storage of natural gas in Ukrainian underground storage facilities.

The country was also able to reduce the procurement of FF from Russian company AT TVEL, bringing it down to 69.27%, thus raising the share of Westinghouse company in the total procurement (by cost measurement) to almost 30% (in 2015 – 5%).

Last year was also productive in terms of approval of a number of important legislative initiatives, implementation of which will have a positive impact on further reforms in Ukraine's energy sector.

However, there are issues that must be addressed promptly, including increasing natural gas production, signing international contracts for coal import, and switching TPP units to the use of gas coal. Priorities for 2017 must include energy efficiency and energy conservation policy along with development of both, traditional energy sector, and alternative energy sources.

[Full text](#)

*Expert of economic programmes
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Foreign Policy

RECOGNISING ORDLO TERRITORIES AS OCCUPIED: GIVING UP DONBAS TO RUSSIA AS PAYOFF OR THE ROAD TO DE-OCCUPATION?

The aim of the law on recognising the uncontrolled territories as occupied is to clearly define the status of ORDLO and the system of relations with the occupational government based on international regulations and rules, in particular, the Geneva Convention of 1949.

The EU is apprehensive of this step, as this changes the legal character of the situation. Ukraine has to get the world to recognise Russia as a party to the conflict, not a mediator. In the current situation, Ukraine has to make a self-determining move. The uncontrolled territory status causes a lot of problems and conflicts.

It is now obvious that Russia will not leave easily, and the situation has become long-term. The only solution is to freeze the conflict. Today's uncontrolled territory status has no legal meaning and does not determine the present situation in ORDLO.

Recognising certain areas of Donbas as occupied does not mean that Ukraine dissociates itself from Donbas and gives them up as payoff for Russia. This is a fight for our territories and their liberation.

[Full text](#)

*Co-director of Foreign Policy and International Security
Programmes of the Razumkov Centre Mykhailo PASHKOV*

2017 WILL BE A COMPLICATED YEAR FOR UKRAINE

The change of government in the USA and the approaching elections in France and Germany have the whole world on alert. Everyone understands: a reshuffle on the international chess board is inevitable. The situation is complicated for Ukraine as well. As it is unclear, what our relations with the key partners in the West will be now.

Europe is experiencing an upsurge of national egoism, far-right and populist trends. This was demonstrated by Bulgaria, as well as Moldova elections, where leftist politicians came to power. At the same time, relations between Washington and Brussels are also getting rather complicated. Suffice to recall President Trump's rather strong comments on NATO being obsolete and welcoming UK's exit from the EU. This turbulence and anxiety mode is a concern not only for Ukraine, but the entire world.

In this context it is worth mentioning the approaching elections in France. There are two key actors as of now: centrist Emmanuel Macron and the leader of the far-right National Front Marine Le Pen. Russia has launched a

hard offensive against Macron to clear the path for Marine Le Pen. Something similar will soon be also happening in Germany, where there is likely to be a strong information campaign to discredit Angela Merkel.

The situation greatly affects the atmosphere around the Russia-Ukraine conflict, as Europe's right-leaning trends can potentially lead to a breakup of the sanction front against Russia, which could give it a free hand in regard to Ukraine. On the one hand, Ukraine could be faced with the fact that the conflict in Donbas goes to the background for the European and world community. On the other, Western support for Ukraine may decrease and after June, EU sanctions against Russia may be eased. This setup is extremely unfavourable for us. It actually dictates the agenda for Ukraine: we must rely on our own strengths and capabilities and take preventive measures to avoid adverse development of the situation.

[Full text](#)

*Co-director of Foreign Policy and International Security
Programmes of the Razumkov Centre Mykhailo PASHKOV*

UKRAINE-RUSSIA: SIX STEPS ON THE EAST FRONT

On 18 February, at the time of Munich Security Conference and the meeting of the Normandy Four ministers, Russian President signed Decree No. 74 on recognising all documents issued by «DNR/LNR» – from passports to death certificates. This decision, made at the top state level is an official and absolute recognition of «DNR/LNR» by Russia as fully legitimate government structures.

Essentially, this is an ultimatum. What other evidence is necessary proving that ORDLO is an occupied territory and that Russia is a direct and aggressive party to the

Donbas conflict that de jure recognises illegal armed formations on the Ukrainian territory? (Already at the Munich Conference, Petro Poroshenko stated that Vladimir Putin's Decree is yet another proof of Russian occupation.) However, if we confine ourselves solely to protest statements in this situation – we are admitting our defeat.

