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## By and large, Europe doesn't care about Ukraine

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Ukrainian blogs and pages in social networks are full of bitter accusations of betrayal from Europe. In turn, the European press is full of reflections about what there is in store for Europe after Russia introduced the prepayment system for gas supplies to Ukraine. Czech Foreign Minister Lubomir Zaoralek expressed the position of the European Union about most recent developments of the Ukrainian crisis.

The Ukrainians accuse Europe that NATO is not going to protect them, that there is no question of admission to the EU and that the abolition of the visa regime is nothing but empty words. "These claims are unfounded, if you look closely at European promises - they are not even promises, but the famous project of the Association Agreement," - Nikolai Mezhevich, Professor of European Studies at the Faculty of International Relations at the St. Petersburg State University (SPSU) told Pravda.Ru. "Under this agreement, it is not Europe, but Ukraine that assumes enormous obligations. Besides, one can promise something and do something to help only to the state that exists under the conditions of at least relative political and economic stability. Whatever European diplomats may say, they understand that there is the most classic example of civil war in Ukraine now."

This understanding has started to take real forms in public assessments. Thus, the report of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the situation in Ukraine noted that human rights violations in the east of Ukraine include abductions, detentions, tortures and murders. Most often, these actions are committed by military men, the preamble of the document said. Human rights activists say that Ukrainian state-run media only add more fuel to the fire, provoke people to tough rhetoric and exacerbate the split of the country.

In the European media, there are no more calls for tougher sanctions against Russia. The rhetoric changed dramatically after Ukraine took a non-constructive position in negotiations with Gazprom. After Ukraine was switched to the prepayment system in gas supply, Western publications started discussing the prospects of heating and the work of companies in the winter period. Thus, Germany's Neues Deutschland makes a disappointing conclusion: "the Federal Republic is heavily dependent on the Russian gas supplies with 38 percent in supplies last year." "For the time being, Germany storage systems are filled with gas to the level of 75 percent, which is absolutely not enough to feel comfortable in winter."

Thinking about alternative supplies (liquified natural gas from the U.S. and Canada), the website brings an expert opinion from NGO Energy Watch Group: "It's hard to imagine that one can now find a replacement for Russian gas supplies without significant structural changes in the global gas market and rising prices." The author of the article concludes that Berlin will seek to resolve the gas dispute between Russia and Ukraine.

This is a good prospect for Russia. One needs to force Europe to take a more independent and constructive position on the Ukrainian crisis. This will make it possible to reduce the U.S. pressure on the Ukrainian leadership, as it still relies on the European Union, and does not intend to become another American state. It will also reduce pressure on the Russian Federation, as the Russian economy is globalized by the dollar.

Noteworthy, prior to the introduction of the prepayment system for Ukraine, even most ardent Russophobes among European leaders were cautious. Thus, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said that Warsaw should not be in the "anti-Russian vanguard or a crusade against Russia." "I also want to say with all certainty that Poland, while I am among those involved in decision-making, will not be the country running aggressive anti-Russian policies," Tusk said for TVN24.

"The heads of European countries do not want to accept Ukraine in the European Union," former Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga said on TV. This opinion was then confirmed by French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius. On i-tele channel, he said that Poroshenko spoke about the EU in his inaugural address and "said that the Association Agreement with the EU was the first step towards accession to the EU." But Europe is against it. "During the talks with our European

partners, most of them clearly did not share this view of Mr. Poroshenko, for sure," said the head of the French Foreign Ministry.

However, after the gas conflict ended with the introduction of the prepayment system for Ukraine, serious financial claims were expressed. Thus, EU Ambassador to Ukraine, Jan Tombinsky, said on June 17 that the European Union had allocated tens of millions of dollars to Ukraine to strengthen the eastern border. But the money disappeared in an unknown direction. "We, as the EU, assigned tens of millions of euros to help the Ukrainian border guards. What do we have now? We have Ukrainian border guards asking for money to buy everything. Where did the money from the EU go?" said Jan Tombinsky, speaking at the IV National expert forum.

The visit of Czech Foreign Minister Lubomir Zaoralek to Ukraine on June 18-19 was very indicative. "The Czech Republic and the European Union do not want an economic war with Russia and seek a diplomatic solution to the crisis in Ukraine," Czech newspaper Blesk quoted Zaoralek. Noteworthy, Turchynov remained dissatisfied with the message. "Today's leaders in Ukraine would like to see Europe much more aggressive," said Zaoralek, hinting at the third package of sanctions against the Russian industry.

Europe will not agree to take another package of penalties. Moreover, it will offer to complete the South Stream itself. EU Energy Commissioner Guenther Oettinger said in Vienna that the problems that South Stream encountered were surmountable. When it comes to possible riots of the freezing population, Europe will forget about its faithfulness to Atlantic partnership.

"I think by and large Europe does not care about Ukraine. The Europeans are more concerned about their own interests, their own economic crisis, survival or confrontation with the United States, in the field of economy - with China. Europe is too much preoccupied with the problem of migrants from Africa and the Arab world," Victor Mizin told Pravda.Ru (deputy director of the Institute of International Studies, a diplomat, political scientist, historian, and publicist at MGIMO). "Gas is a very important factor, and everyone is looking at how the military action is unfolding. It becomes more clear from media publications and comments that people in Europe are sobering up and start to realize that one needs to stop the war. One must agree with our conservative pundits, who say that consequences of the crisis in Ukraine will affect European countries too, which no one wants. Therefore, despite the differences of positions and seemingly, a new wave of the Cold War between Russia and the West, I believe that there is convergence of views between Moscow and the EU. By and large, no one needs this black hole in Europe and near Russian borders."