

EuroMaidan. Chronology of Events

A peaceful, civil society protest on the Maidan Square of Kiev has turned into a violent change of government, which has escalated into an international crisis in view of the Russian military actions on the Crimean Peninsula since late February.

The following chronology summarizes the most important events, in order to shed light on the process of confrontation radicalization and escalation. Six broader phases can be identified up to now (last update: 8 March 2014). The chronology makes no claim to be complete.

First phase – November 21st, 2013 - 29th, 2013: Failure to sign the association agreement with the EU before the EU-Vilnius summit Peaceful pro-European student protests

On November 21st, 2013, the Ukrainian government declares that it will not sign the EU-Association Agreement. Due to this political shift, the Euromaidan is created November 24th, 2013 as a peaceful protest against Yanukovich. In several cities the protests are linked with the national day of commemoration of the Holodomor. Euromaidan is from the very beginning a dynamic phenomenon, a living organism that constantly grows and develops ideas as its aims. After the refusal to sign the treaty with the EU at the EU Summit in Vilnius (November 28th-29th 2013) and the obvious Russian interest and interference in that process, the protests on Maidans (public squares) in Kyiv and other cities begin to grow.

Second Phase – November 29th, 2013 & December 2013: Police violence against peaceful protesters Mass mobilization in Kyiv and demands for political changes in Ukraine

During the night from November 29th to 30th the special force Berkut brutally attacks and seriously injures many of the peaceful protestors, while pretending to put up a Christmas tree on the Maidan, the center of the non-violent protests. As a result the Maidan is dismantled. That is the prelude to the second wave of Maidan protests: the protest against violence and the ignoring of law and order by the Yanukovich administration. On December 1st, 2013 a mass demonstration takes place in Kyiv, first on the square in front of St. Michael's monastery, as the Maidan was "closed". Later that day protestors again gain space on Maidan where the protest camp had been set up for many weeks. Besides the House of Unions and the City Hall, protestors occupy other buildings and use them as a cafeteria, meeting place and for organizational purposes. The political opposition – Udar, Svoboda and Batkivshina – now attempt to manage the protests with various degrees of acceptance. There are many slogans demanding new elections of the parliament and the president.

From then on, people gather for mass demonstrations every Sunday. On December 8th, 2013 the Lenin monument near Bezarabsky Rynok in the centre of Kyiv is smashed by protestors. This is the beginning of "Leninfalls" in many Ukrainian cities and towns.

During December, repressions by government forces and state institutions such as trials and street hooligans hired by the Party of Regions increased. Violence increased against certain groups of persons such as journalists and Maidan activists, e.g. the beating of Tatjana Chornovol and Juri Lutsenko. In violation of existing laws, judges allow for people to be kept in custody without official charges. These are partly intentional provocations by the government to stir up the conflict and to end the

protests not with political negotiations, rather with fierce state violence, This is essentially the strategy of Yanukovych against Maidan in the following weeks.

**Third Phase – January 2014:
Actions and Reactions: Misinterpretations of the Government**

During January 2014, Euromaidan changes its character once again: the peaceful protests grow more and more into an uprising, while the protesters became more radical. To a great deal this radicalization is a result of the steady provocation by the Yanukovych administration. The persecution of protesters, esp. of the participants of the so called auto-maidan, expanded. There are cases of severe torture and several casualties (Viktor Bolotov, Ihor Lutsenko). Doctors and medical personal receive advice to report to the police the personal data of injured protesters, and cases of arrests of protesters in medical facilities are reported. In violation of the law, water cannons during minus 20° C temperatures are used against protesters and the security forces apply further forbidden measures.

On January 16th, 2014 a series of laws are passed by parliament, which violate fundamental human rights and freedoms and thus pave the way towards a dictatorship (such as in Belarus). It causes a resolute reaction by the Maidan protesters, and the Yanukovych administration responded with another wave of state terror.

