

THE EU-RUSSIAN CONFLICT ON CRIMEA AND ITS REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract: *The EU has capacity on pragmatic approaches to resolving conflicts among its members. Nevertheless this supranational institution's potentials to overcome possible rivalries and conflicts originated from outside of its border might be more challenging one. This will be particularly true when conflicts arise over influencing the ENP areas between the EU and its archrival the Russian (Federation). Recent political and economic turbulences in Ukraine affected the both powers' awkward relations on a number of fields. These were/are particularly became evident on the issue of Crimea, in which 'the Russian referendum' was hold, and its annexation to Russia was/is under way. Russian and the EU officials used every opportunity to declare their legal and political stances in their statements. The issues on Crimea's strategic, economic, cultural and environmental significance for the world community in general and the direct involving parties in particular will be scrutinized through practical and theoretical approaches of international Relations.*

Keywords: Crimea; the EU's Neighbourhood policy; Russian Expansion; Energy; political theory

INTRODUCTION

It can be argued that 'why Crimea matters to Russia is equally valid for the EU'. How far the involving parties can escalate the tension between them depends on their short- and long-term needs, expectations and requirements of internal and the determination of international political system. Therefore, from the point of political theory perspectives, the involving parties domestic systems and international balance of power need to be analysed in order to have a balanced and fully examination of this historic dispute.

Moscow decided to send its troops into Ukraine and seize the control of Crimea. Crimean peninsula has located on the northern coast of the Black Sea and strong historical, economic, military and cultural ties with Russia. The Russian authorities demonstrated their determination to use any pretext for their invasion and subsequently annexation of Crimea and other suitable areas. Crimea's strategic importance highly volatile to the regional powers in general to the Russian Federation in particular goes much further back to history (Herring, 1992, p.354-380).

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Within Crimea and its immediate region Sevastopol was/is a vital port for the Russian Black Sea fleet for many reasons since Novorossiysk is still at an embryonic stage for a full-scale naval base. This is a getaway for Russians not only for the Black Sea but also for the Mediterranean and beyond. Russia, therefore, will use every opportunity to regain and stay in Crimea and its immediate region. In fact, Russia sought to regain the area under the pretext of different agreements with Ukraine, which provide a continuation of the Russian military presence up to 2047. Sevastopol is a key factor for Russian regional security, which became evident during the 2008 war with Georgia and other recent international crisis.

The main worry of the EU and international community is beyond Crimea, which might further escalate the tensions between the country's pro-European west and Russian-leaning east and south.

Energy matters in the region and Crimea's potentials of hydrocarbon resources are fuelling the tension. Ukraine signed exploration and production agreements with some western countries' company, which disturbed Russia.

How far Russia will continue to push Crimea's and other areas' annexation and ready to face its possible consequences dependent on Russia's domestic and international power parity issues (Nye, 1997, p.161-170). Is it a legal movement to hold a regional referendum in Crimea on whether to secede from Ukraine and/or join the Russian Federation under the international law (Brownlie, 1967)? How could Kiev's move to dissolve the Crimean parliament, which apparently aiming at strengthening its hand under international law, affect the legality of Crimean annexation? What would be the role of the EU in these matters? The USA and the EU have condemned the referendum as 'illegal' and have threatened 'economic and political consequences' for Russia and its associates.

This paper will examine above matters in a political theory and practical perspectives with a special reference to economic, strategic, military and cultural policies of the EU and the Russian Federation in particular and the regional implications in general.

1. OUTLINE OF THE EU-RUSSIAN CONFLICT ON CRIMEA AND BEYOND

1.1. Territorial Integrity of Ukraine and Crimea

There were/are many pro-Russian nationalists and activists regarded/regarding Ukraine in general and its' mostly eastern parts in particular, as an integral part of the bigger Russian Federation (Russia Today (RT), Putin's address, 2014). This was/is particularly argued for Crimea, and its immediate region.¹ Ethnic Russians

