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*Anastasiia Matiukha*

*Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University*

*Vinnitsia*

*Research Supervisor: A. M. Karakuts, PhD in History, Ass. Prof.*

*Language Supervisor: V.I. Kalinichenko, PhD in Philology, Ass. Prof.*

## **EXISTING AND POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND RISKS IN BILATERAL UKRAINE-GERMANY RELATIONS**

**Introduction.** Germany is Ukraine's one of the nearest neighbors belonging to the European Union, and an important and reliable partner on the way to Europe. Ukraine to Germany is the cornerstone of European security architecture. There is a dense network of political, economic, cultural, and private links between the two countries. The Federal Republic is one of the most active partners of Ukraine, its geopolitical role is determined not only by a high and sustainable economic growth, and, above all, a stable financial position. German politicians allocate an important role to our country, taking into account its geo-economic potential and growing foreign policy role as one of the great powers of Europe. However, the relationships cannot be described as ideal and predictable.

**The objective of this paper** is to highlight the existing and potential challenges and risks in bilateral relations between Ukraine and Germany.

The Germany's interest to Ukraine increased because of the aggression of Russia. Therefore, there is a reasonable risk that, in the case of stabilization of the situation the state will disappear from the radar of foreign policy priorities of Berlin. Moreover, the reconciliation between Kiev and Moscow could allow the Germans to return to the traditional "Eastern policy" with an emphasis on the restoration of relations with Russia [2].

However, the chances of such developments are low. At least in the short-term perspective there are no specific prerequisites for the reconciliation between Ukraine and Russia. Ignoring can occur, rather, in terms of the fact that the Berlin has already accustomed to the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, and therefore could not pay attention to other provocations of Moscow. In order to avoid this, Ukraine needs to provide on a regular basis the German party with the evidence of Russian destabilization of the situation in Ukraine within all the directions — military, political, economic, information, etc. [1].

The Ukrainian issue was called by the German diplomacy as main in the period of its chairmanship in the OSCE in 2016. Berlin will need to report on their foreign policy successes of the year. Consequently, the relationship between the two countries may deteriorate because of the intractability of Ukraine in the Minsk process. The probability of this risk is high enough. It is likely that Berlin will resort to pressure, in promoting settlement, and not always take into account potential undesirable consequences for Ukraine [3]. General fatigue of the Europeans from the settlement might still force Berlin to the strongest influence on the parties of the conflict. There is reason to believe that for Germany at this stage the mechanism for sustainable settlement is not the main thing, but the fact of stabilization. That is, either a decision will be reached by the special status of the separatist regimes, or by freezing the conflict without reintegration. Accordingly, if the parties come to stabilization, even without obligations of the Minsk process, it can be quite suitable for Germany.

Germany enters into a protracted electoral process and this means that questions of internal character would be interesting for the Germans a lot more than questions of foreign policy. The problem of Russia's aggression against Ukraine is not among the priority topics of political debate in Germany. Moreover, it is impossible to expect that the issue of support for Ukraine became the hottest matter of the electoral debate. Championship in this context, holds the refugee crisis. The focus of the Germans on themselves is even more obvious in 2017, when, in fact, the Federal election has to be [2]. For Angela Merkel it is a very special challenge, so she will have to pay less and less attention to Eastern Europe (especially in the view that she often does not find support even among her political partners in the CDU/CSU). The risks are very high. At the end of 2015, it was clear that German citizens are not really interested in the theme of war between Ukraine and Russia. The main attention was focused on refugees, the Syrian issue [3].

The crisis of refugees, whipping up anti-American sentiment intensify Pro-Russian sentiment among a growing number of German citizens. Attack of the refugees on the Germans in Cologne on New Year's Eve marked the culmination moment in the political space of Germany. The popularity of the CDU/CSU began to fall rapidly (in August 2015, the figure was 43%, and in January 2016 – 32.5%). But the popularity of political forces that advocate for the restoration of cooperation with Russia is growing. In particular, they are "The Left" and "Alternative for Germany". If the "left's" level of popularity holds steady at 10%, "Alternatives" has a notable increase from 3% in August 2015 to 13% in January 2016 [1]. The growth of right-wing sentiment became a real challenge for Germany. Anti-Islamic movement PEGIDA creates mass meetings in the German cities: for a country with a Nazi past, a profound sense of guilt for the crimes of Germany during World War II such a social trend is an emergency.

There is a fairly high risk of reforms failure. Ukraine must also reckon the fact that reform progress should be very visible and tangible. How to avoid it? Only a specific, visible progress would be able to convince Germany that the reforms have moved forward. We cannot just talk about laws or established institutions. Every step

in the right direction must be discussed with German partners. For example, Germany attached great importance to the topic of energy efficiency — in this context, Ukraine has started to go the right way. Another important issue is decentralization. It is possible that the issue of decentralization became interesting for Germany in the context of the Minsk process. Therefore, there is a risk that once the conflict progress to frozen, it would be the subject of less interest for Berlin.

**Conclusion.** Thus, there is a number of risks in bilateral relations between Ukraine and Germany. It is important to stress upon them in order to prevent erosion of relations and misunderstanding between the parties.

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***Kyrylo Mieliekiestsev***

*Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University*

*Vinnitsia*

*Research Supervisor: O.M. But, Sc.D. in History, Prof.*

*Language Supervisor: Y. Y. Khankishyieva, Lecturer*

## **THE YEAR OF UKRAINE IN THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND: NEGOTIATIONS, RESULTS, CULTURAL EVENTS (2005)**

**Introduction.** The study examines Ukrainian-Polish relations through the context of “The Year of Ukraine in the Republic of Poland”: the large-scale series of joint actions, celebrations and negotiations hosted by Poland and Ukraine in 2005 in honor of the strategic partnership between the two countries. In addition to detailing a number of celebrations, especially those that influenced the diplomacy of the two countries at the highest level, the study lists specific results of certain agreements that were signed or implemented in the framework of the Year of Ukraine. The primary sources for the research are bilateral agreements between Ukraine and the Republic of Poland (for example, the “Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine