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**PROBLEMS OF RELATIONS OF UKRAINE WITH THE EU AND
RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN THE CONDITIONS OF SOCIO-POLITICAL
CRISIS (ACCORDING TO EXPERT ASSESSMENTS AND MASS MEDIA
MATERIALS)**

The debatable expert and analytical assessments of the issues of foreign orientations of Ukraine in 2013-2014 have been analyzed in the article. The special attention was paid to materials of foreign policy expertise in the leading general political publications. The materials of mass media which related to problematic economical and political aspects of Ukrainian-Russian relations and the perspectives of signing the Association Agreement with the European Union were researched with consideration of

assessments of the leading experts and publicists. The conclusion that the moderate and quite objective assessments of the sequence of events regarding signing the Association Agreement with the EU were provided by experts and columnists of political weeklies “Komentari”, “Dzerkalo tyzhnya”, “Fokus”, and the daily newspaper “Den”, is made. However, traditionally a more radical position regarding the “Eurasian vector” of foreign policy of Ukraine was taken by “Ukrayinsky tyzhden” periodical.

Keywords: Ukraine, Russia, the EU, foreign policy expertise, quality mass media, socio-political crisis, East-West.

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ПРОБЛЕМИ ВІДНОСИН УКРАЇНИ З ЄС І РОСІЙСЬКОЮ ФЕДЕРАЦІЄЮ В УМОВАХ СУСПІЛЬНО-ПОЛІТИЧНОЇ КРИЗИ (ЗА ЕКСПЕРТНИМИ ОЦІНКАМИ І МАТЕРІАЛАМИ ЗМІ)

У статті проаналізовано дискусійні експертно-аналітичні оцінки з питань зовнішніх орієнтацій України у 2013-2014 роках. Особливу увагу приділено матеріалам зовнішньополітичної експертизи у провідних загальнополітичних виданнях. Досліджено, з врахуванням оцінок провідних експертів і публіцистів, матеріали ЗМІ, які стосувалися проблемних економічних і політичних аспектів українсько-російських взаємин, а також перспектив підписання договору про асоціацію з Європейським Союзом. Зроблено висновок, що помірковані і достатньо об'єктивні оцінки щодо розвитку подій стосовно підписання договору про асоціацію з ЄС давалися експертами і оглядачами політичних тижневиків “Коментарі”, “Дзеркало тижня”, “Фокус”, а також щоденної газети “День”. Проте, традиційно більш радикальну позицію щодо “євразійського вектору” зовнішньої політики України займало видання “Український тиждень”.

Ключові слова: Україна, Росія, ЄС, зовнішньополітична експертиза, якість ЗМІ, соціально-політична криза, Схід-Захід.

Грушко Алексей

ПРОБЛЕМЫ ОТНОШЕНИЙ УКРАИНЫ С ЕС И РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИЕЙ В УСЛОВИЯХ ОБЩЕСТВЕННО-ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОГО КРИЗИСА (ПО ЭКСПЕРТНЫМ ОЦЕНКАМ И МАТЕРИАЛАМ СМИ)

В статье проанализированы дискуссионные экспертно-аналитические оценки по вопросам внешней политики Украины в

2013-2014 годах. Особое внимание уделено материалам внешнеполитической экспертизы в ведущих общеполитических изданиях. Исследованы, с учетом оценок ведущих экспертов и публицистов, материалы СМИ, касающиеся проблемных экономических и политических аспектов украинско-российских отношений, а также перспектив подписания соглашения об ассоциации с Европейским Союзом.

Сделан вывод, что умеренные и достаточно объективные оценки по развитию событий относительно подписания соглашения об ассоциации с ЕС давались экспертами и обозревателями политических еженедельников “Комментарии”, “Зеркало недели”, “Фокус”, а также ежедневной газеты “День”. Однако, традиционно более радикальную позицию относительно “евразийского вектора” внешней политики Украины высказывало издание “Украинский тыждень”.

Ключевые слова: Украина, Россия, ЕС, внешнеполитическая экспертиза, качество СМИ, социально-политический кризис, Восток-Запад.