¹ Ukraine was united twice with Russia, firstly in the 9th century and secondly in 1785, after a period of division between Poland, Russia, and the Osmanlı State (Ottoman Empire) (Armaoğlu, 1997, p.253-257; Sönmezoğlu, 2005, p. 407-408). Ukraine was an independent state following the 1917 revolution. Nevertheless, it became one of the original constituent republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Ukraine, once again became an independent state in 1991, on the break-up of the Soviet Union.

are estimated 7.662 million (%17.3) and Russian-speaking Ukrainians 10.629 million (%24) out of the total 44,291,413 in Ukraine (Ukraine, 2014). Considering Crimea, on the similar scale, more than %60 of the population of Crimea are Russian-speakers, with the rest made up of Ukrainian, Tatars and a number of different language speakers (Orr, 2014).

Under the present circumstances, ethnic and linguistic combination of Ukraine creates great concern not only for the Ukraine authorities but also for the EU and the world community in general. The international communities' main worry is that tensions between the country's pro-European, Ukrainian-speaking west and Russian-leaning, Russian-speaking east and south could split the country. Present political turmoil might create wider consequences not only for the region but also in the other part of the world (Putin's address, 2014).² The Russian military existence was/is a reminder for those concerned involving powers that Russia would continue to protect/use its control of Crimea and the region for its variety of interests (Putin's address, 2014; Sönmezoğlu, 2012, pp.17-70).³

When the Russian authorities began to annexation process of Crimea in March and April 2014, the Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatseniuk expressed Ukrainians feelings as saying "no one will give up Crimea to anyone" (Yatseniuk says 2014). This was regarded as a warning signal to the Russians and the West. It seems that the Ukrainian struggle will continue for the time being with and without the help of the West and the European Union. The European Union authorities appeared a bit reluctant to give a prompt reaction against the Russian move on Crimea. Russian President Vladimir Putin bluntly stated on the EU policies and practices as 'Instead of offering Ukraine real support, there is talk about a declaration of intent. There are only promises that are not backed up by any real actions' (Putin's address, 2014). In fact, the European Union has obligation on the protection of the territorial integrity of Ukraine for a number of reasons. Two members of the EU, the United Kingdom and France, signed the 1994 Budapest Memorandum,⁴ which envisaged Ukraine's territorial integrity alongside by the Russian Federation and the United States of America. There were political,

² Russian state television RT (Russia Today) takes the Crimean issue and its annexation as a constant debate as being example for other potential areas in the world. This is argued for an instance for Bask Region in Spain.

³ For a theoretical debate on citizenship and state relations see: Andrew Linklater, *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations*, Second Edition, Macmillan 1990, London, pp.184-201.

⁴ The Budapest Memorandum was signed by the Presidents of Ukraine, Russian Federation and United States of America, and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on 5 December 1994. This was done in connection with the accession of Ukraine to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This Memorandum was expected to provide national security assurances to Ukraine on behalf of those countries. Later, China and France joined its provisions in the form of individual statements. The Joint Declaration by the Russian Federation and the United States of America of 4 December 2009 confirmed the security guarantees for Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine (Unterm 2014).

economic and security reasons for those involving partners' interest on Ukraine at the time, then and present (Unterm 2014; Frederking, 2000, pp.103-104).⁵ Economic matters fuel the political sensitivities on energy security and territorial integrity between the East and the West.

1.2. Energy Resources and Its influence on the regional matters

Crimea has potential hydrocarbon resources for exploration and its commercial usages for those interested energy giants of the western world, locals and the Russian Federation. Consequently, these potentials are one of the escalating issues for tensions in and around of Crimea. Ukraine signed exploration and production agreements with Italy's Eni⁶ (%50) and of a Joint Venture with France's EDF (%5), and the State-owned companies Vody Ukrainy (%35) and Chornomornaftogaz (%10), (both fully owned by NJSC Nadra Ukrainy and NJSC Naftogaz Ucraina) in and around of Crimean peninsula on 27 November 2013 (ENI, 2014). Apparently the offshore area of the eastern part of the Crimean peninsula offers significant hydrocarbon energy exploration capacity, in which covering approximately 1400 km². The area includes a license for Pry Kerch block (Subbotina, Abiha, Mayachna and Kavkazka) where either oil discovery was made and/or oil and gas prospects have been identified (Grove and Barker, 2014).

A consortium led by ExxonMobil and Royal Dutch Shell signed a production sharing agreement for an offshore plot off Ukraine's western Black Sea coast. Relating to this energy issue, local individuals also want to take places on cooperation with the West and the East on the energy issues (Ukrayna'daki, 2014; Nye, 1997, p.171-175). Rinat Akhmetov who is the richest man in Ukraine, was seeking to lure western investors into an offshore exploration project off the coast of Crimea in recent months (Orr, 2014).

Nonetheless, it is not so easy to solve existing Ukrainian related problems if there is highly valuable asset to share it. Therefore, potentials will be used for a number of disturbances for different aims, which were created in recent months in Ukraine and Crimea. The EU have taken some political measures in order to slow down the violence took places in Ukraine particularly against the western interests. As a first step, the EU imposed travel bans and asset freezes on Ukrainian officials deemed responsible for the violence in and around Kiev (Euronews, 2014; Ukraine crisis, 2014). So, administrative and legal issues started to play their roles in highly delicate bilateral and multilateral relations between the East and the West.

⁵ Ukraine is the EU's a priority partner country within the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership. The EU has been seeking an increasingly close relationship with Ukraine aiming bilateral cooperation, encompassing gradual progress towards political association and economic integration. In this respect, an Association Agreement between the Union and Ukraine was negotiated in 2007-2011. Furthermore, the both parties initialed an agreement on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area on 30 March 2012. (Regulation of the EP, 2014).

⁶ Eni, Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (national hydrocarbon authority) which was founded with the Italian law of 136 and came into force on 11 April 1953 (ENI, 2014).

1.3. Legal aspects of Crimea's annexation

How far Russia will push Crimea's annexation and ready to face its consequences? Is it a legal movement to hold a regional referendum on whether to secede from Ukraine and join the Russian Federation under the international law? How could Kiev's move to dissolve the Crimean parliament, which apparently aiming at strengthening its hand under international law, affect the legality of Crimean annexation? There are many questions needs to be answered for the legal perspectives of the existing and emerging issues in the region.

A decision has to go through constitutional processes of a given country in order to be legalized nationally and internationally. Consequently whether or not the Crimean referendum is a constitutional move under Ukrainian law has to be examined which seems violates international law because it violates domestically Ukraine's constitution (Higgins, 2001, pp. 95-128, 238-253).

Purely legality point of views there are some obstacles has to be removed from Russian side (Tsvetkova and Gutterman, 2014). There are legal barriers under the Russian constitutional law that must be sorted out before the Kremlin can take the further step of annexation. In order to annex a part of a foreign country into the Russian Federation that decision has to be approved and/or in accordance with a request from the organs of state power of that part of the foreign country. Moreover, any request to join Russia must be approved by "a referendum conducted in accordance with the laws of the foreign state in the territory of that part of the foreign state." That means Crimea's regional authorities must approve the results of the March 16 referendum for Russia to agree to annexation which was approved in Moscow on 18 March 2014 (Putin's address 2014).

Contrary to this, the Ukrainian authorities dissolved the Crimea's parliament before the March 16, 2014 referendum (Ukraine Dissolves, 2014). This was done in order to argue for the Ukrainian authorities that 'a Crimean annexation request fails to meet the requirements of the Duma's draft bill because it was not carried out by regional organs of state power.' However, there is no practical way to enforce international law on Russia due to its Crimean annexation following the referendum (Brownlie, 1967, pp.178-93). It is extremely difficult to get a decision through United Nations Security Council due to the fact that Russia holds a veto right in it (Baehr, P.R., Gordenker L., 1999, pp. 25-6,120-131). There is no way to enforce Russia's standpoint otherwise. The question is will anyone other than Russia recognize Crimea as a part of Russia? (Laws 2014). The reality is that Russia can take it over a while which becomes a *fait accompli* as like China's takeover of Tibet. This is not a legal but exerting a military power processes.

