

The Ukraine Crisis: Sovereignty, Borders and Economic Interests in ex-communist Europe

A CRCE Colloquium

Ukraine-Russia Crisis through the Slavic Triangle Public Eyes

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Part I. Ukraine



Despite Ukraine being classified as a hybrid, not authoritarian regime as opposed to Russia and Belarus, it is deeply **divided by political and cultural values geographically**. Thus, according to Kiev International Institute of Sociology, almost 95 percent of its Western regions population **speaks Ukrainian** while only 3.1 percent speak Russian, in Central regions this correlation is 61.2 percent to 24.2 percent, in Central-Eastern regions 31.9 percent to 46.4 percent, in South-Eastern regions 5 percent to 85 percent.

- While most part of population Western and Central regions **prefers EU membership**, in the South-Eastern regions correlation is the opposite: 25 percent to 47 percent, and in Donetsk region its 9.4 percent to 72.5 percent.

- While most of population of Western and Central regions **consider Maidan protests** in winter 2013/2014 as “public protest against corruption and tyranny of Yanukovich’s dictatorship,” and only minor part as “coup d’état organized with Western assistance,” in the South-Eastern regions this correlation is 41.7 percent vs. 46 percent.

- While most of population of Western and Central regions consider **Crimea events in March 2014** as “illegitimate annexation by Russia” and only minor part as “free self-determination of Crimea people,” in the South-Eastern regions this correlation is 44 percent vs. 43 percent.

- However, as KIIS Director Vladimir Paniotto stated with regret, most of new pro-Western government’ actions *“in no way were guided by public opinion.”*

Sources: <http://www.kiis.com.ua/index.php?lang=eng&id=4>; <http://inosmi.ru/world/20140510/220182042.html>

Table 1. Do you agree with statement that population of Crimea is exposed to violent Ukrainization? (polling in Crimea in November 2008, 6890 respondents of age 18 were interviewed, marginal error did not exceed 1.2 %) %

Completely agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Completely disagree	DA/NA
52.6	22.6	6.3	12.2	6.3

Table 2. Politicians and opinion leaders state differences in culture, language, historical heritage and geo-political orientations of eastern and Eastern Ukrainians are so deep that they should be considered as the two different peoples. Do you agree with this? %

Completely agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Completely disagree		DA/NA	
6.4	20.1	34.5	27.4		11.6	
Regions			East	South	Center	West
Completely agree			7.5	9	4.6	5.4
Mostly agree			25.3	19.7	19	13.3
Mostly disagree			35.4	37.8	34.3	30.6
Completely disagree			20.8	20.5	31.4	37.8
DA/NA			11	13	10.7	12.9

According to Razumkov Center polling conducted in June 2007.

Table 3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with a statement that Russian language should get status of a second state language? %

Completely disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Completely disagree	DA/NA
24.0	11.9	21.7	34.5	7.8

According to Razumkov Center polling conducted in May 2005, over 11.000 respondents were interviewed, the marginal error did not exceed 1%.

Table 4. If you have a chance to choose a book by foreign author which you want to read, what translation would you prefer: Ukrainian or Russian? %

All Ukraine	2006	2007
Russian	36.8	34.9
Does not matter	28.3	33
Ukrainian	28.7	23.1
Do not read books	4.1	5.8
Prefer to read in original	0.4	1.5
DA/NA	1.7	1.7

Table 5. Same question in East Ukraine, %

East Ukraine	2007	2007
Russian	62	59.2
Does not matter	24.3	29.1
Ukrainian	7.7	4.8
Do not read books	4.1	4.8
Prefer to read in original	0.4	1
DA/NA	1.6	1.1

According to the same polling

Table 6. How do you estimate level of life of Ukrainians compare with Russians? %

Level of life of Ukrainians is better that of Russians	Level of life of Ukrainians is the same as of Russians	Level of life of Ukrainians is worse that of Russians	DA/NA
4.8	29.7	54.8	10.9

Table 7. Same questions by regions, %

Regions	West	Center	South	East
Level of life of Ukrainians is better that of Russians	11.3	4.7	3	1.9
Level of life of Ukrainians is the same as of Russians	36.6	33.5	23.9	24.1
Level of life of Ukrainians is worse that of Russians	37.1	49.6	64.1	65.8
DA/NA	15	12.2	9	8.2

According to Razumkov Center polling conducted in May 2005, marginal error did not exceed 2,3%.

WHICH WAY SHOULD UKRAINE GO – WHAT UNION SHOULD IT JOIN?

*The poll was conducted on September 13-23, 2013, by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS).

Table 8. Please imagine that today a referendum on whether Ukraine should join the Customs Union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan is being held. You can vote for accession to the Union, against it or abstain from voting - not to participate in voting. What would your choice be? %

Options	All of Ukraine	Region			
		West	Center	South	East
For accession	39.9	20.8	29.3	49.7	62.4
Against accession	33.2	58.7	41.9	19.0	12.0
Would not vote	11.3	8.0	14.2	13.1	8.4
DK/NA	15.6	12.6	14.6	18.1	17.2

Table 9. Please imagine that today a referendum on whether Ukraine should join the European Union is being held. You can vote for accession to the Union, against it or abstain from voting - not to participate in voting. What would your choice be? %

Options	All of Ukraine	Region			
		West	Center	South	East
For accession	43.2	74.9	46.5	28.9	23.0
Against accession	30.1	13.0	25.5	36.7	46.4
Would not vote	10.3	4.5	12.7	13.2	9.5
DK/NA	16.4	7.6	15.3	21.2	21.1

Table 10. And if next Sunday a referendum would be held on whether Ukraine should join the European Union or the Customs Union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan - how would you vote? %

Options	All of Ukraine	All of Ukraine			
		West	Center	South	East
...Would vote to join EU	40.5	72.7	44.8	26.4	18.0
...Would vote to join the customs union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan	35.0	13.4	24.9	46.4	57.3
...would not vote	10.0	3.7	13.0	11.3	11.0
DK/NA	13.4	8.0	16.2	15.2	13.0
Refused to answer	1.1	2.2	1.0	0.7	0.7

On **November 9-20, 2013** Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) conducted a public opinion poll commissioned by the client.

Table 8. By signing the agreement on association and free trade with the European Union Ukraine aims at the prospect of accession to the European Union. Accession to the European Union requires introduction of visas to countries that are not members of the Union, including Russia. What would you choose?

For Ukraine to sign an agreement on association and free trade, and become a member of the European Union and to have closed borders with Russia	31.1
For Ukraine not to become a member of the European Union and to have open borders with Russia, without visas and customs	40.5
DK	26.5
NA	1.9

Table 11. In which case do you think Ukrainian products of industry and agriculture will be more likely to sell well - if Ukraine would sign an agreement on free trade zone with the European Union or enter into a customs union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan?
%

If Ukraine would sign an agreement on free trade zone with the European Union	32.6
If Ukraine would enter into a customs union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan	38.5
DK	27.4
NA	1.4

ARE THINGS IN UKRAINE GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION TODAY?

Table 12. Do you think that in general things in Ukraine are going in the right direction or the wrong direction? Distribution of answers (percentage of the adult population of Ukraine aged 18 years) %:

Options	All of Ukraine		
	With Crimea	Without Crimea	Without Crimea
	November 2013		May 2014
Right direction	13,7	13,7	20,3
Wrong direction	68,7	68,5	59,7
DK/NA	17,6	17,7	20,0

Source: <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=343&page=2>

Table 13. Regional distribution percentage of adult population of Ukraine without Crimea (*read by lines*), %

Region	Polling time	In the right direction	In the wrong direction	DK/NA
West	November 2013	12,3	70,8	16,9
	May 2014	37,8	38,8	23,4
	difference	25,5	-31,9	6,5
Central	November 2013	17,7	65,8	16,5
	May 2014	23,4	52,3	24,3
	difference	5,7	-13,5	7,8
South	November 2013	13,3	67,0	19,7
	May 2014	13,8	66,9	19,3
	difference	0,5	-0,1	-0,4
East	November 2013	10,1	71,3	18,6
	May 2014	3,7	85,8	10,5
	difference	-6,4	14,5	-8,1

HOW DID THE ATTITUDES OF UKRAINIANS TOWARDS RUSSIA AND RUSSIANS TOWARDS UKRAINE CHANGED?