Yanukovych attempts to stop the restless protests with new laws. He wishes to restore law and order, instead of finding a compromise.

In the following days violence escalates, esp. in Hrushevskij Street and first deaths occur as a result of sniper fire. Clashes with special police forces and protesters steadily

increase, and there are intentional attacks on journalists, medical personal, while existing laws are continuously broken during trials and by judges. The protesters occupy local and state government buildings and institutions, continue to block roads and to prevent police forces from leaving their barracks. Protesters in other cities, esp. in western Ukraine occupy or block the regional government representation and the offices of the Party of Regions (Yanukovych's party).

The administration does not stop the confrontations in the streets, rather start talks and negotiations to cancel the laws of January 16th and to declare amnesty for arrested protesters. These concessions of the government are linked to preconditions such as the end of all protests and clearing all government and local government buildings. There seem to be different fractions and attitudes towards further proceedings in the government. At the same time the Ukrainian government is very close to bankruptcy and needs financial help.

Both the EU and Russia declare their non-interference into internal Ukrainian issues, but the Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov complains that the US and the EU are already interfering.

**Fourth Phase February 18th - 21st, 2014:
Escalation of violence, more than 80 people killed**

Both protesters on Maidan and the opposition in parliament unsuccessfully demand the restitution of the 2004 constitution. In the meantime the situation escalates on the streets and snipers repeatedly shoot at protesters. The government tries to clear Maidan and the occupied buildings and discusses an upcoming declaration of a state of emergency. This way, the army could be used for domestic purpos-

es. Streets and railways to Western Ukraine are interrupted by police. The “Right Sector” calls to arms and for militant self-defense against the police and Berkut. Political negotiations prove to be useless, while combat between self-defense troops on Maidan and Berkut become fierce. Maidan is still in the hands of the protesters though. More than 80 people are killed, most of them by snipers. The people in Ukraine are in shock and the scene is reminiscent of war.

**Fifth Phase February 22nd, 2014:
Peace negotiations and change in government**

Three EU foreign ministers from Germany (Steinmeier), Poland (Sikorski) and France (Fabius) come to Kyiv for negotiations. Russia sends an emissary as well (Lukin). They talk to Yanukovich and the three opposition leaders. On February 22nd, 2014 they present to the public a peace agreement¹. Yanukovich accepts new presidential elections for 2014 and the restitution of the 2004 constitution. The Ukrainian parliament votes with a brought majority for the restitution of the 2004 constitution.

Dmitry Jarosh as speaker for the Right Sector and the Auto-Maidan do not accept the peace agreement and demand the resignation of Yanukovich in the next 24 hours.

Due to personal changes in the government and the new political directions in parliament Yanukovich leaves Kyiv during the night for eastern Ukraine. On February 22nd, Yulia Tymoshenko is freed from prison and travels directly to the Maidan in Kyiv to call on the masses to not

1 http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/671350/publicationFile/190045/140221-UKR_Erklaerung.pdf

stop protesting until Yanukovich resigns.

From Rostov/Don Yanukovich declares on February 28th, in a video to the public that he views the political changes as a coup d'état and still regards himself as the legitimate president of Ukraine. Russia's president Putin backs him esp. in connection with the beginning occupation of Crimea at that time. With 317 of 331 votes, the parliament declares Victor Yanukovich to be removed from office and plans new elections for May 25th, 2014. It also appoints acting directors of the domestic secret service general public prosecution office, an interim president, head of government as well as ministers of internal and foreign affairs. Investigations into the 101 deaths which occurred during the conflicts on the Maidan are initiated. The deceased are now called the “Heavenly Hundred”.

As part of several legal modifications and personnel-related decisions, the disputed language law of 2012 is withdrawn, which provides for that the language spoken by at least 10 % of the population is recognized as an official language. This decision is again reversed several days later, because it is understood as a provocation against the Russian population.²

Anti-Maidan demonstrations take place on the Crimean Peninsula (Kerch, Sevastopol) and in Odessa.