The United States and the European Union have condemned the referendum as illegal and have threatened economic and political consequences for Russia if Moscow takes further action to seize control of Crimea (Jozwiak, 2014). In fact, they have taken some measures to achieve their end. The debate on Crimea and other parts of Ukraine is still under the discussion of the influential powers' agendas.

1.4. Why Crimea matters to Russia?

Moscow decision to send Russian troops into Ukraine and seize control of Crimea has thrown the spotlight onto the peninsula. Strategically important Crimea has located on the northern coast of the Black Sea and strong historical and cultural ties with Russia. Russia dominated and ruled Crimea for many years. Moscow cannot ignore such a significant gateways for its security and economic wellbeing (Putin's address, 2014). Therefore, Russians will use any issue as a pretext for its military invasion and annexation in order to defend its citizens and interests in Ukraine, especially in Crimea. If one consider the needs and expectation of Russia and its practices in immediate borders one can safely argue that Russia is pursuing realist perspective of international relations theory (Smith, 1999, p.61-91).

Crimea's strategic importance highly volatile to the regional powers in general to the Russian Federation in particular goes much further back to history (Cordesman, 1994, pp. 55-57). Sevastopol port was and still is one of the vital harbours for the Russian Naval forces. This is not only important for the Black Sea but also for the Mediterranean and beyond for the Russians. Russia therefore will use every opportunity to regain Crimea and its region. In fact, Russia sought to regain the area under the pretext of different agreements with Ukraine. The signed agreements with Ukraine in 2010, the Russian military can continue to use Sevastopol until 2042, with an option of extending the lease to 2047 (Hille, 2014).⁷ Vladimir Putin blandly stated that the Black Sea fleet's presence in Sevastopol is a key factor for Russian security (Putin's address, 2014; Windsor, 1993, pp. 61-70). This became evident during the 2008 war with Georgia, when the Russian fleet staged blockades in the Black Sea and was used to launch amphibious landings. There were also other usages during the Libya crisis, anti-piracy missions in the Indian Ocean and Moscow's role in dismantling Syria's chemical weapons. According to the agreements were signed Russians can station up to 25,000 military personnel in the base. Sevastopol has become even more important since Russia was forced to stop using the naval base in the Syrian port of Tartus (Weir, 2014; Gardner, 2014).

Moscow is trying to convert the Russian largest commercial port, Novorossiysk on the Black Sea coast, into a full-scale naval base. The Russian navy using the port for smaller naval vessels and a supply point, which is still at an embryonic stage compare to Sevastopol. Russians see Crimea as an integral part of the Russian Federation. Nikita Khrushchev transferred Crimea to Ukraine in 1954.

⁷ The Kharkiv Accords (Pact), (the Russian Ukrainian Naval Base for Gas treaty), was signed as a continuation of 1997 between Ukraine (President Victor Yanukovych) and Russia (President Dimitry Medvedev) on 21 April 2010 in Kharkiv, Ukraine. According to the treaty the Russian lease on naval facilities in Crimea would be extended beyond 2017 by 25 years (to 2042) with an additional 5 years renewal option (to 2047). This was in exchange for a multiyear discounted contract to provide Ukraine with Russian natural gas. Shortly after the March 2014 annexation of Crimea to the Russian Federation unilaterally terminated the treaty on 31 March 2014.

After the break-up of the Soviet Union Crimea became part of newly independent Ukraine rather than part of the Russian Federation (Putin's address, 2014).

It became rather difficult for Russians to digest the reality of an independent Ukraine with an approximately 7.6 million ethnic Russians in it. Sevastopol was home of Russia's Black Sea naval base since the 18th century and it was under the authority of the Ukrainian Soviet republic in 1978. Sevastopol somehow remained under the Russian authorities in everything but just the nominal name was Ukrainian city. More than %60 of the population of Crimea is Russian-speakers and the rest consisted of Ukrainian and Tatars speakers.

1.5. Recent Political Turmoil in Ukraine and Crimea

Pro-Russian 'activists' in Crimea have demonstrated and organized widespread opposition to the new national government in Kiev with a prospect of secession from Ukraine. These actions in Crimea protracted grassroots actions against the Ukrainian government in the capital's central square, recruiting hundreds of 'local men' into and as 'self-organized militias' as reported in various newspapers in the West (Buckley and Olearchyk, 2014).