- The press release contains the results of a joint project of the **Kiev International Institute of Sociology** and Russian non-governmental research center "**Levada-Center**".
- Kyiv International Institute of Sociology conducted its poll from **April 29 to May 11, 2014**. The survey was conducted in 110 localities (PSU) in all regions of Ukraine, except the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, with a random sample representative of the population of Ukraine aged 18 and older, 2022 were interviewed. Statistical sampling error does not exceed 3.3%.
- "Levada-Center" conducted a survey on a representative sample of Russian population from **May 23 to 26, 2014**; interviewing 1,600 respondents aged 18 and over in 130 settlements of 45 regions of the country. Statistical data error does not exceed 3.4%.

Source: <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=347&page=1>

Ukrainians were asked "**What is your general attitude towards Russia?**" And Russian were asked "**What is your general attitude towards Ukraine?**"

- **Attitudes of Ukrainians towards Russia, as well as attitudes of Russians towards Ukraine, in recent time have seriously worsened.** However, the attitudes of Ukrainians towards Russia is better than the attitudes of Russians towards Ukraine. Compared to the February survey, the number of Ukrainians who had positive attitude towards Russia fell sharply (from 78% in February to 52% in May), while the share of people that had negative attitude towards Russia has almost tripled (13% in February, 38% - in May).
- This deterioration of attitudes towards Russia **applies to all regions, but in different ways.** The largest share of people with pro-Russian attitudes is in the Eastern region (77% in May, and was 92% in February, a decrease by 15%) and in the South (65% in May, was 86% in February, a decrease by 21%). In the Central Region, 43% displayed positive attitudes towards Russia (in February is was 76%, with a reduction by 33% in May). The lowest share of them is in the Western region (30% in May, was 70% in February, a decrease by 40%).
- In Russia the number of people with positive attitude towards Ukraine have **decreased almost in half from February to May - from 66% to 35%.** Number of negative-minded increased over the same period of time from 26% to 49%. In addition, according to "Levada Center," **69% of Russians are ready to support the leadership of Russian in the military conflict with Ukraine, and 90% support the annexation of Crimea,** while 86% believe it is the result of free will of the Crimean residents.

Figure 1: Dynamics of the good attitude of Ukrainians towards Russia and Russians towards Ukraine %

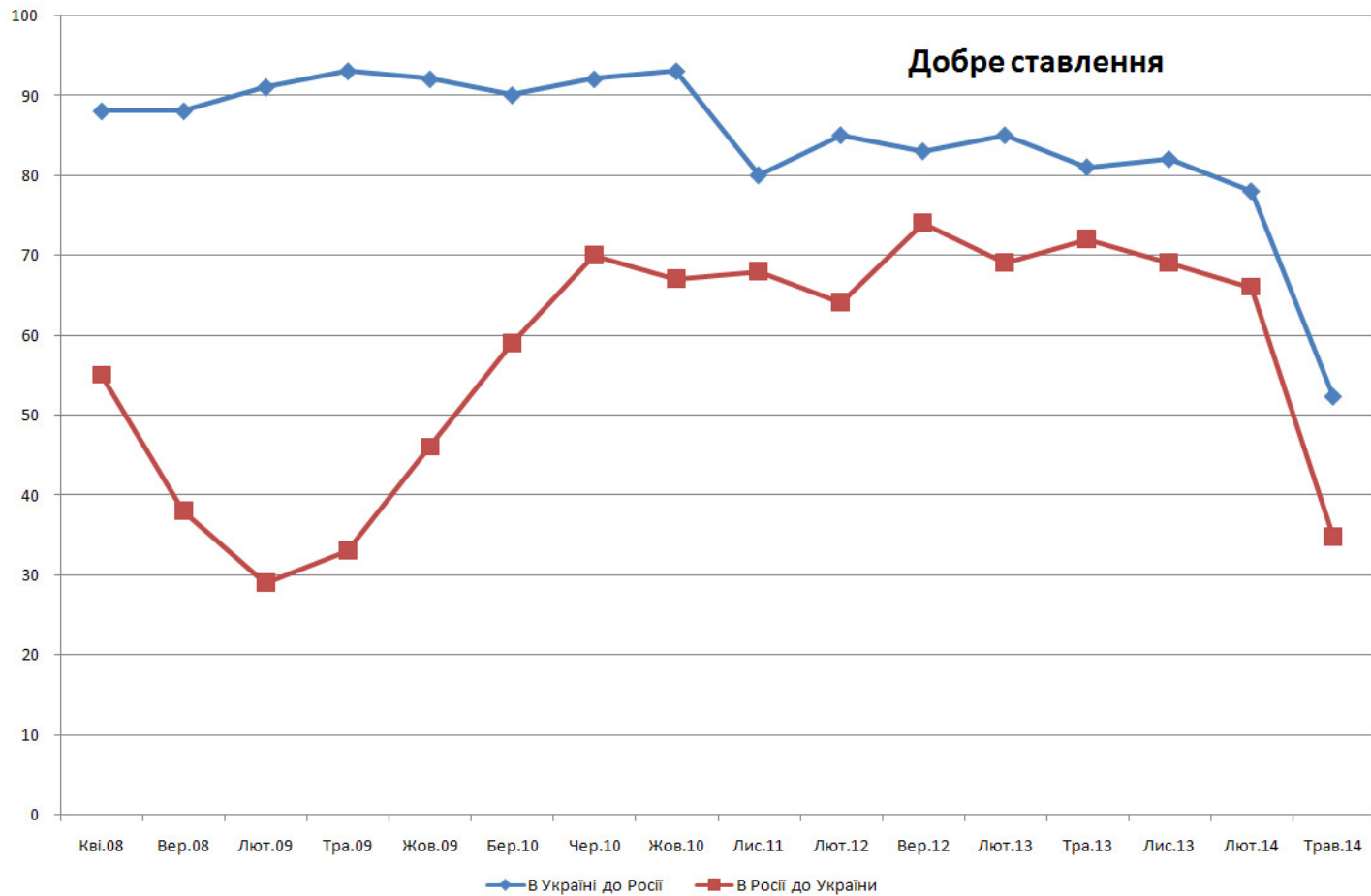


Figure 2. Which type of relations with Russia does Ukraine want? %

Якими мають бути відновини України та Росії?

