



ATLANTIC MEMO # 7

Ukraine's Western Integration: A Slow Process

Most Atlantic Community members recognize that Ukraine lies in the sphere of traditional Russian interests. The question of Ukrainian EU and NATO membership should therefore be considered in the light of Western-Russian relations. Given Angela Merkel's visit to Kiev on July 21, the authors and commenters of the Atlantic Community hope that the following points will be considered:

1. EU should recognize that EU and NATO memberships are closely bound.

Although [Heinrich Bonnenberg](#) and [David Francis](#) argue that Ukraine should not be granted membership in NATO and that such membership would only "exasperate tensions with Russia," most Atlantic Community members doubt that Ukrainian membership in the EU would be possible without Ukrainian NATO membership. [Vitalii Martyniuk](#) asserts that Ukraine cannot guarantee its own security without international cooperation. Therefore, Ukraine cannot remain neutral and outside of security alliances.

2. Ukraine and EU should be aware of integration costs.

Ukraine remains dependent on Russia economically. As [Nicolas Gvosdev](#) points out, the question of EU-membership can only be solved if the EU is able to "fundamentally reorient Ukraine away from Russia." This would, however, mean that the EU has to be ready - among other things - to deal with the work migration of millions of Ukrainians who are currently working in Russia and who are looking to work in the EU. [David Francis](#) points out that another cost of integration for Ukraine would be that it would have to pay regular market prices for gas. Moreover, [Hall Gardner](#) comes to the conclusion that if integration into EU structures were to be too quick or intense, pro-Russian sentiment and separatist movements in the East of the country could be mobilized.

3. Russo-Ukrainian relations need to be settled first.

[Hall Gardner](#) argues that "until the Russians and Ukrainians settle their own disputes over their boundaries," especially over Crimea, one simply cannot offer Ukraine membership in NATO or in the European Union. Because Crimea protects the entrance into the Sea of Azov and Russia's energy export facilities at Novorossiysk, Russia will always oppose Ukrainian integration into western structures until the Crimea question is resolved.

4. Russia should be included in the integration process.

Many authors argue that European assistance for Ukraine should not be used "in such a way so as to exclude Russia, but to include her" ([Gardner](#)), and to help to build stronger EU-Russian relations. [Andreas Umland](#) suggests solving the Sevastopol-problem by letting the Russians preserve their naval base in the city thus allowing Sevastopol to develop into an area of Russian-Ukrainian-Western cooperation. [Nicolas Gvosdev](#) adds that if the EU-Russia Council had allowed Russia to participate in decision making as it was originally supposed to, the question of Ukrainian EU and NATO membership would be less critical. Many authors also agree that due to its historic interdependence with Ukraine and Russia, Germany should play a leading role in the integration process (ref. [Bonnenberg](#)).

5. Integration means more than membership.

All of the authors agree that Ukraine needs gradual integration into Western structures. [Hall Gardner](#) proposes that before talking about EU or NATO membership, the EU should strengthen the integration of the European and Ukrainian electricity and gas markets and cooperate in the development of alternative energy.

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