Figure 1 – Ukraine: Russian native speakers



Source: ukrcensus.gov.ua; IMF; Thomson Reuters Datastream; IISS
<http://blogs.ft.com/the-world/files/2014/03/election.gif>

In Sevastopol ethnic-Russians forced out the Kiev-appointed city administrator and replaced him with Alexei Chaliy, a local businessman with Russian citizenship. The tension has been further fuelled by the deaths of six Crimean riot police in the Kiev. So called ‘ethnic Russians’ have using the argument of Russian officials’ mouth labelling the new Ukrainian authorities as “fascists” and “bandits”.⁸ Gennady Basov, leader of Sevastopol’s Russian Block party, argued that ‘the new Kiev leaders planning to make illegal to speak Russian altogether’ which is not substantiated by the previous and present actions of the Ukrainian authorities. Contrary to this claim however, the pro-Russian Crimeans organized well-attended protests where Russian flags were waved and chanted loudest possible way to be heard not only in Crimea and Kiev but also in the Western capitals “Russia! Russia!” There is no only single one-way solution of the Crimean conflict. On the one hand, there are Crimean residents supporting the peninsula’s unification with Russia and on the other, some Crimean prefer either greater autonomy for the region or remaining united with Ukraine under the new leadership in Kiev (Orr, 2014).

Table 1 - About number and composition population of Autonomous Republic of Crimea by All-Ukrainian population census’ 2001 data

	Defined as the native language (%)			
	language their the nationality	Ukrainian	Russian	other language
Russians	99.7	0.2	x	0.1
Crimean Tatars	93.0	0.5	5.9	0.6
Tatars	67.8	0.1	25.0	7.1
Azeris	55.8	0.7	37.9	5.6
Armenians	52.9	0.3	46.1	0.7
Ukrainians	40.4	x	59.5	0.1
Moldavans	31.0	1.9	66.0	1.1
Greeks	23.8	1.1	71.8	3.3
Koreans	20.1	0.1	78.8	1.1
Bulgarians	18.4	3.1	77.6	0.9
Belarussians	17.1	0.9	81.8	0.2
Poles	4.1	20.4	74.6	0.9
Jews	1.9	1.1	96.7	0.3

Source: All-Ukrainian population census

(<http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/language/Crimea/>)

⁸ Russian intense diplomatic, media and psychological moves and works had taken places in portraying Kiev’s new leadership as ‘fascists’ and ‘terrorists’ directed by the Western powers. So, the Russian authorities have pledged to defend Russian citizens and interests in Ukraine, especially in Crimea. This is an old and new ways of influencing and expanding Russian interest wherever this pretext will be useful as it was exercised in Georgia in 2008 (Huntington, 1996, p.266-298).

The analysis of the indicated ‘native language’ shows that 10.1% of the population of Autonomous Republic of Crimea have indicated ‘Ukrainian’ as their native language and 77.0% of population indicated ‘Russian’ as their native language and 11.4% of population indicated Crimean-Tatar (Ukraine census, 2014).

1.6. Facts and figures on Crimea.

The total population of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea according to the data of the All-Ukrainian census was 2,033,700 persons. The urban population accounted for 1,274,300 whereas the rural population is 759,400 persons, and this is 62.7% and 37.3% respectively. The total men of the population is 937,600 whereas women 1,096,100 which corresponded to 46.1% and 53.9% respectively. There are 16 towns in which 5 of them populated more than 50,000 inhabitants. Within this population the national structure of Crimea is multinational composition. According to the 2001 Ukrainian census Crimea has more than 125 different nationalities and ethnic groups in which with an increase intention of people with higher and secondary education (Ukraine census, 2014).

2. REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONFLICT

2.1. The European Union decision on Ukraine and Crimea

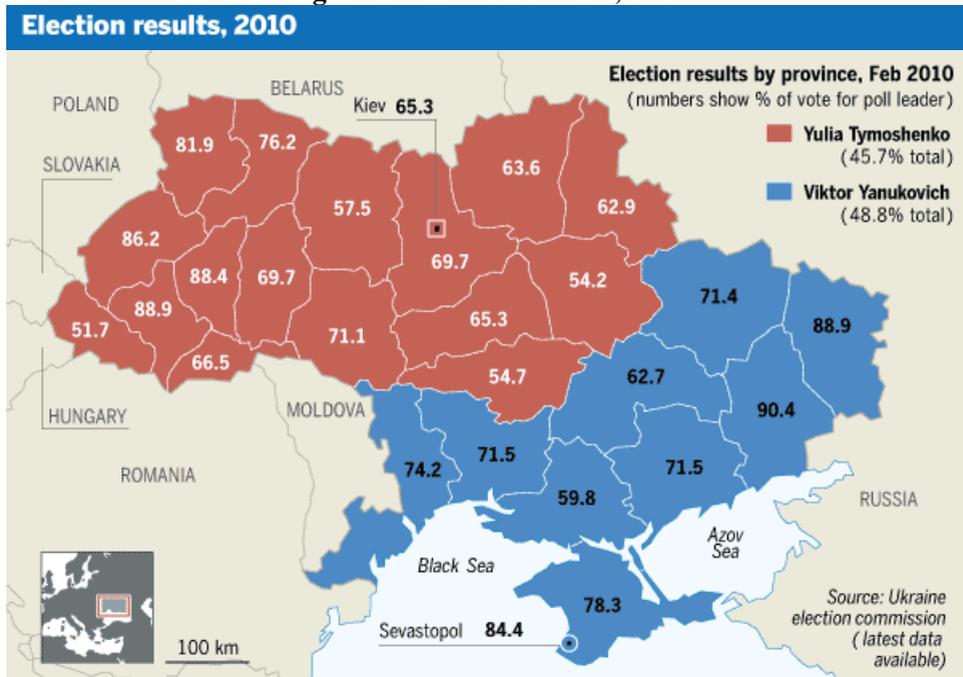
The European Council discussed and decided on the events, which took places in Ukraine in general and Crimea in particular. The European Union condemned armed individuals’ actions in cities of Eastern Ukraine (Statement 2014). These actions regarded as ‘destabilizing acts’ and should to be stopped. All involving parties are encouraged establishing a dialogue for a peaceful end. The Council expanded the list of those subject to assets freeze and visa ban (Council conclusions on Ukraine, 2014; EU freezes, 2014).

The Council repeatedly stated that Ukraine’s unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity should be respected. The Council has called Russians to do the same, and urge them immediately ‘to renounce lawless acts’ in Eastern Ukraine. In order to sustain the stabilization of the area Russia should call back its troops from the Ukrainian soil. Threat and/or use of force cannot be accepted not only in Ukraine but also in the region. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian authorities should pursue their law and order within its soil and make every effort to reducing tensions between Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

The European Union condemned Russian ‘illegal’ annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. It is stated that the European Union will not recognize Russian fait accompli in Crimea. The EU welcomed the adoption of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly Number 68/262 on 27 March 2014 (Territorial integrity, 2014). The Council further stated that it looks forward to the Commission's evaluation of the legal consequences of the annexation of Crimea

and to the related proposals for economic, trade and financial restrictions regarding Crimea.

Figure 2 – Election results, 2010



Source: Ukraine election commission
(<http://blogs.ft.com/the-world/files/2014/03/election.gif>)

The EU repeatedly declared that Russia's peaceful and constructive engagement with Ukraine is important for political, economic and strategic reasons in which the EU will gladly take places. As a first step, a multilateral mechanism for a dialogue should be established aiming to find a political solution on Ukraine's full sovereignty and territorial integrity. To this end, the European Council welcomed the meeting with the participation of the High Representative and Foreign Ministers of Ukraine, Russia and the US, as a start of a substantial de-escalation process of the issue. It is also further expected that the EU and the Russian Federation should support economic stability of Ukraine (Main results, 2014, pp.13-15).

