

## Ukrainian Crisis and Reactions of the USA-EU-Russia

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(Abstract) In this text and by using articles from newspapers and official news websites and other scientific sources, I will attempt to present the crisis in Ukraine and how it has affected the EU, USA and Russia. First, I am going to refer to the reason that led to the crisis and then based on that I will refer to the relations of the EU and Ukraine. Then I will continue following the course of events chronologically until the annexation of the Crimea by Russia. At that point I will refer to the USA relations with Ukraine and to the USA relations with Russia in order to justify the US reaction to the fact of the annexation of Crimea. Then I will talk about sanctions against Russia in which the EU got involved after a shocking event which led to this mobilization of the EU. Finally, I will refer to the current situation in Ukraine and I will conclude answering the question: How has the crisis in Ukraine affected Russia, the USA and the EU?

Key words: Ukraine, Crimean province, Eastern Ukraine, USA relations with Russia, EU.

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1. The timeline of the Ukrainian Crisis.

The Ukrainian crisis starts with the Orange Revolution, which was a series of protests and political events that took place in Ukraine from late November 2004 to January 2005, as a direct consequence of the iterative process of presidential elections in Ukraine in 2004. The ructions which held by supporters of the side of Viktor Yushchenko, claimed that the elections were marred by widespread corruption, voter intimidation and direct electoral fraud on the part of Viktor Yanukovich. The revolution that happened then took the designation "Orange" from the color which adopted the political camp of Yushchenko during the election process.

The protests were encouraged by the reports of various domestic and foreign election observers, and by the widespread public perception that the results of the by-elections of November 21, 2004 among the top candidates Yushchenko and Yanukovich were rigged by the authorities in favor of the latter. The protests nationwide achieved when the results of the initial runoff canceled, and even ordered a repeat ballot by the Supreme Court of Ukraine on 26 December 2004. Under intense scrutiny by domestic and international observers, the second revote declared "fair and free". The final results showed a clear victory for Yushchenko. The Orange Revolution was over.

But the decisive reason for the outbreak of the crisis was the evening of November 21, 2013, when the Ukrainian government refused to sign the Free Trade Agreement with the European Union (EU). The corollary of this was the concentration of thousands of demonstrators on Independence Square in downtown Kiev, under the coordination of the leader of the pro-European opposition, Arseni Giatseniouk.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> BBC: Τη οδήγησε την Ουκρανία στην κρίση, 22/01/2014: <http://www.tovima.gr/world/article/?aid=559623>

## 2. European Union-Ukraine, friends or enemies?

It is worth noting here that the decision of this connection with the EU dates back several years. Already, four years after the independence of Ukraine from the former Soviet Union, Ukraine is looking for new allies, is looking for a new union to join and start a new path, a path of development which is vital for Ukraine. So in July 1995, sends a mission to the European Communities and immediately begins the interaction of Ukraine with the countries of the EEC. In 2008 in fact, we had the beginning of negotiations of the Free Trade Agreement between the two sides.

For Kiev relations with the EU is extremely important, as they represent opportunities for trade and investment, opportunities for travel and work for Ukrainian citizens as well as financial help to modernize the inefficient and sometimes unsafe energy infrastructure, while new Ukrainians are very in favor of closer European perspective of the country. Further cooperation in areas of low policy with the EU will help Ukraine to get away to some extent by the economic instability and poor performance.

But for the EU, Ukraine is an important partner, bordered by four other countries of eastern Europe it can become the eastern border of a large European economic space and gateway of Europe to the Eurasian mainland.<sup>2</sup> Ukraine stills the most advanced and largest economic country in the Eastern Partnership, in relation to the other countries of the former Soviet Union, this is introduced in European countries by the natural gas supplying but also by the possibility of investing in the agricultural potential of the country. However it is a difficult equation for the EU, the result of which the EU will understand the limits of respect to its influence in the former Eastern Bloc.