In the international situation that has extremely worsened in 2013-2014, especially in Central-Eastern Europe, the problems of civilization choice are gaining an increasing value, first of all for those countries, which aim to move away from the traditional communistic past and to overcome the East-West confrontation line for real for more sustainable and predictable development. The mentioned problems are primarily actual for modern Ukraine, and they have found a reflection at the pages of quality mass media, in the current political and the deeper expert assessments.

Formulation of the problem. The topic of proposed article relates to utterly important and debatable problems of the relations of Ukraine with the EU and Russian Federation in the context of socio-political crisis in our country caused above all by the refusal of the President V. Yanukovich to sign a known Association Agreement with the EU at the Vilnius summit last autumn. In the center of attention are the expert and analytical assessments on this case, which have been published at the pages of many quality mass media.

Degree of scientific development of the topic. We will underline at once that these problems were not a subject of special research of domestic scientists. Some important expert assessments analyzing the

efforts of Ukraine in the issue of concluding the new basic agreement with the EU are presented by the modern researcher T.V. Sydoruk [1, p.216-237], who also emphasizes the necessity of considerable strengthening of “transformative power” of the EU in the region of Eastern Europe. In the dissertation research T.V. Andryushchenko it is mentioned that the attempts of Ukraine to reach the level of “centers of leading development” (Western, North-Atlantic and partly Far Eastern ones) encounters the series of obstacles, and behavior model of Ukraine will consist in the gradual orientation on the best European and world examples [2]. Separate aspects of the expert and public thought in the context of building the productive relations of Ukraine with neighboring countries in the region of Central-Eastern Europe were studied by a domestic researcher P.P. Chernyk [3]. Generally, it can be stated that one of the leading topics of the noted relations that was and remains today is the problem of forming the favorable international environment for realization of the tasks of the state development of Ukraine and reflection of these processes in the media and public thought.

Purpose of the article is to analyze the debatable expert and analytical assessments of the issues of foreign orientations of Ukraine in 2013-2014. Herewith the special significance belongs to the materials of foreign policy expertise in such weeklies as “Komentari” (Comments), “Dzerkalo tyzhnya” (Mirror of the week), “Fokus” (Focus), and the daily newspaper “Den” (Day).

Proceeding to the presentation of the main material, we will firstly outline the preconditions that have formed before the summit in Vilnius and the factors, which did not facilitate the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU by Ukraine. As notes the majority of the experts, the execution of formulated by the Council of the EU still in December 2012 and clarified somewhat later (see Fule’s list) requirements for Ukraine has actually been delayed by Ukrainian authorities. Since then, as analyst L. Aleksandrov indicates in the special analytical and forecast issue of “Ukrayinsky tyzhden” (Ukrainian week) with “The Economist” magazine, for the most part of 2013 Ukrainian authorities have actively demonstrated, “although more imitated” their execution. In particular, the half-and-half amendments to the Ukrainian legislation have been introduced, and part of the victims of selective justice have been released. In the same time the delaying by the government of execution of the conditions has been

constantly generating the doubts related to the behavior of V. Yanukovych in the context of such “pseudointegration”. The analyst allows such an option too: it might have been “only a war of nerves for Putin”, to get him to make a bigger acquiescence, for example, in the form of multibillion credits and reducing the price for natural gas in exchange “for refusal from the Association Agreement with the EU” [4, p.126]. In such situation, it was hardly possible to talk about continuation of some significant socio-economic reforms. Not coincidentally, analyzing the socio-political situation of the last months of V. Yanukovych presidency, the famous American expert on post-communistic transformations Anders Aslund emphasized: “One can say that the presidency of V. Yanukovych from the view of reforms has already ended. Now it is only about his survival and keeping at the helm” [5, p.25]. We will quote in relation to this the words of then Minister of Justice O. Lavrynovych, who observed the following: already “a year before the non-signing of the Agreement it was visible that the issue of European integration has ceased to be the real direction of state policy. As it will be realized, it is only a matter of time” [6]. In this context more understandable becomes the tactics of the Kremlin, about which L. Oleksandrov writes. Apparently, they expected that for severely cornered Yanukovych “nothing remains but to join the neo-imperial projects”. Because after the failure of the Association it will be much harder “to negotiate not only with the European leaders, but with Putin and the Chinese as well” [4, p.127].