[Full text](#)

*Co-director of Foreign Policy and International Security
Programmes of the Razumkov Centre Mykhailo PASHKOV*

RUSSIA'S HYBRID AGGRESSION IN EUROPE

The tactical tasks of Russia's hybrid aggression in Europe include erosion of basic values that unite EU member states, disorientation of public opinion, formation of influential pro-Russian lobby.

The pre-election situation in France has dramatically changed after the corruption scandal involving Francois Fillon – a candidate «convenient» for Russia, generally well-disposed towards Kremlin, has lost his leading position in the election race. Current ratings have independent candidate Emmanuel Macron, head of the En Marche! party in the lead, who according to predictions, defeats far-right politician Marine Le Pen in the second round (May, 7) by a large margin (62% – 38%).

Such electoral changes are clearly not in the interest of Kremlin, and Russian state news agencies Sputnik

and Russia Today have launched an information attack on Macron, having published a number of compromising articles about him.

There is hardly any doubt that Kremlin will use all possible external and internal means of influence (from Russian diaspora to secret services) to drown Macron and clear the way for Marine Le Pen, whose taglines on France's exit from the EU and NATO, abolishing the euro, recognising Crimea as Russian, etc, are perfectly in line with Kremlin's interests.

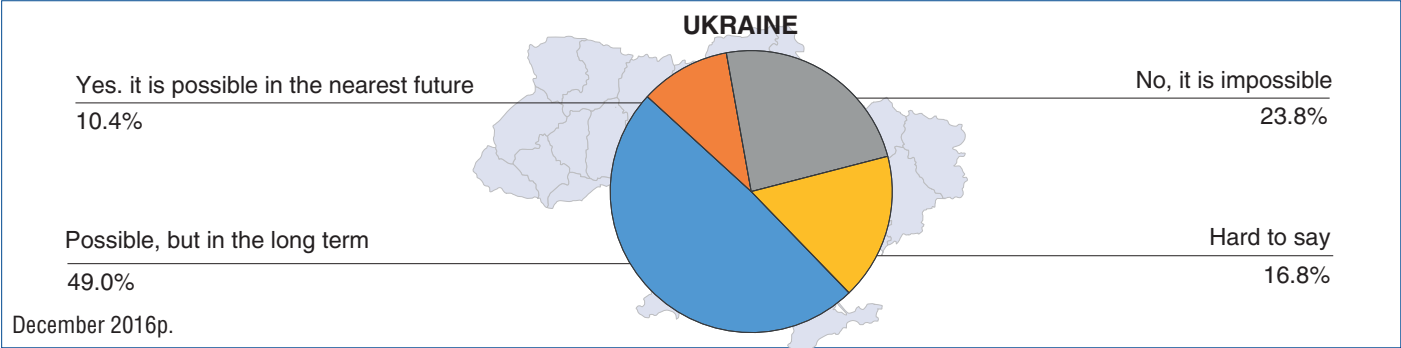
Experts at Washington Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) believe that the next objectives of Russia's hybrid expansion are French presidential elections (April-May) and German Bundestag elections (August). By the way, it is also worth remembering that

Sociology

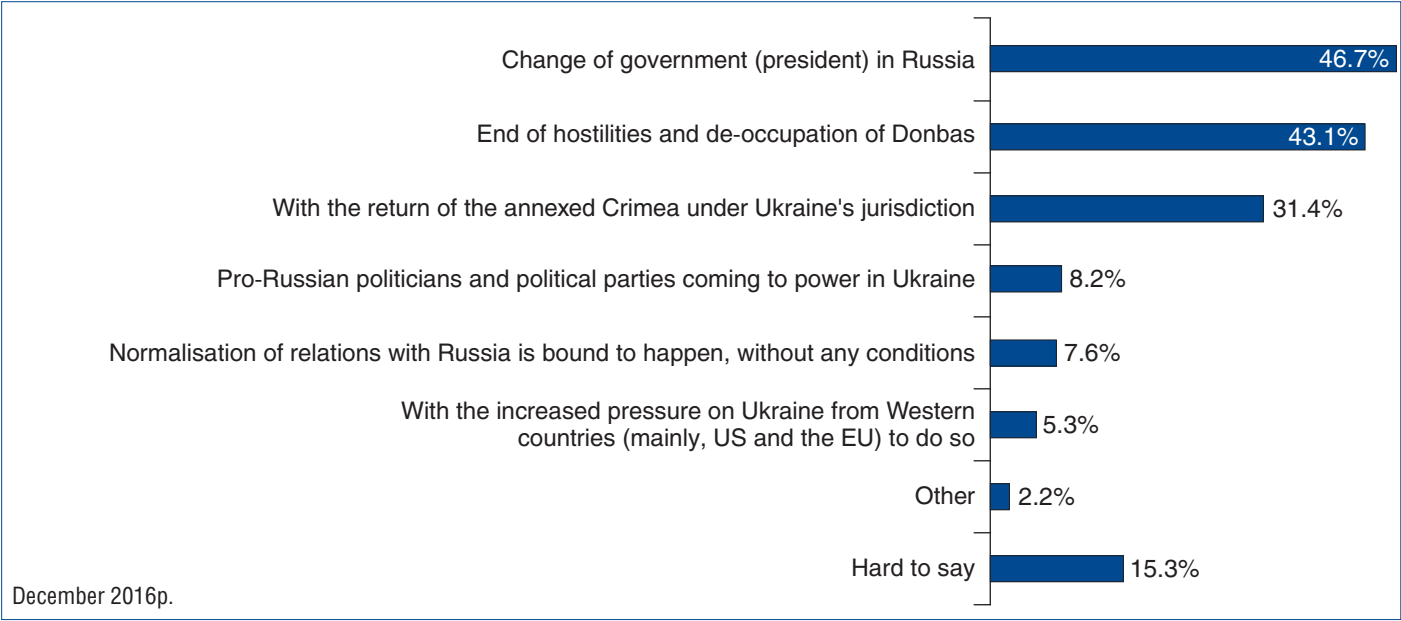
The study was conducted by the sociological service of the Razumkov Centre together with the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation from 16 to 20 December 2016 in all regions of Ukraine, except Crimea and the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Number of respondents – 2,018, age – from 18 y.o. Theoretical error of each sample does not exceed 2.3%.