In October 2011 the Free Trade Agreement described as Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. The reason that inclusion of such adjectives is that the agreement is part of Ukraine's Association Agreement with the EU. This means that the old version of the Free Trade Agreement, upgraded and is part of a longer-range and gravity agreement. This involves two very important sectors of the Ukrainian affairs, economic and political. On the one hand, Ukraine will liberalize further the economic relations with the EU and on the other should make laws closer to EU rules on trade. The latter is an important commitment on the part of Kiev, and includes broad areas such as intellectual property, competition, state aid and, finally, technical barriers to trade and health. However, there is a risk, those links may change the geopolitical alignment of the country, from Moscow to Europe and harm the country's relations with Russia, since they exclude the possibility of Ukraine to join the Customs Union launched from Moscow and the ambitious plans of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin for a "Eurasian Union" that would include many of the former Soviet states.<sup>3</sup> Finally this agreement is not signed, not only for the reasons stated but for three other reasons. First, because the EU European leaders are still twirling around the EU debt crisis. Moreover, what especially cost the signing of the agreement was the imprisonment of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, which according to the EU leaders had "political motives" and not respecting international standards.<sup>4</sup> Lastly, the refusal of Prime Minister Yanukovich, to sign the Agreement, under the pressure of Russia.<sup>5</sup>

Additionally, it is worth to note here that Ukraine has always been divided into two pieces even during the seventy years of being a socialist republic of the Soviet Union where enjoyed the confidence of Moscow. The advanced north and east were pro-Russian, while the less advanced southern and western vassal was in Central European powers. So, power in Ukraine pulsates between pro-Russian and pro-European forces.

### 2.2. Following the events that led to the annexation of Crimea from Russia.

On November 24, 2014 took place one of the biggest demonstrations the country, seeking the resignation of President Viktor Yanukovich. The wave of demonstrators touched 200.000. OI police forces tried to remove the crowd of protesters from Independence Square, using various methods that caused the injury and arrest of several protesters. But instead of defusing the crisis occurred more intensity.

On 22 January the loss of two demonstrators by bullets during the events, gave rise to the expansion of protests across Ukraine. Three days later, Viktor Yanukovich is trying to defuse the crisis by calling the opposition and claiming that she was responsible for all the bloody conflicts. Notwithstanding the requirement of protesters for the resignation of Viktor Yanukovich, he clearly stated that he did not intend to

<sup>2</sup> Ζακωντινός Δ.Α., Η Οικονομική Διάσταση της Ουκρανικής Κρίσης, 25/06/2014: <http://www.elisme.gr/gr/2013-01-07-19-11-53/item/2014-06-25-mundial>

<sup>3</sup> Σχέσεις ΕΕ-Ουκρανίας: Ένα γεωπολιτικό τεστ, 28/12/2011: <http://euractiv.gr/dieyrynsi/sxeseis-ee-oykranias-ena-geopolitiko-test>

<sup>4</sup> «Μαύρη εικόνα» για την Ουκρανία, διαπιστώνει έκθεση, 20/01/2012: <http://euractiv.gr/dieyrynsi/%C2%ABmayri-eikona%C2%BB-gia-tin-oykrania-diapistonei-ekthesi>

<sup>5</sup> Ουκρανία- ΕΕ: Μεγάλες προσδοκίες, 23/10/2014: <http://gr.euronews.com/2014/10/23/ukraine-union-europeenne-attentes-et-deceptions/>

resign after he was elected as chairman with legal proceedings and therefore did not intend to leave the country. The Ukrainian parliament has voted by an overwhelming majority (328 of the 450 parliamentarians) in favor of removal of Viktor Yanukovich, while the Ukrainian President called votes of the Ukrainian parliament illegal.

The escalation of tensions led to the removal of the, pro-Russian, Ukrainian President from the capital of their country and move towards the east, the city of Kharkiv and from there he escaped to Russia where he sought asylum. Following the resignation of Prime Minister Azarov and the removal of the President, the EU urged Kiev to form a new government that would include opposing "camps" to prepare for the proclamation of free and fair presidential elections. So, Arseni Giatseniouk was appointed as an interim prime minister of Ukraine and as an interim president, Alexander Tsourtsinof. After the deposition of Viktor Yanukovich, on February 22, 2014 everybody was gazing Crimea, the peninsula located south of Ukraine, in the northern part of the Black Sea. Historically the Crimean province was given as a "gift" from the Russian Republic in 1954 under the leadership of the USSR, the Nikita Khrushchev to the Ukrainian Republic, with the approval of the common presence of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Republic and the Bureau Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian Republic in the transfer of the province. This concession of Khrushchev was symbolic, since that time Ukraine had no autonomy. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 the effect of the donation made visible as Ukraine became independent in 1991, the Crimea was no longer under its control. In 1992 following a decision of the central government of Ukraine was in the Crimea autonomous republic status.<sup>6</sup>

The leadership of Crimea announced that on March 16 will hold a referendum on whether the region should join the Russian Federation<sup>7</sup>. Moscow has already received official measures for the integration of the peninsula, but the new Ukrainian government and the international community have condemned the referendum as illegal. The results of the referendum showed that 96.77% of voters favored the annexation of Crimea to the Russian Federation as well as feel their country Russian.