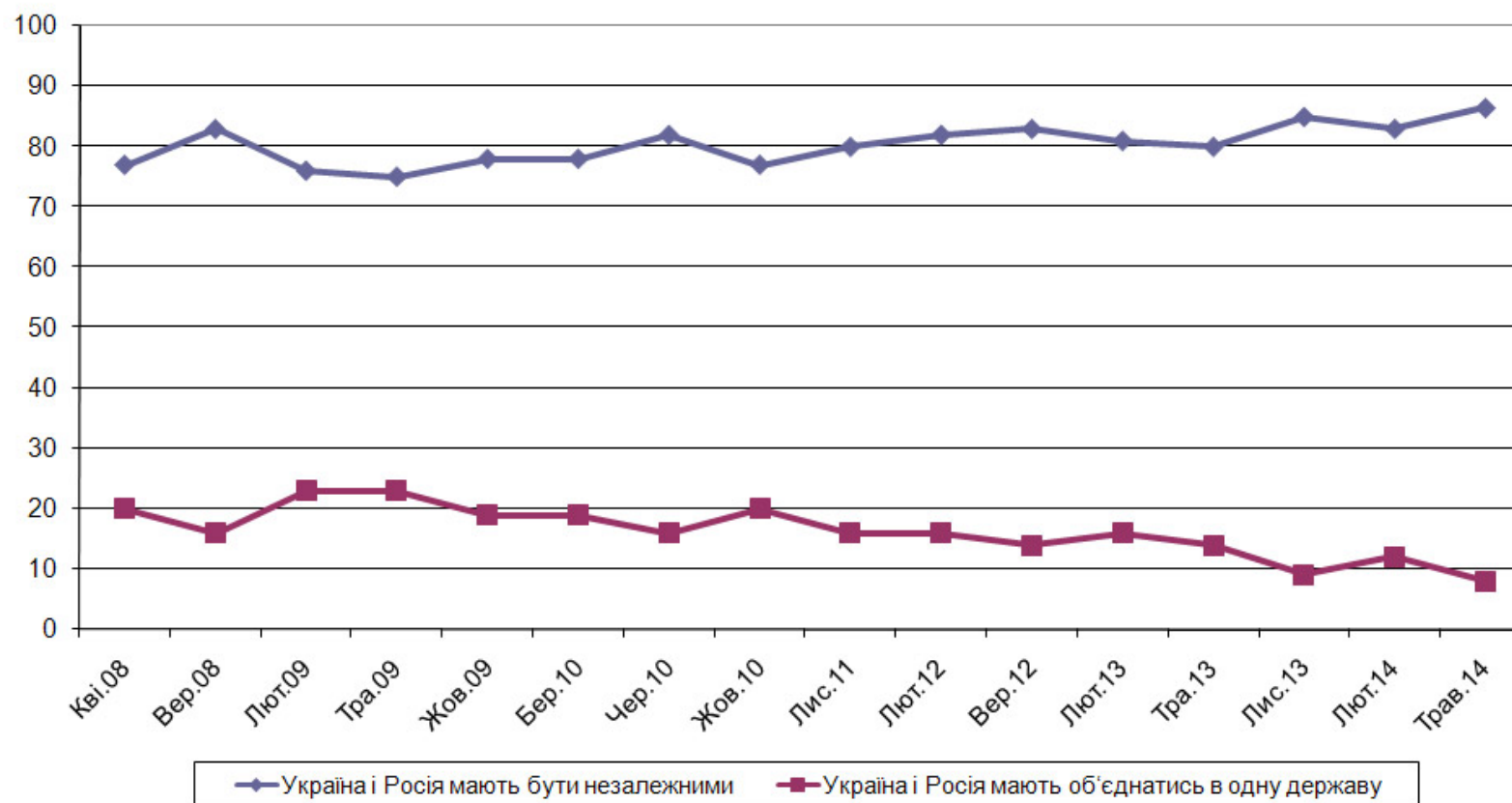


Table 14: Attitudes in Ukraine to Russia (by region) %:

Options	Relations between Ukraine and Russia should be the same as with other countries - with closed borders, visas and customs	Russia and Ukraine should be independent but friendly states - with open borders without visas and customs	Ukraine and Russia should unite in one state	DK
West	52.1	42.5	0.0	4.6
Central	40.7	48.9	2.7	7.5
South	20.0	70.2	6.3	3.0
East	11.0	58.9	25.8	4.3

Source: <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=347&page=1>

UKRAINE, RUSSIA, BELARUS – ATTITUDES TOWARDS EACH OTHER

The press release contains the results of a joint project of the Kiev International Institute of Sociology, Russian non-governmental research organization "Levada-Center", and Belarusian pollster Novak. All three organizations included the same questions in the survey, conducted in May (Ukrainian respondent could choose between survey in Russian or Ukrainian language). Kyiv International Institute of Sociology conducted its own poll "Omnibus" **from April 29 to May 11, 2014.**

- 52% of the Ukrainian population in general had good attitudes towards Russia and only 35% of the Russian population in general had good attitudes towards Ukraine.
- 85% of the Ukrainian population in general had good attitudes towards Belarus and only 57% of the Belarusians in general had good attitudes towards Ukraine.
- Thus, despite the Russian aggression, **Ukrainians were more friendly towards the two neighboring countries than those countries were towards Ukraine.**
- The friendship between Russia and Belarus is mutual:** 85% of Russian had generally good attitude towards Belarus and 81% of Belarusians had good feelings towards Russia.

