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The Annexation of Crimea : Legal Uncertainty for Years

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The Annexation of Crimea: Legal Uncertainty for Years*

Ukraine has become the center of international political scene as the result of the Russian Federation's illegal military intervention and annexation in March 2014 of the Crimea Peninsula, a part of Ukraine.

Several months before the annexation a political crisis occurred in Ukraine. After its former President, Victor Yanukovich, refused to sign the Agreement of Association with the European Union on 29 IX 2013 thousands of Ukrainians from every region of the country gathered on Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) on continuing Euromaidan – the peaceful manifestation in support of Euro integration¹. Very soon the peaceful protests became violent and police intervened to suppress the protesters.

If at the beginning of Euromaidan the youthful demonstrators expressed their support for European integration of Ukraine, other anti-government protesters demonstrated against corruption, violations of human rights, and demanded democratic reforms including the reformatting of political and economic systems. Step by step, these peaceful demonstrations turned into a second Ukrainian revolution – the Dignity Revolution². Notwithstanding the fact that the ruling regime arrested activists, kidnapped the leaders, and tortured the participants, the protesters stayed on the street in the tents placed on the main street of Kyiv City Khreschatik for three months during the winter.

The peak of the Dignity Revolution occurred during the period of 18-21 II 2014 when the President Yanukovich gave his security forces an order to fire on

* The author would like to thank Mark Smith, a retired economic development official and now a full-time author, Richland, Washington, U.S.A., for review of the draft of the article and providing important comments and valuable suggestions.

¹ *Ukraine protests after Yanukovich EU deal rejection*, BBC Europe [30 XI 2013], <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25162563> (3 VII 2014).

² Prime-Minister Victor Yanukovich's falsification at the 2004 presidential elections, when he was announced a President, caused the first Maidan that turned into the Orange Revolution.

the protesters.³ Within those few days up to 100 people were killed, including several policemen, and more than 1100 protesters were injured.⁴

Under pressure from the European Union to stop violence, President Yanukovich agreed to start negotiations with opposition leaders representing the Euromaidan. On 21 II 2014, after long negotiations, Victor Yanukovich was forced to sign a compromise agreement to stop the violence under supervision of the European Union representatives – Ministers of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski of Poland, Laurent Fabius of France and Frank-Walter Steinmeier of Germany. The Russian representative, Vladimir Lukin, who participated at the negotiations, did not sign the agreement.⁵

The compromise that was agreed to allowed the parties to begin solving the conflict between state authorities and citizens of Ukraine. The agreement contained several political arrangements, including: restoration of the Constitution of 2004 which had been changed by the Constitutional Court in 2010 in violation of legal procedures, the start a constitutional reform, an investigation of the violence that occurred during the 2013-2014 peaceful protests and others. In recognition of this agreement the Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) adopted several laws among which was one that repealed the anti-democratic laws adopted on January 16 which generated another wave of protests that resulted in several activists being killed and injured. After signing the agreement, the President failed to appear in his office to sign the laws that would have calmed down the protesters. Since that time nobody has seen Victor Yanukovich in Kyiv City – the capital of Ukraine – and there was no official information where he was.⁶

³ *Ukraine violence leaves at least 10 dead*, ABC News [18 II 2014], <http://web.archive.org/web/20140219020800/http://abcnews.go.com/International/ukraine-violence-leaves-dead/story?id=22566049> (7 VII 2014).

⁴ *Ukraine death toll rising on Feb, 20 with at least 42 people killed, most by gunshots from police*, „Kyiv Post”, 20 II 2014, <http://web.archive.org/web/20140221071310/http://www.kyivpost.com/content/kyiv/ukraine-death-toll-rising-on-feb-20-with-at-least-42-people-killed-most-by-gunshots-from-police-live-updates-video-337236.html> (6 VII 2014).

⁵ *Opposition leaders sign deal with President to end crisis in Ukraine*, Fox News Channel [21 II 2014], <http://web.archive.org/web/20140221103553/http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/02/21/ukrainian-presidency-says-deal-reached-at-crisis-talks/> (10 VII 2014).

⁶ Later a story of the President Yanukovich's escape was widely discussed in media. President Yanukovich left the capital right after signing of the agreement with protesters' representatives on 21 II 2014 for Kharkiv. He then tried to leave the territory of Ukraine from local airports in eastern Ukraine. When he could not leave the country by plane in Kharkiv he went to Donetsk. See: *Пограничники отказались выпустить самолет Януковича из Донецка (Border guards refused to release Yanukovich's plane in Donetsk)*, „Zerkalo Nedeli”, 22 II 2014, http://web.archive.org/web/20140222225800/http://zn.ua/POLITICS/pogranichniki-otkazalis-vypustit-samolet-yanukovicha-iz-donecka-139539_.html (9 VII 2014). Then he went to Crimea and surrendered himself at discretion of Russian military forces located on peninsula. See: *Янукович пытается сбежать из Севастополя на корабле (Yanukovich*

Not having any information about the President's whereabouts the Verkhovna Rada decided to act as the Constitution of Ukraine advises in this situation. The Parliament on 23 II 2014 empowered the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to act as temporary president.⁷ This was urgently necessary in order to keep the situation under control, because after the President escaped from the country his regime collapsed.

Having lost its direct influence on Ukraine (which it had effectively exercised through Victor Yanukovych), the Russian Federation launched a military intervention into the territory of Ukraine. The first unmarked armed forces began arriving in the Crimean Peninsula from Russian Kuban through Kerch Strait ferry by small groups almost immediately after President Yanukovych's disappearance.⁸ Later, in April 2014, the President of the Russian Federation recognized those unidentified soldiers as Russian regular military troops.⁹

Along with the Russian troops already allocated to the Crimea under the 1997 Treaty on Stationing of the Black Sea Fleet in Crimean Ports the total number of Russian military forces already in the Crimea numbered several thousand at the beginning of March 2014.¹⁰ Gunmen without identification and local pro-Russian self-defense forces blockaded all Ukrainian military and navy installations in Crimea.¹¹ In addition, they blocked the land connections with Continental Ukraine.

On 2 III 2014 the Russian military troops surrounded the Crimean Parliament and did not allow anyone except pro-Russian parliament members to enter. One of the those deputies, Sergey Aksyonov appointed himself Prime-Minister.

tries escaping from Sevastopol on a ship), „Argumenty Nedeli”, 24 II 2014, <http://an-crimea.ru/page/news/57889/> (2 VII 2014). He was immediately deported to Rostov-on-Don City in Russia, situated near the border of Eastern Ukraine.

⁷ *Ukraine: Speaker Oleksandr Turchynov named interim president*, BBC News [23 II 2014], <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26312008> (5 VII 2014).

⁸ *Russian Invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian Policy* [4 III 2014], <http://ukrainianpolicy.com/russian-invasion-of-ukraine/> (2 VII 2014).

⁹ *Putin acknowledges Russian military were in Crimea*, RT [17 IV 2014], <http://rt.com/news/crimea-defense-russian-soldiers-108/> (30 VI 2014).

¹⁰ It is important to mention that the bilateral agreement between the Russian Federation and Ukraine allowed up to 25 000 Russian navy and other military personnel to be based in Crimea on a temporary basis until 2015. During presidency of Victor Yanukovych, the term of this agreement was extended until 2043 under so called Kharkiv Treaty on Crimea in exchange for gas supplied to Ukraine by Russia at a discounted price. The treaty was strongly criticized and evoked mass protests. *Ukrainian crisis: March 17*, LB chronicles the latest events in Ukraine [17 III 2014], http://world.lb.ua/news/2014/03/17/259669_ukrainian_crisis_march_17_live.html (1 VII 2014).

¹¹ T. Sullivan & V. Isachenkov, *Russian troops take over Ukraine's Crimea region* [1 III 2014], <http://news.yahoo.com/russian-troops-over-ukraines-crimea-region-200052097.html> (2 VII 2014).

The Crimean Parliament (Verkhovna Rada of Autonomous Republic of Crimea¹²) in a closed meeting held on 11 III 2014 adopted a Declaration of Independence and set a Referendum to be held on 16 III 2014 on the future status of Crimea.¹³

The results of the referendum were approved by the local Parliament practically immediately after carrying out the referendum – on 17 III 2014 – and the foundation of the Republic of Crimea was announced, along with the adoption of an appeal on joining the Russian Federation.