After recognition of the Crimean annexation by Russia, followed by the withdrawal of the Ukrainian army from the peninsula. On March 27, the United Nations (UN) with a resolution declared illegal the secession of Crimea from Ukraine. Two days later began the electoral race in Ukraine, with prospective Peter Poroshenko and former Prime Minister of Ukraine Yulia Tymoshenko. While pro-Russian separatists continue to occupy public buildings in Sloviansk, town 60 km. Away from Donetsk, but also in Mariupol, Russian President Putin says that Ukraine is on the verge of civil war. After being attacked in the city of Mariupol pro-Russian separatists and the concentration of 200 demonstrators in the city center in Ukraine, Putin says he hopes will not have to apply the 'right' dispatch Russian troops in Ukraine. After his statements, on June 18, on temporary cessation of hostilities and amnesty to rebels who would lay down their weapons, Putin expresses his support to Poroshenko for such a decision, by inviting him to dialogue. On July 1, Poroshenko ends the period of truce by launching military operations against Russian separatists. Fatal clashes marked the next days in cities like Donetsk and Sloviansk.

While the referendum on the secession of the Crimea was consistent with international law and the UN Charter and in accordance with the precedent set by Kosovo's secession from Serbia in 2008, the West and Kiev refused to recognize the legitimacy of Crimean reunification with Russia. It is worth to mention that under international law, secession, which is made by minority groups mostly rejected as contrary to the prohibition of splitting territorial solidarity. Two cases accepted by the international community as exceptions to the prohibition: 1) when systemic / mass violation of human rights of the minority, and 2) when the spin-off is presented as saving solution in the political and physical extermination of ethnicity. Such a case was considered lawful secession was the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan.

### 2.3. Ukraine-USA Relations: A chess game with queens the USA-Russia and King Ukraine.

It is worth mentioning here some basic information regarding US relations with Ukraine. In particular, since 1991, Ukraine became independent, relations with the US spent forty waves, dovetails with the Moscow-Washington relations. Found at the peak in the late 90s, where in 1994 at the signing by Ukraine of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, one of the conditions was that the guarantor signatory powers-including the US and Russia - would respect the territorial integrity of the country. However, twenty years after the Crimea seceded and was annexed to Russia, while the Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine separatists attempting to autonomy areas. The US-Ukraine relations found its nadir on Leonid Kuchma, the second in a series of Ukrainian Prime Minister after independence Kuchma was accused of numerous

<sup>6</sup> Γιατί η Κριμαία είναι αυτόνομη δημοκρατία στην Ουκρανία; -Μια ιστορία εύθραυστης γεωστρατηγικής;, 01/03/14, : <http://www.iefimerida.gr/news/>

<sup>7</sup> Κριμαία: «Ένταξη στη Ρωσία μέχρι τα τέλη Μαρτίου», 09/03/14: <http://www.stokokkino.gr/article/6477/Krimaia-Entaksi-sti-Rosia-mexri-ta-teli-Martiou>

corruption scandals but weakening freedom of mass media<sup>8</sup>. But most importantly it was that on his own government had turned Ukraine to Russia fact not pleasing to the US. Also the performance of human rights deteriorated and the murder of journalist Georgy Gongadze brought freezing bilateral contacts.<sup>9</sup> But the opportunity came with the "orange revolution" in 2004 which was presented as a great opportunity for the American agent to return near the Russian border. The Bush administration began providing funds lavished on democratization in Ukraine selectively enhancing NGOs, which were employed in the country and would have influence in governance. However, a subsequent attempt of George Bush to integrate Ukraine into NATO failed as he found strong resistance from influential members North Atlantic alliance, such as Germany and France, who did not wish to worsen relations with Russia. The election of Barack Obama in 2008 has another approach to the doctrine of foreign policy towards Moscow and Kiev. Obama announced that pressed the reset button in relations and the images from the famous breakfast with Vladimir Putin raised extensively for awareness this rapprochement. Since the development of events, but obviously each side had a different interpretation of the term "reboot", Ukraine is again in the eye of the cyclone.<sup>10</sup> For the US space of Eurasia is precious because they believe that whoever controls this track, monitor and heart warming. The Eurasia is a treasury rich in raw materials and manpower and key input in the countries of the "Eurasian Balkans" which are the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus as well as Ukraine which initially wants to spend the influence<sup>11</sup>. And this is something that Russia is fighting for with vigor. Palpable proof; the annexation of Crimea to Russia. Thus, in US-Ukrainian relations, the US are those who earnestly desire and seek their involvement in this eastern bloc since the season started their extroversion, one thing had as its main objective and on what supported throughout the American theory control of Eurasia. So Ukraine like a king in this chess board with limited movements, becomes prey to the conflict of the USA- Russian queen, who aim at controlling and influencing this king-country of high geopolitical importance.

