

THE SECOND SUMMIT OF THE 3 SEAS INITIATIVE

Internal report
on the situation concerning national and sexual minorities
in Ukraine for consideration of the Summit participants



Warsaw 2017

Introduction

A new nascent Federation is intended to unite a wider circle of states with common economic and political goals, than just the European Union member-countries invited to take part in this summit. In this regard a series of resolutions concerning domestic political problems of prospective members have been adopted.

Virtually all Summit participants in their speeches expressed deep concerns about violations of the rights of sexual minorities in Ukraine. All representatives of the Visegrad Group and Balkan States also had a number of concerns in connection with increasingly complex situation with national minorities in Ukraine. The first problem is a common phenomenon among the former Soviet republics. If admitted by the Ukrainian Government, it can be easily resolved by means of adopting amendments to the current legislation and changing educational curriculums. The issue of national minorities, however, is far more acute, and the Summit participants are deeply divided on it. The following points of challenge were emphasized after a round of statements.

The authorities, including President Poroshenko, flatly and categorically deny the fact of discrimination against particular national communities living in Ukraine. It has been generally recognized by the Summit participants that the ethnic minorities are treated as dead weight in Ukraine, which is confirmed by multiple violations of the 1992 Law on National Minorities and by continuous curtailing of the legal rights of national minorities.

Purpose

1. The latest education reform, implemented by the leadership of the country, deliberately abolished the constitutional guarantee for education in regional languages, replacing it with the right to study in the mother tongue. Under this pretext Ukrainian language is being imposed as obligatory in areas where national minorities are concentrated; and teaching in minority languages is being sharply reduced in educational institutions. Besides, there is no access to higher education in the mother tongue for the ethnic minorities.

2. The lack of governmental and total absence of local agencies dedicated to protecting the rights of national minorities, alongside with the abolition of the Office of the National Minorities Ombudsman. The Council of National Communities of Ukraine consists of 11 members, at the same time there are at least 17 large ethnic communities and more than a hundred small ones in Ukraine. This is an indication that the Council takes a rather formal approach to its duties.

3. Promoting nationalism at the state level:

- xenophobic rhetoric and intolerant bias in the official mass media;
- impunity of the extremist groups desecrating ethnic and cultural monuments and committing regular attacks on members of the diasporas;
- discrimination on the grounds of nationality in both private companies and public institutions.

Since the Slavic participants of the association consider further existence of the Three Seas Initiative without Ukraine as counterproductive, and Ukrainian claims against Russia are among the key issues on the Summit agenda, the following decisions have been made.

Referring to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, to oblige the Government of Ukraine:

- to amend state legislation by defining the rights of sexual and ethnic minorities and their protection mechanisms;
- to ensure the right to use the mother tongue and freedom of choice of the language, the right to preserve national and ethnic cultural identity;
- to ban political, social, cultural and economic discrimination based on nationality;
- to prohibit the incitement of inter-ethnic discord and introduce inevitable punishment for it;
- to establish a special governmental office for the work with national minorities as well as local ethnic affairs committees in all regions of Ukraine;

- to provide autonomy to the largest ethnic groups historically dwelling in one area;
- to legalize dual citizenship.

Support

It has been resolved to set up a Committee on National Minorities in Ukraine with a function of advisory work and monitoring the implementation of the requested changes to achieve the desired results.

Approval

This report has been unanimously endorsed by all participants of the Three Seas Initiative Summit 2017. It has also been approved of by our guest, the President of the U.S.A. Donald J. Trump.