For more details on the results of opinion polls conducted by the Razumkov Centre, go to our website at <http://www.razumkov.org.ua>. <http://www.razumkov.org.ua>.

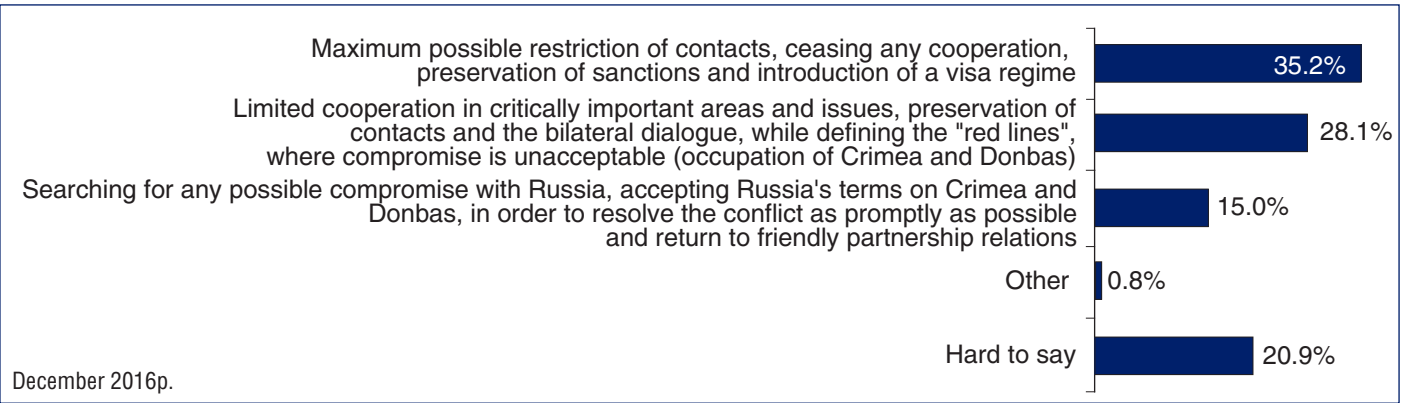
Do you believe in the possibility of normalisation of bilateral relations between Russia and Ukraine?
% of respondents



If normalisation of relations with Russia is possible, under which conditions it could happen?
% of respondents



In your opinion, which Ukraine's policy towards Russia is currently most appropriate?
% of respondents



PRESENTATION OF JOINT RESEARCH OF THE DEMOCRATIC INITIATIVES FOUNDATION AND THE RAZUMKOV CENTRE

On 17 March 2017, Ukrainian Crisis Media Centre hosted expert discussion «Ukraine-Russia: what should be the format of the future relations?», where Razumkov Centre and Democratic Initiatives Foundation presented results of their joint sociological research. Discussion participants included Foundation Director I. Bekeshkin, Co-director of Foreign Policy and International Security Programmes of the Razumkov Centre M. Pashkov, Scientific Director of the Foundation O. Haran and Deputy Head of Centre for Russian Studies O. Samarskyi.

During the discussion, M. Pashkov also presented results of a long-term sociological monitoring of the Razumkov Centre dedicated to the state, problems and prospects of Ukraine-Russia relations, told about a number of research projects conducted by the Razumkov Centre in this area.