As a result, we can understand the US reaction and its warns that possible Crimea annexation movements will close the door on diplomacy.

The US foreign minister told his Russian counterpart that Crimea is part of Ukraine and that Moscow should avoid military escalation. Kerry made these statements to Lavrov in a telephone conversation that had Saturday, an official said the State Department. Kerry "made clear that the continued military escalation and provocation in the Crimea, or anywhere else in Ukraine, along with steps to attach the Crimea to Russia will be closed every available space for diplomacy and invited to create maximum restraint," said a State Department official. Earlier, Sergei Lavrov said that the crisis in Ukraine "is artificial and was created purely for geopolitical reasons."

Barack Obama, for his part, discusses the situation with foreign leaders, among them to David Cameron, Francois Hollande, and with leaders of the Baltic countries. The US president said three leaders in the Baltic States on the crisis in Oukrania- that his government supports them and will honor its commitments under the NATO, according to a statement from the White House.

"The president reaffirmed the unshakeable commitment of the United States [...] on collective defense under the North Atlantic Treaty and the continued support for security and democracy in the Baltic allies," said White House announcement. The US president spoke with the President of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of Latvia Andris Berzins and the president of Estonia Thomas Hendrik Ilves.<sup>12</sup>

British Foreign Secretary, William Hague, said in an interview with the BBC that Russia had "miscalculation" when invaded Crimea and added that Western countries could impose financial penalties extensive range, if not find a diplomatic solution between Russia and Ukraine. He warned also that European countries could be removed from the Russian gas and to import more from the US. He ruled out the possibility of military action towards Russia, but said the risk "real military conflict" in the Crimea.

Meanwhile, the leader of the pro-Russian regional parliament in Crimea pledged Saturday that the region will become part of the Russian Federation before the end of the month.

<sup>8</sup> Adrian Karatnycky, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 2 (Mar. – Apr., 2005), pp. 35–52, in JSTOR.

<sup>9</sup> BBC (26 September 2002). «Profile: Leonid Kuchma»

<sup>10</sup> ΗΠΑ-Ουκρανία: Μία σχέση παραχώδης, 18/09/2014: <http://gr.euronews.com/2014/09/18/us-and-ukraine-history-of-ups-and-downs/>

<sup>11</sup> Ζακωντινός Δ.Α., Η Οικονομική Διάσταση της Ουκρανικής Κρίσης, 25/06/2014: <http://www.elisme.gr/gr/2013-01-07-19-11-53/item/2014-06-25-mundial>

<sup>12</sup> ΗΠΑ:Κλείνουν την πόρτα στη Μόσχα αν προσαρτήσει την Κριμαία, 09/03/14: <http://www.tovima.gr/world/article/?aid=575055>

"The transition to a new legal structure is complex. But we assume that all procedures are completed in March," said the president of the Parliament of Crimea, Vladimir Konstantinov, according to the Russian news agency Itar-Tass.<sup>13</sup>

It should be noted that the dependence of Ukraine from Moscow's great and multidimensional economic, energy, cultural and geographical parameters. 36% of export goes to the countries of CIS (CIS Countries - Regional International Organization whose participating countries are former Soviet republics, which were formed after the dissolution of the Soviet Union) and thus become vulnerable to embargo. A great percentage of Ukraine's needs in Natural Gas (NG) is imported from Russia. It should be noted that approximately 12.2 billion€ of the annual deficit of Ukraine, 8 billion€ is owed in Russia (for natural gas).<sup>14</sup>

#### 2.4. The EU enters the game on penalties and the crisis continues.

Turning point of the developments of the Ukrainian crisis was the crash of the Malaysian Boeing, on 17 July 2014.<sup>15</sup> The magnitude of the tragedy, and the fact that the aircraft aboard foreign citizens, are expected to lead to international pressure to find solution to the conflict of Kiev with the pro-Russian separatists. The pro-Russian separatists favor temporary truce (lasting two or three days) to assist rescue operations while they are in negotiations to allow access in international organizations.