The new state – the Republic of Crimea – was recognized by the Russian Federation, North Korea, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Syria, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Russian partners including Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia also supported the Russian Federation's military invasion and occupation of Ukraine. A group of unrecognized nations that are under the influence of Russia – Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh also recognized the referendum and independence of Crimea.

The Russian Federation and Republic of Crimea signed a treaty on accession of the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol City into the Russian Federation as two new territorial units on 18 III 2014. The Republic of Crimea existed for only one day.

Marc Weller, Professor of International Law at the University of Cambridge, acknowledged that Russia by annexing Crimea had violated several international documents, including:

- The Alma Ata Declaration of December 1991 on dissolution of the Soviet Union;
- The Budapest memorandum of 1994, where Russia provided guarantees to Ukraine's sovereignty within existed borders in exchange of removal of nuclear weapons from its territory;
- The Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership concluded with Ukraine in 1997 where an agreement on the stationing of the Black Sea fleet in Crimea is a part.¹⁴

Doctor of International Law Eric Engle emphasizes that by occupying a part of Ukraine's territory contrary to its declarations and international treaties' obliga-

¹² According to the Constitution of Ukraine, Crimea had a status of Autonomous Republic with comprehensive autonomy: the Autonomy had its Constitution, Parliament (Verkhovna Rada of Autonomous Republic of Crimea) and a Cabinet of Ministers. The City of Sevastopol had a special status – direct subordination to Kyiv.

¹³ Referendum was initially planned for 25 III (the day of presidential election in Ukraine), then it was moved to mid-May, then to mid-April, then to 30 III, and finally to 16 III 2014. It looked like the occupation was unexpectedly effective.

¹⁴ M. Weller, *Analysis: Why Russia's Crimea move fails legal test*. Electronic copy of the article available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26481423> (10 VII 2014).

tions, Russia has violated universally recognized principle of territorial integrity of states.¹⁵

The referendum of 16 III 2014 became the basis for a suspicious transformation of part of Ukraine – the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol City – into two Russian federal administrative units. So, one of the first problems that appeared almost immediately was this referendum's legality.

The local and international experts pointed to numerous violations of Ukrainian legislation and international standards while the referendum was being carried out.¹⁶ Among those violations were the fact that the voting sites did not cover the whole territory, some voters voted multiple times, citizens could cast votes for relatives without their being present, non-citizens of Ukraine whom were Russians could also vote, and finally, the referendum was conducted under the control of the Russian soldiers and paramilitaries. Journalists reported that ethnic Crimean Tatars (indigenous people) as well as pro-Ukrainian citizens boycotted the referendum.¹⁷

There were no doubts as to the ultimate result of the referendum as local authorities reported that a vast majority of voters supported the independence of Crimea. Incidentally, the Committee on Human Rights and even President Putin calculated that only 15-30% of Crimeans voted for the secessions of Crimea from Ukraine and for joining Russia during the 16 III 2014 referendum.¹⁸

On 27 III 2014 the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution approved by almost 60% of the member states declared the Crimean referendum invalid and called on all states, international organizations, and specialized institutions not to recognize any alteration of the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol.

Ukrainian laws do not provide any legal basis for performing local referendums. So, the result of the referendum is absolutely illegal. The first legal reaction of Ukraine was to nullify the illegal decisions of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea' Parliament and the City Council of Sevastopol as to their independence. Ironically, the Crimean Parliament of Autonomous Republic of Crimea which

¹⁵ Doctor Eric Engle provided on 24 III 2014 a lecture in Kyiv, Ukraine to Fulbright Ukrainian Association members. E. Engle, *A New Cold War? Cold Peace. Russia, Ukraine, and NATO*. Electronic copy of the article available at: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2419414> (10 VII 2014).

¹⁶ L. Charboneau, *U.N. General Assembly declares Crimea secession vote invalid*, Reuters [30 III 2014], <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/27/us-ukraine-crisis-un-idUSBREA2Q1GA20140327> (2 VII 2014).