The EU Council valued the work undertaken by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Monitoring Mission, which is of utmost importance in monitoring developments in Ukraine (OSCE Monitoring Mission, 2014). The Council supports and takes under strict consideration of this mission's reports for obtaining updated developments in Ukraine (Ukraine, a developing, 2014). Therefore, the Council expresses its concerns on possible restrictions on the ability to observe of this Monitoring Mission on the situation in the area of human rights and other issues in Crimea and Ukraine.

The European Neighbourhood Policy aims to familiarize Ukraine within the scope of EU's parameters. Therefore the EU Council is ready to assist Ukraine in the field of civilian security sector reform, support of police and rule of law within the territory of Ukraine. In this respect the Council tasks the European External Action Service (EEAS, 2014) to deploy an expert mission to prepare for appropriate assistance complementary with other on-going efforts and elaborate a Political Framework for Crisis Approach (PFCA), examining all options, including through a possible Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission (CSDP, 2014).

The EU Council highlighted the tense situation in Ukraine by any additional destabilizing acts may deteriorate broad range of economic and political consequences between the European Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and the Russian Federation, on the other hand. Therefore, the responsible EU institutions are working on the possibility of possible targeted measures and further steps as requested by the European Council.

The EU Council encouraged Ukraine to continue to move ahead with its course of political reforms and the constitutional reform. It is further supported that the Ukrainian authorities implementation and commitments to ensure the representative nature and inclusiveness of governmental structures which is expected to reflecting regional diversity and ensure the full protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. The Ukrainian authorities should investigate what the International Advisory Panel of the Council of Europe suggest on all human rights violations, acts of violence and to fight extremism. The Council regarded an appropriate move of the Ukrainian parliamentary resolution calling for the immediate disarmament of all illegal self-defence forces. The Council supporting to build trust across Ukraine and the decision of the holding of free and fair Presidential elections on 25 May in Ukraine.

The Council is expecting from the new Ukrainian authorities will continue to commit on signing the remaining provisions of the Association Agreement after the presidential elections on 25 May 2014. The agreement will include the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (Full document DCFTA, 2014). To this end, the Council adopted the Regulation on the reduction or elimination of customs duties on goods originating in Ukraine as a support measure to Ukraine until 1 November 2014 (OJ of the EU L118.1-760).

The EU Council stated that its commitment to stand by Ukraine and to provide strong financial support to its economic and financial stabilisation. The Council welcomed the agreement between the IMF and the Ukrainian authorities on a new Stand-By Arrangement on 27 March 2014. The Council adopted the Decision on the macro-financial assistance for Ukraine establishing clear conditions for its future disbursement, which will bring the total amount to EUR 1.6 billion (Commission's support, 2014).

The Council encouraged and welcomed the creation of the Support Group for Ukraine. This will work on the implementation of the "European Agenda for reform" which is a part of the ENP's aims a implementation of set of structural reforms, including the fight against corruption, public finance management and

budget transparency. The EU calls on all interested and involving parties to contribute to the stabilisation and development of Ukraine and the region, which will serve not only for the EU but also for the regional powers.

The Council declared that the EU ready to assist Ukraine's energy security and supply through further diversification of the rapid enhancement of reverse flow capacities energy efficiency, and effective interconnections with and within the European Union. Nevertheless, such assistance has to be combined with Ukraine's efforts to reform and modernise its energy sector, in line with Ukraine's commitments in the Energy Community Treaty.

The Council suggested consultations with Russia and Ukraine with a view to ensuring security of supply and transit energy. The Council expressed its concern regarding the unilateral increase of gas prices applied to Ukraine. This might be an indication of possible political usage of energy in bilateral and multilateral relations. The Council highlighted its decision by expressing how an international business should conduct. It is suggested that a firm conviction that all differences of views on the price and conditions of gas supplies should be solved through negotiations and available legal mechanisms, with a view to stabilising the economic situation in a given place. Energy relations must be based on reciprocity, transparency, fairness, non-discrimination, openness to competition and continued cooperation to ensure a level playing field for the safe and secure supply of energy.