It is worth mentioning here, that the US has tried for months to convince the EU to meet tough stance against Moscow, but the European governments were hesitant because of the economic cost, especially at a time when the EU economy is weak and vulnerable. However, the fall of Malaysian aircraft (Malaysian Airlines) in eastern Ukraine on July 17 was the reason for the alignment of Europe with the American position, despite any cost for Europe.

In particular, US President Barack Obama said that the plane was hit by a missile coming from the area controlled by Russian separatists. European leaders are pushing Russia to convince the separatists to allow access to the area of the accident to deal with the case, and on July 24 the coalition collapses in Ukraine with the resignation of Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk. The European Union has agreed for the first time on July 29, 2014 to impose a variety of sanctions on Russia, bringing confrontation between Moscow and the West to a new level. In a parallel development, Washington claimed that Moscow violated the bilateral treaty on the control of nuclear medium-range missiles and US president announced the implementation of new sanctions against Russia in the energy sector, trafficking of weapons and with financial institutions.

The penalties, which affect Russian oil companies, banks and arms companies, by far the strongest movement in the West against Russia. The State Russian banks are forbidden to seek funding in the European capital, a measure that would increase their borrowing costs, which will be reflected in all sectors of the Russian economy.

O European Council President Herman van Rompuy called the sanctions "strong warning" and said that if Russia does not change its position in Ukraine, "then it will change its stance and the EU." Furthermore, "The effect of commercial penalties are relatively small. The much bigger danger is the blow to market confidence," said economist at Allianz insurance Georg Eder. In similar climate moved and Marcel Fratser Institute for Economic Research Berlin DIW. "The economies of Germany and Europe already see negative effects of the conflict with Russia. The biggest danger however comes from the enormous insecurity has caused controversy. Companies do not know whether to continue exporting their products to Russia in three months or in a year. Banks are not certain whether the loans will be repaid. Energy consumers do not know what will happen to the prices of oil and gas."<sup>16</sup>

In early August Russian troops installed the Ukrainian border where they start series of exercises. As European countries and the US impose a range of penalties against Russia, reprisals from the Russian side come on August 7 in the form of an embargo on Western products, following a presidential decree imposes import ban on vegetables, meat, fish, dairy and other products derived from the West (USA, EU, Australia, etc.) for one year. On July 26 Russian President Vladimir Putin has met with his Ukrainian counterpart Petro Poroshenko in Minsk, Belarus, their first face to face meeting after two months. After two months, new sanctions agreed by the EU. Alexander Loukasevits, representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry, called those sanctions "unfriendly" and officially confirmed that there will be retaliation; "our response is

<sup>13</sup> Β.Κοσταντίνοφ: «Μέχρι τέλη Μαρτίου η Κριμαία θα έχει ενσωματωθεί στη Ρωσία», 09/03/14: <http://www.defencenet.gr/defence/item/bk>

<sup>14</sup> Παρελθόν, παρόν και μέλλον της Ουκρανίας, 05/03/14: <http://www.tovima.gr/opinions/article/?aid=573415>

<sup>15</sup> Παγκόσμιο σοκ από την συντριβή Boeing 777 των Μαλαισιανών αερογραμμών πάνω από την Ανατολική Ουκρανία, 17/07/14: <http://www.tovima.gr/world/article/?aid=616361>

<sup>16</sup> Ε.Ε. και ΗΠΑ υιοθέτησαν σκληρές κυρώσεις έναντι της Ρωσίας, 30/07/14:

[www.kathimerini.gr/777902/article/epikairothta/kosmos/ee-kai-hpa-yio8ethsan-skhlres-kyrwseis-enanti-ths-rwsias](http://www.kathimerini.gr/777902/article/epikairothta/kosmos/ee-kai-hpa-yio8ethsan-skhlres-kyrwseis-enanti-ths-rwsias)

proportionate to the damage that would cause such sanctions in our economy," said the spokesman of the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation. He, even, invited the EU Member States to prevent the implementation of those sanctions because they are "counterproductive". However, in August 2014 conflicts in the east of the country intensified as well as the presence of thousands of foreign troops. During this period, the Ukrainian President in his meeting with European leaders in Brussels, held the EU response required after the invasion of Russian troops in his homeland. The repeated clashes resulted in the exodus from Ukraine one million people who are constantly increasing. On August 31 the Ukrainian authorities released a group of Russian paratroopers and in turn the Russian authorities returned 63 Ukrainian soldiers. On September 5<sup>th</sup>, Poroshenko declared truce with the agreement signed between Russia, Ukraine and the revolutionaries in Minsk. However in September 2014, Petro Poroshenko announced that the ceasefire in Ukraine appears to be achieved after removal from the country, 70% of Russian troops. But despite the ceasefire agreed between the government and the pro-Russian forces on 15 September new conflicts erupted in Donetsk having as a result the death of six civilians and an unknown number of soldiers by bombing that took place in the industrial center of Ukraine. In addition, on September 12 2014, Russian convoys crossed the Russian border with Ukraine having humanitarian mission. Specifically, to transport food and relief items in Ukrainian regions controlled by pro-Russian separatists. A few days later, on September 15, the economic consequences of the conflicts affected the country's economy which is now entering recession, with GDP has declined 6%. Simultaneously, it was announced the postponement of the free trade agreement between the EU and the Ukrainian government. Certainly the Ukrainian economy was not the only one that experienced the consequences of war, but also Russia. On September 18, began a new round of talks between the Russian and the Ukrainian government on the issue of gas prices, the supply of which in Ukraine had been halted in June 2014. The two governments reached on September 26, as the day of commencement of tripartite talks for that matter, between the two and the EU. At the same time Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his desire to amend the Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Ukraine, since in his opinion it would hurt the Russian economy. On September 22, while held demonstrations in major Russian cities such as Moscow and St. Petersburg during the war in Ukraine and Russia's involvement in this, it was decided by pro-Russian separatists and representatives of the Ukrainian side to temporarily cease the hostilities and create a demilitarized zone 30 km. in eastern Ukraine. On September 25, Russia announced its intention of President Putin to participate in the G20 summit to be executed on 16 and 17 November in Brisbane, Australia and the Russian Foreign Ministry said that Ukraine should first solve the problems of the Russia before attempting to join the European community. A few days later, on September 29, there has been unrest in eastern Ukraine with riots in Kharkiv, dismantling of Lenin statue in the city and the death of 15 people after bombing and launching a criminal investigation in Russia for "genocide" of the Russian-speaking populations in eastern Ukraine. As the month draws to a close, he began the EU-Russia-Ukraine talks on gas, resulting in a preliminary agreement on 27 September, with statements of the Ukrainian side on the desire to definitively resolve the issue as soon as possible. Towards the end of September, the Ukrainian Prime Minister accused Russia on the use of gas as a weapon against Ukraine. Specifically Russia significantly reduced gas supplies to the neighboring country at a time when the fairly low temperature brought the cold in Ukraine. In early October, the situation intensifies as more than a dozen Ukrainian officials were subject to public humiliation by members mainly of the radical right-wing group that threw them in garbage bins (this is the Trace bucket challenge, which spread across most of Ukraine) in order to combat Corruption and crime are under the same essential characteristics of the previous regime. The gas issue between the two countries remained equally important at the beginning of October with the announcement of a new round of talks on the issue on 21 October in Berlin. On October 3, Moscow accused Kiev for the death of a 38-year-old employee of the Red Cross in Donetsk bomb explosion, which denied the Ukrainian side. In the middle of the month and shortly after Putin's meeting and Poroshenko for stopping conflicts in eastern Ukraine, while just before the Russian president called problematic transport Russian gas from Ukraine in Europe, seeking to find an alternative solution such as through the pipeline South Stream. On October 9, despite the ceasefire declaration a month ago about the fierce fighting continues having as a consequence the death five civilians, twenty-four others wounded, in the Donetsk region, which is a stronghold of the pro-Russian separatists. On 13 October, the situation remains tense as gunmen ambushed the supreme commander of the pro-Russian separatists, Pavel Gkoumparef, who had named himself "governor" of the "People's Republic of Donetsk." In particular, the transition road was attacked in Donetsk that caused crashed into a pole and overturning his vehicle. At the same time, despite the ceasefire of September 5, the battles in Donetsk and specifically around the airport, continue as separatists still control most of the province. On October 14 broke new conflicts, and 10 km from Mariupoli, in the village Sartana, the Greek community counted seven dead and seventeen wounded after mortar attacks. But there remains unsolved whether blame pro-Russian separatists or Ukrainians who did exercises in this region. Still, the same day, there were clashes between demonstrators and police outside Parliament in Kiev to mark the 72th anniversary of Ukrainian guerilla army, URA and to