¹⁷ P. Shishkin & A. Troianovski, *Crimean Tatars appear to boycott voting* [17 III 2014], <http://stream.wsj.com/story/latest-headlines/SS-2-63399/SS-2-482792/> (2 VII 2014).

¹⁸ I. Somin, *Russian government agency reveals fraudulent nature of the Crimean referendum results* [6 V 2014], <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2014/05/06/russian-government-agency-reveals-fraudulent-nature-of-the-crimean-referendum-results/> (2 VII 2014).

had previously been elected under Ukrainian law continues working now as a local legislative body of the Russian federal unit.

The foundation of the Crimean Government and empowering the Council of Sevastopol City with additional powers has been made in violation of the legal procedures as set forth in Ukrainian laws. For instance, the Sevastopol City Council established a special body – a Coordination Council – with delegated powers to manage the city, including the power to form local militia, appoint a procurator, create additional security bodies, and manage sea port infrastructure, etc.¹⁹

The most questionable were the first decisions of the Crimean Parliament of the newly created state. Among those decisions were those concerning the territory of a new republic, citizenship, nationalization and property, state budget and taxes, and numerous economic issues, including currency, banking, business, etc.

The Regional Administrative Court of Kyiv City (Appellate Court) satisfied a petition of the Procurator General of Ukraine and invalidated decisions of Crimean government taken in February-March 2014 that are in violation of the Constitution of Ukraine and the laws of Ukraine, particularly the Law of Ukraine On Local Self-Government in Ukraine. The court reasoned that those decisions were against the constitutional foundations, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

The citizens of Crimea experienced difficulties brought about by the illegal annexation of their territory by a neighbor state practically immediately. They were given one month to make a decision on their citizenship²⁰. Those people who were willing to remain Ukrainian had from 18 III to 17 IV 2014, to file a formal declaration of their intent to remain Ukrainian. In fact, local authorities did not provide with everything necessary for fulfilling these formalities. People claimed that they could not find the agencies to which they had to address their applications. The procedure itself was not clearly defined. All those who did not file their application within the one month timeframe automatically became citizens of the Russian Federation. In this regard, we can refer to the assertion made on 2 VII 2014 at one of the Moscow's courts by Oleg Sentsov, arrested in Crimea and accused of terrorist activities: „I am not a slave to be given with the piece of land.”²¹ Many Crimean citizens consider the process a violation of their human rights and are ready to file claims with the European Court of Human Right.

¹⁹ Админсуд отменил решение марионеток Кремля о „независимости” Севастополя (Administration Court nullified the decision of Kremlin's marionettes on „independence” of Sevastopol), Censor.net [21 IV 2014], http://censor.net.ua/news/286353/adminsud_otmenil_reshenie_marionetok_kremlya_o_nezavisimosti_sevastopolya (2 VII 2014).

²⁰ The population of Crimea was approximately 2,4 million citizens.

²¹ Sentsov: I am not a slave to be transferred with a piece of land, Hromadske TV [7 VII 2014], <http://www.hromadske.tv/society/sentsov-ya-ne-kriposnii-shchob-iz-zemlyu-mene-per/> (2 VIII 2014).

Crimeans painfully accepted the changes in their citizenship. According to international treaties citizens should be able to get a visa at embassies or consulates based in the country of their citizenship. Citizens of Ukraine living in Crimea will have to go to Continental Ukraine in order to get their visa while those that accepted the Russian citizenship will now have to apply for their visas at consulates in Russia. Both situations bring additional problems for citizens of Crimea. Since the annexation of Crimea was not widely recognized internationally, there are not any foreign states' representatives on this territory.

The most serious changes happened in the economic sphere. In April 2014 Crimean Government allowed the circulation of the Ukrainian currency – Hryvnya – in Crimea for several weeks. On 1 VI 2014 the only currency allowed in Crimea became the Russian Ruble. People did not have enough time to convert their savings into the new currency, especially in conditions when the financial system of Crimea began worsening.

Ukrainians who refused to accept Russian citizenship lost the opportunity to get the money they receive from the Ukrainian state budget. Those obligations are salaries to civil servants, pensions, social programs recipients (for instance, allowance for child birth), etc. Ukrainian social services are not allowed to operate in territory of Crimea. Ukraine is not able to continue executing its budget obligations to its citizens domiciling in Crimea. Russia eliminated all Ukrainian banks from the peninsula. As a result, all credit and other long-term relationships between persons (legal and physical) and banks are interrupted and the future is under question. Both parties to those relationships – banks and clients – are in a difficult situation.