Source: <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=345&page=1>

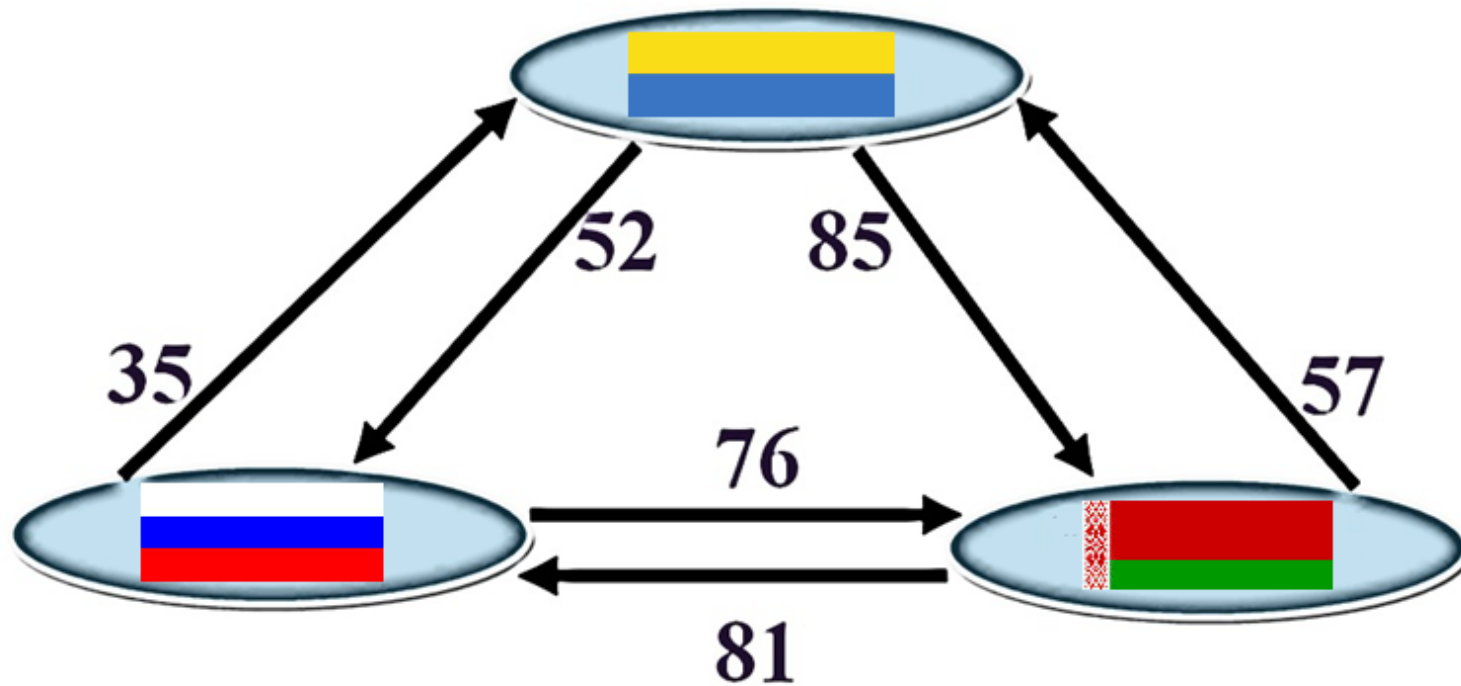


Figure 1. May 2014, Percentage of the adult population of the country that have good or very good attitude to a particular country (the direction of the arrow indicates the direction of the relationship)

Not only the perception of countries as a whole was investigated, **but also separately looked at attitudes towards people** and the leadership:

- 80% of the population in Ukraine in general have a positive opinion of Russians (32% very good and 48% mostly good), 13.5% have a negative opinion.
- 81% of the Russian population have in general good attitude to Ukrainian (22% very good and 59% mostly good), 12% have a negative opinion.

The opposite picture is seen in **Ukraine's public opinion about Russian leadership and in Russian public opinion about Ukrainian leadership:**

- 71% of the population of Ukraine in general have a bad attitude towards the Russian leadership (56% “very bad” and 15% “mostly bad”), 19% have a generally good attitude (10% undecided).
- 79% of the population in Russia have a bad attitude towards the leadership of Ukraine (29% “very bad” and 50% “mostly bad”), 11% have a generally good opinion (10% undecided).