The departure of Yanukovich after the negotiations with the EU troika and the opposition parties came by surprise to many Ukrainians and international observers. His escape from Ukraine marks the end of the Maidan demonstrations and at the same time sheds

2 Moser, Michael: Language Policy and Discourse on Languages in Ukraine under President Viktor Yanukovich. Ibidem-Verlag, Stuttgart 2013; Kulyk, Volodymyr: Language Policy in Ukraine What People Want the State to Do. In: East European Politics and Societies 27 (2013) no. 2, 280-307

light on other hot spots, most notably the involvement in and occupation of Crimea by Russia as of late February. The events in Crimea and eastern and south eastern cities of Ukraine are closely linked with the Maidan movement and the development of a civil society in Ukraine. However, it is a different kind of struggle with the unmistakable involvement of international power interests. The focus now shifts from domestic Ukrainian affairs and events to constellations recalling cold-war scenarios.

Sixth Phase February 28th, 2014 - : The Crimean Crisis

On February 20th, 2014 the speaker of the parliament of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Volodymyr Konstantinov (Party of Regions) does not rule out that the Crimean Peninsula will separate from Ukraine. On February 27th, a Russian flag is hoisted on the parliament building of Crimea. The regional parliament and several airports are occupied by men in uniforms without nationality markings. Russia increases its military presence on the Crimean Peninsula. On the same day, the parliament decides to hold a referendum on the national affiliation of Crimea on March 16th, 2014.

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translated by Michael Dobbins

Приложение 1
к Постановлению Верховной Рады
Автономной Республики Крым
от 6 марта 2014 года № 1702-6/14

Б Ю Л Л Е Т Е Н Ь
для голосования на общекрымском референдуме 16 марта 2014 года

Б Ю Л Е Т Е Н Ь
для голосования на загальнокрымскому референдумі 16 березня 2014 року

2014 сенеси март 16-да умумкырым референдумнда рей берильмес ичюн
БЮЛЛЕТЕНЬ

Отметьте любым знаком в квадрате тот вариант ответа, за который Вы голосуете:
Позначте будь-яким знаком у квадраті той варіант відповіді, за який Ви голосуєте:
Насыл бир вариант ичюн рей бергенишмени ишаретнен бельгилемиз:

1) Вы за воссоединение Крыма с Россией на правах субъекта Российской Федерации?
1) Ви за воз'єднання Криму з Росією на правах суб'єкта Російської Федерації?
1) Русне Федерациону субъекти акъларында Кырым Руснеге къошулмагъна размысмыз?

2) Вы за восстановление действия Конституции Республики Крым 1992 года и за статус Крыма как части Украины?
2) Ви за відновлення дії Конституції Республіки Крим 1992 року і за статус Криму як частини України?
2) Сиз Кырым Джумхуретининъ 1992 сенеси ичюн Анавасы амелге кечирильмес ве Кырым Украина къасыны оларакъ статусы ичюн?

Бюллетень, в котором оставлены неотмеченными или отмечены оба варианта ответа, считается недействительным.
Бюлетень, в якому залишено непозначеними або позначено обидва варіанти відповіді, вважається недійсним.
Къайд этильмеген я да эки вариант къайд этильгеми заманда бюллетень керчек сайылмаз.

Бюллетень изготавливается размером 210 x 150 мм на бумаге белого цвета.

According to the ballot paper voters in Crimea are given the choice to join Russia immediately or to return to the Constitution of 1992 within Ukraine. A third option is not possible.

Source: www.bbc.com

SOME INTERESTING LINKS:

General information and documents:

<http://www.ssees.ucl.ac.uk/library/directory/ukraine2014.htm>

Chronology of events (in German):

<http://www.laender-analysen.de/index.php?topic=ukraine&url=../ukraine/archiv.html>

The Ukraine List by Dominique Arel:

<http://www.ukrainianstudies.uottawa.ca/orange.html>