Among the very first decisions made by a new/old Parliament and self-proclaimed government was nationalization of Ukrainian state property. Several sectors of local economy were nationalized, including: tourism sites, sanatoriums, children's recreation sites, oil & gas excavation sites, and land for agricultural use etc. Russia, through the local authorities, practically confiscated 27 tourist sites, most of which are resort centers.²² In May 2014 Crimean Government nationalized 141 agrarian enterprises.²³ As a practical matter, the blockade of the territory of Crimea organized by the local government collapsed the local tourism industry. About 6 million tourists annually visited the peninsula; 4,5 million of those were Ukrainians. It is important to mention that tourism is the main source of local budget income.

²² *Росія конфіскувала усе курортне майно України у Криму (Russia confiscated all resort property of Ukraine in Crimea)* [21 VI 2014], <http://www.pravda.com.ua/photo-video/2014/06/21/7029705/> (2 VII 2014).

²³ *Russia nationalized in Crimea 141 agrarian enterprises*, „Business Vesti”, 22 V 2014, <http://business.vesti.ua/53009-v-krymu-nacionalizirovali-141-agrarnoe-predpriyatje> (2 VII 2014).

One of the main targets of the illegal Crimean government and the Parliament was the nationalization of gas and oil excavations, both onshore and offshore.²⁴ Recently Ukraine bought two oil production platforms that cost, with additional necessary equipment, about 1 billion U.S. Dollars. Now Ukraine does not have an access to them and Russia uses them for extracting gas and oil.

From legal point of view this is not nationalization. At the very least it is confiscation – the taking of property from the owner without any compensation. No doubt, these actions violate the law, national and international. These actions brought severe damage to economy of Ukraine. Currently, Ukrainian Government is calculating those damages in order to sue Russia.

Another issue is private property rights protection. The current situation is that a private person cannot freely use their property in Crimea. Ukrainians cannot freely visit Crimea – it is a foreign country for them now. There are virtually the problems the people face when registering real estate deals: in order to exclude manipulations and falsifications Ukraine closed an access to the state real estate register in March 2014. Now a buyer has to register a deal in Rosreestr – a register administered by the Russian Federal Agency of State Registration. Russian relevant system in Crimea is at the beginning of its creation.²⁵

Practically all citizens of Crimea face different difficulties. If they are not Russians, they lost their jobs and the opportunity to get a new job or continue business activity.

With the annexation of Crimea a complete reformatting of the business environment began. Local businesses, which conducted business in Crimea on one day became foreign businesses after the annexation. Businessmen did not receive a chance to adjust their activities to the new reality in a civilized manner. They were forced to re-register their businesses in Russia without any possibility of remaining a Ukrainian entrepreneur. Russia prohibits paying taxes into the Ukrainian state budget, so these businessmen were forced to pay taxes only to Russian budget or cease their business activity.

In order to find solutions to those and many other problems, the Parliament of Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada) adopted on 15 IV 2014 the Law of Ukraine on Assurance of Freedoms and Rights of Citizens and Legal Regime of Temporary Occupied Territories of Ukraine.²⁶

²⁴ H. Gloystein, *Ukraine's Black Sea gas ambitious seen at risk over Crimea*, Reuters [7 III 2014], <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/07/ukraine-crisis-gas-crimea-idUSL6N0M41R320140307> (2 VII 2014).

²⁵ *Проблеми и перспективи покупки нежвижимости в Крыму (Problems and perspectives of real estate deals in Crimea)*, ACC Bud [13 V 2014], <http://www.accbud.ua/news/id/problemy-i-perspektivy-pokupki-nedvizhimosti-v-krymu> (2 VII 2014).

²⁶ „Ofitsijnyi Visnyk Ukrainy” 2014, no. 36, s. 36, art. 957.

