

White Paper Ukraine

A South Tyrolean Accord for the Donbas, Codes of Tolerance for Ukraine and a Reconciliation Referendum for Crimea

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I.

100 years ago the Great War started. When we look back with the full knowledge of facts and background information about the main actors and states we may come to the conclusion that Europe could have avoided this major catastrophe of the 20th century with more sensitivity, knowledge of the opposing actors and endeavor to discuss and reconcile.

II.

The war in the Donbas-region has cost more than 4000 lives and destroyed many villages and cities within a few months. After the sad experiences in World War I and World War II, weapons are speaking again in this war-torn region. Each side blames the other, as usual.

The Russian involvement is heavily disputed. The Russian people want to protect their people. Some speak about volunteers who help their Russian friends, others of a silent invasion. In Kiev some talk about terrorism, others in Russia see them as heroic freedom fighters. There is a lot speculation about the Russian interests and master plans for Ukraine, ranging from political to military influence, securing Crimea or a continuation of a 'cold conflict' to keep influence in Ukraine.

Within the Minsk-process there is hope for a peaceful solution that would benefit the people in the East and West of Ukraine likewise as well as all neighboring nations and Europe as a whole.

One of the options to be discussed is presented here in a neutral White Paper: A South Tyrolean Accord for the Donbas and Codes of Tolerance for Ukraine.

What does this mean?

Using best practices of a resolved ethnic conflict in Europe, mainly caused by the change of borders in World War I and World War II, the South Tyrolean Accord from 1971, signed by the Republic of Austria and the Italian Republic, could offer a way out.

A long time after Italy seized control over this region from Austria in 1919, the German majority (60 percent in 1971) felt insecure and discriminated by the Italian central government in Rome. The locals wanted to protect their traditional culture and identity. The Accord solved that problem. Now the Germans live peacefully and happily within Italy and as citizens of the European Union.

III.

Transferred to the situation in Ukraine the following agreements could settle the conflict:

The human rights of the Russian population in the Donbas are guaranteed to the same degree like for the Germans in South Tyrolia. This includes: a self-ruling local government with much autonomy. Bilingual schools, media, public administration, street signs or cultural institutions.

The same rights are given to citizens of Ukrainian roots who may enjoy all freedoms.

The status of autonomy will be integrated in the constitution of Ukraine and cannot be changed.

An international guarantee is given by signatory states including Russia, Belarus, Germany, Poland, France and Italy. A standing Donbas committee is established with ambassadors from each country within the OSCE in Vienna. This committee appoints Ombudsmen for any complains, which cannot be avoided.

An annual progress report by the Donbas OSCE committee and the Kiev government presented by the OSCE and the Kiev government in parliament.

A reconciliation fund of € 3bn for the region, financed equally by the EU and the Russian Federation and utilized to build up infrastructure.

The establishment of roundtables in each city to promote mutual understanding and reconciliation, moderated by the OSCE.

The establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission by the Donbas OSCE group, using best practices from South Africa, as more than 20 other countries have done so far. Reporting live on TV in Ukraine and Russia with an annual report.

Radical reforms to stimulate new jobs, especially for small businesses.

Free trade agreements negotiated by the Kiev government with the EU and the Russian Federation.

Special passports for visits like done for the Oblast Kaliningrad and Poland, where residents can travel up to 60 kilometers without visa and visit the other country.

The Donbas stays within the state of Ukraine.

To support the reconciliation process and start a fresh peaceful chapter, the Russian patriots will lay down their governmental positions and declare the established local entities in the Donbas dissolved, as they have reached its purpose to protect the Russian culture and identity.

IV.

For the Russian population in Ukraine and all other minorities Codes of Tolerance will be implemented. They include:

The Kiev government appoints a Minister for Tolerance and Reconciliation with sufficient staff and funding by the EU. He promotes respect towards all ethnic and religious minorities in Ukraine and reports annually to the parliament and the OSCE with an "Ukrainian Codes of Tolerance and Reconciliation Report."

Within the context of reconciliation an amnesty committee will be established, as in South Africa, for people from all conflict parties.

V.

The peace-making effort may include:

Kiev will withdraw all troops and Russia will stop any support for the Donbas at its border.

Safeguarding a UN peace mission with 3000 soldiers from Mongolia, Italy, Austria and South Korea, sealing the border and disarming the Russian fighters.

Kiev and Moscow declare to respect and enhance both the principles of the Charta of Paris from 1990 and the guarantee-declaration from Budapest of 1994 and to honor the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

NATO and the Russian Federation declare not to utilize their military against each other. They will not use their forces, equipment, active or non-active soldiers or allow those activities against each other. Only self-defense according to international law is permitted.

VI.

Concerning the status of Crimea, the following mechanisms could be agreed upon:

The OSCE, with the support of the UN, will organize a fresh Reconciliation Referendum for Crimea in three months with two options: A vote to stay within the Russian Federation or to leave it and become as an Autonomous Region within Ukraine. All parties may register and promote their vision for two months with the same time on TV. The result will be respected by all local authorities as well as by the government in Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the EU, the U.S. and the international community.

Kiev and Moscow will guarantee free travel of goods to Crimea.

In case Crimea stays with Russia, Moscow will, as a gesture of good will and reconciliation, discount its gas supply for Ukraine by 25 percent over the next ten years based on the lowest payment in Europe.

We ask all parties involved to discuss and consider carefully these first ideas, or maybe better options, to find a peaceful solution for the people in Ukraine, and consider the lessons learned from the Great War 100 years ago for a better understanding, mutual trust and reconciliation.

Dr. Hubertus Hoffmann

President & Founder
World Security Network Foundation
hubertus@worldsecuritynetwork.com