honoring the Army that day is declared by Poroshenko as a national holiday. According to a statement by John Kerry became the first step towards the lifting of sanctions against Russia following the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine. Additionally, important day is the October 17, 2014 which was launched on European soil, namely in Milan "working breakfast" for the Ukrainian crisis.<sup>17</sup> Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Peter Poroshenko faced each other in one of the relatively few times since the outbreak of the crisis- along with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Francois Hollande, the British Prime Minister David Cameron, the Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, the Presidents of the European Council and European Commission, Rompuy and Barroso, and Federica Mogkerini, head of European diplomacy. Those discussions were full of misunderstandings but positive as stated Putin and Renzo. However, the night did not seem good signs on the diplomatic scene. At this summit, Russia failed to bridge differences with the Western countries on the issue. However things went better in the Russian-Ukrainian negotiations on the gas, after the two sides agreed to the terms of resumption of gas conditions for the winter. Specifically, the two presidents agreed on the provisional price of \$ 385 per thousand cubic meters for the winter until March 31, 2015. During the meeting the Russian president also highlighted the problem of budget deficit of Ukraine, losing the opportunity to mock European partners and calling on the EU to help Ukraine to the problem of debt toward Russia. The positive development in the gas issue continued as on October 31, after a telephone conversation, Russian President Putin and his counterparts Poroshenko, Merkel and Hollande, hailed the agreement to resume gas supplies to Ukraine. In addition, Amnesty International has accused the Eastern Ukraine, both government forces loyal to Kiev, and the pro-Russian separatists on summary executions, and found evidence of arbitrary executions by both sides that went unpunished. Detected yet, mass grave in the village Ninznia Krinka where were found 400 corpses. Furthermore, on October 20, a heated debate has caused the publication of the magazine *Der Spiegel* about the tragedy on flight MH-17 of Malaysia Airlines. The magazine claims that the tragedy was caused by rocket BUK they found at the base separatists. Igor Korotsenko argues that disclosure of the German secret service demonstrates that Western secret services know who is behind this crime, but for political reasons do not admit this version. On October 23, wave of refugees from the east "changes" in Kiev and Kharkiv, which is a safety island in the east, is having suppress separatism since last spring. Few days before the election campaign, Arseniy Yatsenyuk attempted to undermine the process "I hope that the elections will be held in compliance with democratic principles for a political stability in Ukraine." The annexation of Crimea to Russia means loss of 450 seats in parliament and the actions of separatists in the east will prevent the holding of elections in at least 14 constituencies in the region. The separatists claim that they are planning to hold their elections on November 2, in the territories they control to promote their demands for independence. On the first picture of the election results we observe that the pro-Western forces prevailed. The Prime Minister, Giatsenioukis seeking for a government partner to retain the premiership, which is expected to be long lasting. A similar course with the Prime Minister followed the President, Poroshenko in order to form a government. Finally, on November 2, separatists conducted elections which the Ukrainian state rejected describing them as a hoax. From the media coverage of events in the ballot box Donetsk and Lugansk, we see that the leader of the pro-Russian Alexander Zacharensko was officially declared winner with 79% in Donetsk and Igor Plotninski with 62% in Lugansk. Kiev had complained that the process undercuts the peace agreement in Minsk and undermines the possibility of a dialogue, Poroshenko supported that he "hopes" that Moscow will not recognize the alleged violation of the elections because of the Minsk protocol signed and the representative of Russia. Conflicts around the regions had intensified with deaths while the ceasefire remains on paper with continuous violations.

### 3. The current situation

In the capital of Belarus, in February 2015, the leaders of Russia Putin, Ukraine Poroshenko, France Hollande and Merkel Germany held over 15 hours talks. From February 15, 2015, the President of Russia states agreed to a ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy weaponry by both parties.<sup>18</sup> On February 24, 2015, the army of Ukraine states that it cannot withdraw its heavy weapons, because there are insurgent attacks despite the ceasefire.