Other analyst Oleksandr Kramar, in already mentioned joint Ukrainian-British analytical weekly, has noted about the two possible scenarios in case of defeat or victory of Euromaidan. In case of defeat of the pro-European movement we can expect “extreme variants of keeping the power in 2015”, and “strengthening of dependency from Russia and isolation from the West”. In case of escalation of the other, initially positive scenario, Russia, in analyst’s opinion, “can inspire the separatist actions in some south-eastern regions (at least in Crimea and Sevastopol)”, and to try to destabilize the situation in the rest of border regions with “further mimicking the Transnistria-Abkhazia scenario” [7, p.125].

It is interesting that before the summit in Vilnius (November 2013) a famous political expert D. Vydrin who in the last years was close to President V. Yanukovych has provided an opposite – quite an optimistic forecast concerning the possible signing of the Association Agreement by

Ukraine. At the question of the reporter “Vesti. Reporter” (News. Reporter) (which, by the way, stood out by a more pro-Russian sympathy), with what will the summit in Vilnius end, the expert replied: “With exchange of expensive pens which will sign the Association with the EU, and the start of a long, very long road to Europe” [8, p.12]. It happened like this, but already with another President of Ukraine.

We will note, that the “half-and-half” scenarios of development of events were observed then. In October 2013, someone of the experts and political observers has spoken with a forecast of the possibility of “partial” conclusion of Association with the EU. It was even considered that an incomplete association is a kind of “golden card” for the current president. According to this scenario, first of all the economic part of the Association with the EU would enter into force, and the political one, where the really essential convergence with the EU was foreseen (fighting the corruption, freedom of speech, work of joint political institutes), given the necessity of its ratification by 28 member countries of the EU, would be “pigeonholed” [9, p.18].

A sufficiently large number of publications in mass media in such context were dedicated to the development of relations of Ukraine with Russian Federation. In an interesting and capacious by the content and expert assessments small article of a political observer of “Fokus” magazine, Vasyl Knaipa, dedicated to the development of relations between Russian Federation in autumn of 2013 and in middle-term perspective, in particular a new/old trend of the development of bilateral relations was noted, when “Russia helps Ukraine again”. It has become possible after “semisecret meetings” of the Presidents V. Yanukovich and V. Putin, which took place on October 27th and November 9th. However, in spite of some economic preferences and the main thing – credit of 15 billion dollars, from the point of view of far-reaching advantages, in expert’s opinion, Ukraine will hardly benefit. Because, for example, in case of division (joint exploitation of domestic gas transporting system), Russian Federation will further continue the construction of the South stream bypassing Ukraine. This way, Ukrainian side will remain “in zugzwang situation” – because both the refusal and the agreement to give away half of the “pipe” to Russia will equally lead in perspective to a “loss of sense of existence of gas transporting system as such” [10, p.8].

The author also stated that a possible “escape of Ukraine to the

West” is able to shorten significantly the time of creation in the neighboring Russia of industrial capacities in those sectors where it is dependent on Ukraine. It refers to production of some metal pipes, helicopter engines etc. And it is completely understandable that in Moscow they come from the logic that a competitor should be displaced from similar markets. In the opinion of V. Knaipa, Russia is not interested to develop not only Ukrainian energy transit, but also the attempts of machinery, agricultural industry complex, and aviation and space sector as well. Therefore, the general conclusion of the expert: Russian Federation improves the relations with Ukraine so as to after “rebuilding” its own capacities, “worsen them abruptly”, and in the relations at the line Kyiv – Moscow in the vast majority of branches only the “laws of competition” will subsequently remain.” [10, p.8].

As the political commenter of “Dzerkalo tyzhnya” Tetyana Sylina believed, although the agreement of Ukraine entering the Customs union was still not signed by V. Yanukovych after negotiations with V. Putin, but a stable impression of “start of crawling “customing” of Ukraine” remained.” [11, p.2]. As for the perspectives of cooperation between Russian Federation and Ukraine in the sector of military industrial complex, other expert Artur Lantan has noted the following. Although after the meeting of the two presidents in Moscow “the aurochs of defense industry complex” have experienced the euphoria, it is worth to investigate the situation and to understand that Russian embrace for defense and hi-tech sectors of Ukraine is “quite ambiguous” [12, p.2,3]. It is also worth to emphasize the fact which was then noted in the media, that Russian Federation is not so much disturbed by technological attempts, and the cooperation with defense industry complex constructors in Ukraine who “have a significant experience and can propose the more recent design solutions” [13, p.7].

One of problematic topics in the relations of Ukraine “with East and West” was and remains the problem of “release from gas shackles” of Russia. And here again the view of the official Kyiv turns to the side of western partners: many of experts and politics hope for solving of the issue at the expense of reverse supplies. The observer of “Komentari” weekly Viktoriya Poda writes that, referring to the officials, that namely the reverse supplies from Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and other EU countries “in the nearest time can cover hundred percent of needs in the blue fuel”, of course,

taking into consideration the own production. BYT leader Y. Tymoshenko has provided not so optimistic forecast: in her opinion, this is possible only in 2020 [14, p.15].

As V. Poda notes, few remember, but 40 years ago Ukraine has produced 68.7 billion cubic meters of natural gas by itself. However, in the end of 1970s this indicator started to decline. There were two reasons. First, the previously discovered deposits were being exhausted. Second, namely in that time the volumes of geological survey works have been reduced significantly, since all the money were thrown in for development of deposits in Western Siberia. [14, p.15].

It is worth to understand that one of the factors, which has seriously affected the fact that Yanukovich and his entourage themselves tried to contact “Gasprom” directly, was a defeat in the struggle for power and commercial influence of the politics of the “gas group”. The first one from it who turned up in London was Valeriy Horoshkovsky, then a resignation in January 2014 of another member of the group S. Lyovochkin. Of course, D. Firtash alone could not undertake the role of communicator from then Ukrainian authorities with the Kremlin. It interesting to note that Firtash and the Group DF company led by him have long ago taken a course to the West. It is also indicative that the majority of beneficial stakeholders of GDF have concentrated namely in the Great Britain. As Ivan Petrov notes in one of the expert materials of “Komentari” weekly, one of the main western partners of D. Firtash – CEO of GDF Robert Shetler Jones lives there [15, p.3].

In fact, for 2014 in the energy sector a “two-vector” political line has been planned: as a member of Energy community, according to the words of then Minister of energy and coal industry E. Stavytsky, Ukraine will take steps for “renewal of agreement”, herewith attaining “equal opportunities” in using the EU instruments for achieving the common goals. On the other hand, the course of Ukraine as the one presiding in the CIS will continue for strengthening of cooperation in energy sector, in particular for concluding the agreement for “free access to pipeline transport” [16, p.16].

Recently in mass media and in expert environment a topic of reverse gas supplies to Ukraine from the territories of the neighboring states of Central Europe – Poland, Hungary, Slovakia is being debated more often. A special hope in this is put on Slovakia, although the negotiations

considering the reverse gas supplies to Ukraine are ongoing for the 4th year already. In whole Slovakia can pump into our gas storages up to 30 billion cubic meters per year. For comparison, Poland – only 1,5 billion cubic meters. It is also interesting to note that the total capacity of gas storages of 28 countries of the EU is about 80 billion cubic meters. As Alla Yeryomenko indicates in her expert material, one of the main issues remains the problem of direct contact of the operators of the two countries – Eustream company (Slovakia) and Ukrtransgaz. The difficulty is that Slovakia government owns only 51% of Eustream, and the rest – 49% of the stock, as it is obstinately claimed at the market, is indirectly owned by the same “Gazprom”. And this circumstance as a result does not allow the operators of the gas transporting system of both countries “to conclude a direct mutually beneficial agreement” [17, p.8].

We will underline that the “shadow” of the gas issue has relentlessly accompanied Ukrainian-Russian relations from the end of the 90s. In this political context, as observer Alla Yeryomenko emphasizes in the analytical material in “Dzerkalo tyzhnya” weekly, by no accident in the recent years the Russians have increasingly talked about the “merging” NJSC “Naftogaz Ukrayiny” (Naftogaz of Ukraine) and “Gazprom”.