Table 15. What's your general attitude towards Belarus today? By region % :

Options	West	Center	South	East	All of Ukraine
very good	17.1	27.6	43.5	51.9	34.1
mostly good	61.8	54.0	47.2	40.0	51.2
mostly bad	6.7	4.7	3.3	1.8	4.2
very bad	1.7	2.2	0.4	0.9	1.4
DK	12.7	11.5	5.7	5,4	9.1

Table 16. What's your general attitude towards Russia today? By region % :

Options	West	Center	South	East	All of Ukraine
very good	4.8	6.9	22.6	40.2	17.3
mostly good	24.8	36.1	42.5	36.6	35.0
mostly bad	24.2	25.2	15.4	8.8	19.1
very bad	35.2	18.8	10.6	9.0	18.7
DK	11.0	13.0	8.9	5.4	9.9

Table 17. What is your general attitude towards Russians (residents of Russia) today? By region % :

Options	West	Center	South	East	All of Ukraine
very good	19.4	16.6	41.6	56.3	31.7
mostly good	51.9	56.8	43.8	35.0	47.9
mostly bad	14.2	12.4	7.8	2.7	9.6
very bad	5.6	6.1	1.3	1.6	3.9
DK	9.0	8.0	5.4	4.5	6.9

Table 18. What is your general attitude towards Russian leadership today? By region % :

Options	West	Center	South	East	All of Ukraine
very good	0.8	1.1	7.0	28.9	8.5
mostly good	1.7	4.1	11.5	27.5	10.4
mostly bad	10.8	14.5	23.3	12.6	15.2
very bad	84.2	70.9	44.3	16.7	56.1
DK	2.5	9.4	13.9	14.2	9.9

- During the fighting in the south-east of Ukraine, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, over **a million people fled their homes, 800,000 of them fled to Russia**, and the rest to other regions of Ukraine.

Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/multimedia/2014/09/140917_v_ukraine_refugees_yaroslavl_semibratovo.shtml

- **Most of the parties that have a chance to get voted to the new Parliament on October 26, are not calling for a special status for the Russian language**, support the European integration of Ukraine and, to put it mildly, are skeptical regarding the Customs Union.
- **Moreover, there no objections are voiced by any of parties with high rating over the need to deepen cooperation between Ukraine and NATO.** The discussion applies only to how quickly and deeply Kiev should get closer to the Alliance.

“After twenty years of independence, Ukraine is a divided country on the threshold of economic bankruptcy. It is home to two nations with different and probably antagonistic visions of the future, two nations growing apart every day. Both these nations look up to the world outside with unrealistic expectations – one to the West, the other to Russia,

Ukraine in its current shape could have been saved by several decades of peaceful development with a modest and sophisticated foreign policy, respecting the geopolitical position of the country and gradually improving its economy and standard of living. None of that was in the cards for Ukraine. Attempts at radical change represent a fundamental threat in such a fragile, heterogeneous and politically sensitive country. Unfortunately that is what is happening in Ukraine today, with all the risks it entails for Europe and the world”.

**Vaclav Klaus, Jiri Weigl,
Political Statement of Vaclav Klaus Institute No 25, Prague, April 15, 2014**

- **Is Ukraine moving in the right or wrong direction?** (dynamics, 2004-2013)
http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/print.php?lng=UKR&&poll_id=66&&address=poll
- **Various aspects of the expected impact of the Association Agreement with the EU and accession to the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia** (multi-chart)
http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=892-
- **Which direction of foreign policy should be a priority for Ukraine?** (dynamics, 2002-2014) http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=305
- **Should Ukraine join the European Union?** (dynamics, 2002-2012)
http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=387
- **What integration direction should Ukraine take?** (regional distribution)
http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=666

- **What integration direction should Ukraine take?** (dynamics, 2011-2014)
http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=865
- **Which direction of foreign policy should be a priority for Ukraine?** (regional distribution) http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=119
- **Do you agree with the statement that the population of Crimea is exposed to violent Ukrainianization?** (Survey in Crimea)
http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=401
- **Some politicians and journalists argue that differences in culture, language, historical heritage, foreign policy orientations of western and eastern Ukrainian are so large that they can be considered to be two different nations. Do you agree with this opinion?** http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=719

- **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the assertion that the Russian language should be given the status of a second official language?**
http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=242
- **If you had an opportunity to choose a book of a foreign author that you really want to read, would you prefer to read its translation in Ukrainian or Russian?** (dynamics 2006-2007) (regional distribution)
http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=710
- **How do you rate the standard of living of the population of Ukraine compared to Russia?** (regional distribution)
http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=850