The European Union reaffirms its support for political association and economic integration with Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. The EU is trying to establish strong relations by signing the Association Agreements and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas within a very short period of time. This relation aimed to enhance the European Union's confident of a positive impact on wider stability and socio-economic development and for the benefit of all the citizens of the two states and their neighbours. Subsequently, the EU encouraging Georgia and the Republic of Moldova to continue implementing EU required reforms as part of their commitment to further strengthen the political association and economic integration with the EU. Therefore, it is important for the EU to have good relations not only with these two states of Ukraine neighbours within the Neighbourhood Policy of the EU. In order to bolster the relation and Ukraine thrust to the EU, the Council approved macro-financial assistance of up to € 1 billion for Ukraine. In addition to this, the European Union authorities adopted EU trade preference for Ukrainian products and reinforced EU restrictive measures targeting persons responsible for the misappropriation of Ukrainian state funds. These are granting unilateral trade preferences to Ukraine, providing for the temporary reduction or elimination of customs duties in accordance with a schedule of concessions set out in an annex to the EU-Ukraine association agreement (EU-Ukraine Association Agreement 2014). The EU's support package aimed to assist and encourage to Ukraine's political and economic transition and reforms (European future for Ukraine, 2014). The package was announced by the Commission on 5 March 2014 and endorsed by the Council on 6 March 2014 in response to the unprecedented developments in Ukraine.

CONCLUSION

According to the EU's assessment 'Russia is a flagrant breach of international law and a policy of aggression that it is not observed as the like of since the Cold War'. The actions were taken places in Crimea and Ukraine reduced the international credibility of Russia. It is believed that Russia organized an unconstitutional "referendum" on whether to break the Crimean region off from the Ukrainian state.

International and the European Union efforts are needed to support economic and political reforms and their implementation in Ukraine. The events of Maidan Square were a popular uprising against corruption and political stagnation, a call for reforms and stronger ties to Europe. Russian supporters resisted severely to the uprising in Kiev which is quite understandable by the Russian great expectations.

The EU adopted a package of supporting economic stabilization and well-functioning public authorities in Ukraine about 16 billion Euros. The EU further offered visa procedures simplification towards Ukraine, strengthening the partnership by improving the judicial system and the rule of law, as well as fighting corruption with the state.

The European Council decided sanctions against Russia. This is regarded as a fair and just act as suspending the negotiations on visa liberalization with Russia. In addition to this, the EU carried out travel bans and freezing of assets of individuals and officials.

Ukraine in general Crimea in particular is a vastly important for the European Union and the Russian Federation. After president Viktor Yanukovich left office, the new government in Kiev faced a number of challenges as weathering out corruption, safeguarding the integrity of public authorities and getting the economy back on its feet. The EU wanted to play a key role to play in contributing to making what Ukrainian government what to achieve as line with the European Union requirements.

A Summit was held and signed the Association Agreement between the European Union and its Member States and Ukraine in Brussels on 21 March 2014 (Final Act 8841/14, 2014). The European Parliament and Council approved on the reduction or elimination of customs duties on goods originating in Ukraine on 16 April 2014 in Strasbourg (OJ L 118/1, 2014).

The Ukrainian people as like any other state in the region and wider world deserve a democratic and prosperous future where it is located. The strategic importance of Crimea should not be the curse of its bright future.

The EU should focus, research and practice on four core grounds of conflict resolution in Crimea and Ukraine. These four bases will provide the EU negotiators to focus their work in an area of concentration, such as health care, the environment, or ombudsman practices. The EU has potentials in the world of negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution through applied research and exposure to professional work in the field with grounding in theory, research and

practice. Obviously these depend on availability and acceptance of the EU's existence in the region in particular worldwide in general.

Conflict resolution requires a rigorous and concentrated works and program that demands a serious commitment of time and energy (Freedman, 1993, p.105-117). The EU and Russian needs are different on the issue of Crimea and Ukraine (Ukraine, 2014). Henceforth, the peninsula and its environmental areas' values are not the same level for the involving parties. This brings different approaches to the same issue while one side regards essential whereas others see the same differently in the future as in the past. Therefore, involving parties should be very careful in their every single move with an utmost attention.

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