The issues of economic cooperation on the East-West line anyway blend into the broader circle of issues of the modern interaction of Ukraine with the leading state on the world arena. In the center of attention of politics in the frames of the conflict of the West (the USA and the EU) and Russia concerning Ukraine all main actors try to put certain limiters regarding its possible “renewed” geopolitical status.

This way, for example, the expert on the issues of international policy Serhiy Tolstov considers that it could be about the nonaligned status of Ukraine and about the non-deployment of “military objects on its territory”. At the certain stage an issue of “internationalization of the status of Ukraine”, acknowledgement of its neutrality can arise [18, p.5]. In fact, some experts consider that the fate of neutral Finland is expected for Ukraine, which was played by the former in the years of cold war. Among the American experts, for example, there is no unanimity regarding the future of Ukraine: two opposite opinions are voiced in consideration with the Russian factor. Some analysts consider that Ukraine can be “preserved in the borders of March 17th, 2014”. Others proceed from the fact that “Crimea is lost forever for Ukraine”, and the main goal is to stop the

separatism at the southern east of the country. Generally, the position of American elite on the Ukrainian issue is oriented at the absence of confrontation with Russia concerning the entry of Ukraine into NATO and is inclined to the model of “finlandization of Ukraine”. We will once more remind that in due time the Finnish policy of a bridge between the West and the USSR has helped to preserve the territorial and economical sovereignty of Finland [19, p.6].

It is clear that the perspective to hide in the nearest years under the geopolitical umbrella of NATO is unlikely for official Kyiv. As the political observer of “Komentari” weekly O. Ivanov writes, “frankly speaking, trying to escape under the umbrella of North Atlantic Alliance, it is necessary to realize that apparently only a part of Ukraine will make it” [20, p.4].

The key geopolitical interests of Washington, according to the expert Maksym Mykhailenko, in global context remain the two (if it is first of all about the energy component): pull Ukraine out of the influence of Russia and return again to Syria issue, through which in particular a gas transit from the Gulf countries to the EU is ensured. We should not forget, as this author of one of expert materials notes, that in Eastern Europe (and in Ukraine) it has been started and will be further expanded the production of natural gas from shale rock. What is more, even Japan has started the production of the shale rock oil today [21, p.6].

As for Europe, it can be stated that much has changed in its traditional vectors from the times of the cold war. A single defense and foreign policy of “confederative Europe”, united around the French and German core, could become the best formula of cooperation and a “guarantee against any attempt to start an unjustified military adventure”, - this wrote in the distant 80s of the XX century a French admiral Antoine Sanguinetti in one of the compilations dedicated to the problems of international safety in the context of “East-West” relations and published then in Moscow [22, p.173]. However, 30 years have passed, and the geopolitical, and more precisely, geo-economic situation has fundamentally changed. Today the very fact of existence of a traditional security union of the leading states of the West can sometimes decide little in the international policy. A moment has come, when, as Z. Brzezinski openly writes, all European countries “evade the serious obligations” even within NATO. Moreover, in his opinion, the special relations between Germany

and Russia are able to erase the borders of a “holistic and free Europe”. The German business elite is primarily interested in such relations (and the Italian one and of some other countries as well), its attention “is focused on commercial perspectives of Russia which is on the stage of modernization” [23, p.103]. Therefore, the EU has today faced the much deeper geostrategic divide, where a significant role is played by the commercial factors, and not only purely geopolitical factors. As the authors of the solid periodical on the problems of the modern stage of development of the international system indicate, today are born the “new formats of regulation of the international environment”, which change in the context of multilevel global and regional dimensions [24, p.247].

“Den” newspaper, systematically providing the positions of foreign press, has expressed the hopes for a more moderate and adequate position of the leading geopolitical actors in the Ukrainian issue. In particular, they referred to the British newspaper “The Independent”. At the columns of this periodical it was noted that the stability of Ukraine can be ensured only then, “if Russia, Europe and the USA will cooperate, and not view this country as a prize”. Moreover, an opinion was expressed here, that being a careful politician, President Obama “does not demonstrate any desire to start a confrontation with Moscow”. In the same way the countries of Europe think, developing the package of economic aid for Ukraine. An in the “perfect option of the course of events Russia will take part in this process”. The result of analytical forecast is the following: “Nobody knows how this crisis will end. But even in this complicated moment Ukraine can become a bridge between the East and the West” [25, p.3]. However, the crisis, both of home policy and of foreign relations has significantly deepened, in spite of that during 2013 “the EU and Russia have tried to do everything for Yanukovich to still refuse from balancing and decide with the direction of integration” [4, p.126].