Significant increase in breaches of the ceasefire, observed in the airport area of Donetsk. In late February 2015 the USA had threatened to intensify the sanctions to be imposed in Russia, whom they consider responsible for repeated violations of the ceasefire agreed on February 12. Meanwhile, the USA announced it would send "non-lethal" military equipment to the government of Kiev to assist it in the bloody military

<sup>17</sup> Συνάντηση κορυφής ΕΕ, Πούτιν και Ουκρανίας με «μεγάλες διαφορές», 17/10/14: <http://news.in.gr/world/article/?aid=1231356384>

<sup>18</sup> Μετά την ολονυχτία συνομιλιών: Πετύχαμε συμφωνία για εκκευρία στην Ουκρανία, λέει ο Πούτιν , 12/02/15: <https://left.gr/news/minsk-tetrameris-synodos-koryfis-gia-tin-oykraniki-krisi>

crackdown in Eastern Ukraine.<sup>19</sup> The US will send remote-controlled, unmanned reconnaissance aircraft «Raven» 320 vehicles "Chamvi", 30 of which are armored, stated the official who wished to remain anonymous, but did not specify the timing of the mission. The White House has not yet decided whether to send deadly weapons, for example anti-tank missiles, as sought Kiev. In a first reaction to these developments, the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Riampkof described as "unexplained" the new sanctions decided to be imposed by the US.

Beginning of April 2015: Call by the Russian, Ukrainian, German and French Foreign Ministers to withdraw their troops and heavy weapons.

April 20, 2015: The assessment of the situation in eastern Ukraine is now calmer after the recent spate of violations of the ceasefire, expressed by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov who added that Moscow is working to prevent a possible further escalation of violence. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which supervises the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, announced yesterday that its staff are able to access the Sirokine for the seventh consecutive day yesterday Sunday, indicating that there is relative peace in the region.<sup>20</sup>

"The message is that we want a political solution. We and especially the Ukrainian president are ready to talk to Russia about it," said Merkel. All that remains is to take action!

#### 4. Conclusions

In conclusion, we see that the crisis in Ukraine is the result of both internal political and social division and instability. The situation of course became even worse when Ukraine was at the center of controversy of two great powers, the US-EU and Russia. The annexation of the Crimea by Russia, which led to this practice it was because Putin felt that his country's vital interests in Ukraine threatened by the EU, but also because it became more intense the feeling of geographic encirclement of the West. On the other hand, the USA attitude is clearly more strict and perhaps "hostile" towards Russia on the issue of Ukraine and this is obvious through the penalties imposed. Penalties mainly economic, because nowadays the strength and security of states are directly related to the economy, so the US wants to hit at this point Russia and because sanctions are the first step to warn a state deemed to have violated international law and has made use or threat of use of violence. On the other we observe that the EU maintains a moderate attitude towards Russia and Ukraine. On the one hand because the participation in the "game" of sanctions is not economically viable (see. Greece with agricultural products) especially in the period of economic recession which is going through, but also because energetically stills depending on Russia. Therefore, retaliation will bring reprisals, said Foreign Ministry spokesman Russian Loukasevits. However, the EU has so far seen Advocates of the American side and trying to find a compromise political solution with Russia on the issue of Ukraine.

Finally, i would like to emphasize the fact that everyone might affect each other in a negative way. The image of Russia has been adversely affected, while the US and the EU see Putin not only as a strong leader but also as a spoiled child who remembers retrospectively that once someone took of his "game" and he is demanding it back by force. Also the economic sanctions imposed by the EU and US in Russia seems to affect not only economically Russia (fall in the value of the ruble) but also the EU and mainly the agricultural countries of the EU such as Greece. On the other hand the USA do not seem to be directly affected by the situation in Ukraine and in my opinion, the way and the reasons why dealing with the issue "Ukraine-Crimea", is for prestige issues and demonstration of their power towards Russia as well as because perhaps this issue is an opportunity to control the region which is in the "key" to Eurasia.

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Harikleia Kokkinou-Mandamadiotou: Ukrainian Crisis and Reactions of the USA-EU-Russia. *International Relations Quarterly*, Vol. 6. No.1 (Spring 2015) 9 p. Thank you for your kind collaboration. *Editor-in-Chief*