RAZUMKOV CENTRE PARTICIPATED IN THE 2017 EUROPEAN THINK TANK SUMMIT

On 2-3 March, the European Think Tank Summit took place in London organised by the Chatham House and Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (University of Pennsylvania) with support of McKinsely Global Institute.

The Summit was attended by representatives of over 60 major think tanks of Europe, USA, Asian and Latin American countries. Ukraine was represented by the Razumkov Centre (Yurii Yakymenko), as well as the Ukrainian Think Tanks Liaison Office in Brussels (Olena Prystaiko).

This year's topic of the European Think Tank Summit was «The Future of Europe: Cooperation, Conflict or Chaos? The Role of Think Tanks in Shaping Europe's Future». The objective was to discuss modern trends of populism, nationalism, and protectionism, and to create recommendations to avoid their problematic consequences.

Summit materials can be found [here](#)

PRESENTATION OF THE PUBLICATION OF ANALYTICAL STUDY «OBJECTIVES AND PROSPECTS OF UKRAINE'S INVESTMENT AND INTEGRATION DEVELOPMENT» AT THE RAZUMKOV CENTRE

On 3 March 2017, presentation of the publication of analytical study «[Objectives and Prospects of Ukraine's Investment and Integration Development](#)» took place at the Razumkov Centre.

Fast-paced integration changes typical for modern world demand a high level of competitiveness, investment attractiveness, macroeconomic and institutional stability from the countries. At the same time, the appearance of a number of successful emerging powers and their active involvement in existing networks of creating added value produce a situation, where the performance and efficiency of the «old» or «traditional» economic unions may be questioned, and thus, there is a need for implementation of new global and transcontinental projects, which actually means the emergence of new global integration projects.

One of such transcontinental projects with the capacity to significantly influence international economic relations is the so-called Silk Road Initiative proposed by China and aimed to create a trade, investment, transport, cultural transcontinental network. Ukraine can become an active participant in this project, which can give our country a major boost in the development of modern investment and innovation infrastructure, and thus – long-term sustainable development.

Given the multidimensional nature of the identified area, the publication also includes opinion pieces of leading national experts on specific issues of forming Ukraine's modern competitive economy.

RAZUMKOV CENTRE PARTICIPATION IN THE TRILATERAL EXPERT DIALOGUE (BERLIN)

On 27-28 February 2017, a Ukrainian-Russian-German expert meeting took place in Berlin under the title «Eastern Ukraine – a Forgotten War? Prospects of the Minsk Agreements and the Normandy Format». During the meeting, Co-director of the Foreign Policy and International Security Programmes of the Razumkov Center M. Pashkov presented a special publication of the Razumkov Centre «The Russia-Ukraine Conflict in the Context of Geopolitical Changes». This is a collection of articles by Ukrainian, Russian and German experts published in Russian and English with support of Konrad Adenauer Foundation Office in Ukraine. The publication also includes results of sociological studies of the Razumkov Centre on Russia-Ukraine relations.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE «PARTY REFORM AS A GUARANTEE OF STABILISING THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN UKRAINE»

Deputy Director General for Analytics of the Razumkov Centre Yurii Yakymenko said that in order to develop a roadmap, it is necessary to first understand the goal of such actions. This means understanding, what we would like our political parties to be: programme-based and ideological, national with clear membership. However, such understanding of political parties is somewhat simplistic. There are different party systems in the world and parties differ from one another. For example, lately, in Europe there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of party members. Meaning that parties cease being organisations based on registered membership. So there is no one true approach to political parties. Instead, we should be moving towards facilitating the execution of their primary functions by political parties. In particular, representation of voters' interests, formation of elite, exercise of power. According to survey results, 72% of citizens believe that political parties are not carrying out their functions in the society. The expert supported proposals presented by the Committee of Voters of Ukraine on standardisation of political parties' areas of activity. He stressed the importance of establishing analytical centres at party offices that would bring their activity into a more efficient plane.

MEETING WITH A KOREAN MEDIA GROUP REPRESENTATIVE

On 20 March 2017, at Razumkov Centre, Co-director of the Foreign Policy and International Security Programmes M. Pashkov and Economic Issues Expert K. Markevych met with the Editor of Maekyung Media Group Kim Byung-ho (Republic of Korea). During the meeting representatives of the Centre spoke about the socio-economic situation in Ukraine, about the events currently going on in Donbas. They also discussed consequences and prospects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Special attention was paid to the issues and special aspects of development of Ukraine's energy complex. The conversation also covered the state and prospects of Kyiv-Brussels cooperation, as well as the course of Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration.

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