Speaking about the Eurasian vector of integration of Ukraine, the Ambassador of the USA in Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt in the interview for “Den” newspaper has expressed his surprise on the fact that namely in Ukraine where Russia usually “has so much soft force influence, the Kremlin has allowed using only its harsh force” [26, p.4]. Besides, the observer of “Den” v. Dubnov emphasized that earlier nothing (as it happened after the European Maidan) has opened the “gateways in the Russian public opinion, as Ukraine did” [27, p.3]. But the events that took

place after the Euromaidan have greatly changed the adjustments of public opinion regarding the European perspectives of Ukraine. According to the results of sociological poll of Horshenin institute, conducted this May, 59,7% of the respondents consider that Ukraine has to move in the direction of the integration with the EU. In the same time, only 18,8% of Ukrainians have spoken for integration with the Customs union [28].

However, some American experts emphasize that it is necessary to stick to the balanced position in the Ukrainian issue. As one of the famous American foreign policy analysts, professor of Columbia University Robert Legvold noted, modern tactics of the USA (and the West in whole) regarding the crisis in the Eastern Europe about Ukraine, and in other possible crisis situations as well, should be the following. The USA and their European allies have to concentrate their attention on how to “influence the choice of Russia through the formation of the events and not by the way of attempts to change the outlook of the Kremlin”. In the opinion of the expert, Washington together with Brussel should provide Ukraine with “that economic aid which it needs so desperately. Of course, at the condition of real steps to correct the corrupt political system” [29, p.4].

Really, the internal problems, which Ukraine has to solve today (and not only the politics, but a community in whole) are complicated and multifaceted, but one of them is the most serious and reflects the fact that our country is on the civilization borderlands. On this a famous philosopher and political scientist M.I. Mykhalchenko aptly wrote several years ago: “Today it is still hard to determine, to which civilization Ukraine belongs. In our country a totalitarian and a liberal culture of thought and actions coexist. Confrontation, schism of orientations and of value system are the characteristic features of social life. Moreover, in the culture and in the way of life of every person a legacy of traditionalism, totalitarianism and the features of liberalism are entwined into such whimsical schemes that sometimes it seems that both a society and a person hover (got stuck) in the age of the intertemporal, in the intercivilization space” [30, p.447]. Albeit we will remind that at the first stage of independence in Ukraine there was quite clearly singled out one of the vectors of foreign policy. Leonid Kravchuk in an interview for “Fokus” weekly, assessing the position of the president and the government of the first years of independence on the “European” issue, has emphasized the following: then “we had enough powers and wisdom to adopt some European laws. For example, “On main

courses of foreign policy of Ukraine”, where the European vector was registered. It was not realized, but in the documents it was indicated” [31, p.21].

Conclusions. Therefore, summarizing the material outlined in the article, it can be stated that on an informational level in the researched period the dominating ones still were the “pro-European” expert assessments and political commentaries in the analyzed mass media. The moderate and sufficiently objective assessments concerning the signing of Association Agreement with the EU were provided by experts and observers of political weeklies “Komentari”, “Dzerkalo tyzhnya”, “Fokus”, and the daily newspaper “Den”. However, a more traditionally radical position regarding the “Eurasian vector” of foreign policy of Ukraine was taken by “Ukrayinsky tyzhden” (Ukrainian week). We will also note that the problems of relations first of all between the USA, Russia and Ukraine remain actual during the whole current year, which clearly finds its reflection at the pages of leading general political publications.

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MIGRATION AND POLITICAL PROCESS IN UKRAINE

Lever migration in Ukrainian society due process of becoming an independent state. The growth of migration in recent years associated with the growth of their place in the Ukrainian political process. A role in a political mobilization of migrants factors play a "danger motif", "principle of justice." The political mobilization of migrants can be caused not only by competition of different ethnic and national groups, it can also be the result