When the draft law was discussed in the Cabinet of Ministers and later in the Parliament, disputes took place about its title. Taking into consideration the fact that annexation is a forcible acquisition of a state's territory by another, it was decided to refer to it as a temporary occupation as Ukraine does not recognize the change of legal status of the territory. International community supports Ukraine in this. As a result, the Ukrainian Parliament declared that Crimea is a territory temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation.

This is the most immediate legal response to the challenges that Ukraine faces in the course of the occupation of Crimea by the neighbor country. The Law is aimed at solving many legal problems created by aggression of the Russian Federation.

In order to assure protection of rights of Ukrainians living in Crimea the State closed an access to several registration systems in Crimea among which are: land, real estate, intellectual property rights, businesses registration, securities & financial instruments' transfer of owners' rights system, etc. It should help to protect the persons' rights from transfers that can be made in violation of Ukrainian legislation and in some situations to restore violated rights of persons.

Ukraine tried to adjust its national court system to the new reality – Crimea is now practically under two jurisdictions. So, the Law suggests that claimants to file their actions with the City of Kyiv courts in administrative and civil disputes, including appellation and cassation courts. It will help to avoid uncertainty with pending cases. Still, a problem of recognition and execution of judgments exists.

Currently, circulation of shares, bonds & financial instruments is also under two quite different systems of regulation. It impacts the conduct of general meetings of shareholders of joint-stock companies (corporations) based in Crimea. The custodian institutions based in Crimea are now under the supervision of the Russian Federation. It is also important to mention that the national securities depositary systems in Ukraine and Russia are quite different.

Besides the legal uncertainty caused by Russia's actions, there are even bigger problems that threaten Ukrainians living in Crimea. A full blockade of Crimea by Russian border guard troops and self-defense forces put the citizens of Crimea under a threat to their survival in that the two land connections with Continental Ukraine have become international border control points. In addition, local authorities prohibited supplying products and goods to Crimea from Ukraine which increases prices and generates deficits. Almost immediately the citizens of Crimea began suffer from the lack of products of everyday necessity. The issue is that geographically Crimea is a peninsula: it does not have a land connection with Russia. There are only two land passes with continental part of Ukraine on the North of the peninsula (Armyansk and Genichesk) with a highway and railway connections each. The Crimea Peninsula heavily depends on electricity and water supplying from continental Ukraine. A project that has been discussed in which

Russia would build a big bridge through the Kerch stream within several years seems unrealistic in that it would cost billions of US Dollars and will hardly solve all problems mentioned above.

The current situation is uncertain and continues to create different kinds of difficulties not only to citizens of Crimea but Ukrainians having relatives and property interests on the peninsula. It is quite obvious that this uncertainty cannot last for many years. There is a consensus that solutions which should satisfy everyone need to be found. Meanwhile, after three months of annexation, there are no signs of progress in solving the problems that the citizens of Crimea meet every day.

One of the solutions can be a return of Crimea to Ukraine. This variant could be possible if the aggressor really wants to take care of the people living in the occupied territory. Uncertainty is the most challenging issue because it converts the problems that are now accepted as temporary into reality, impacting the day-to-day lives of several million people.

The most realistic way to resolve the conflict is through negotiations, but this will only work if the parties really want to find a solution. These negotiations should be based on the presumptions that the secession of a part of one country and joining it to another should be done in accordance with existing legal procedures, and then ratified by an international treaty that recognizes mutual property and obligations. An example of this can be found in the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The international community accepted this „divorce”. Otherwise a simple question will stay without an answer: how in today’s world a territory of one country can be taken and joined with another state by a decision of one person?

One more variant remains-appealing to international judicial institutions to obtain an internationally recognized court’s judgment. This means that the current situation will have to be preserved for some time, until the court would make a decision. Another issue that will arise is how the judgment will be recognized and executed in Crimea and the Russian Federation? In this case, the situation would become an international conflict frozen in time. It is worth mentioning here that there are quite a few of such conflicts, including Kaliningrad, Chechnya, Tuva (Russia); Transdnestria (Moldova); Tibet, Taiwan (China); Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Georgia); Quebec (Canada); Ireland (Great Britain); Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenia); Former Yugoslavia; South and North Korea.

One thing is obvious: the international community, especially the European Union, should play more active role in finding the best solution to this international conflict.

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