

## **West needs to get real on Ukraine**

### **Opinion**

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**Are Western countries demanding too high a price for Ukraine's move westward. The answer appears to be a resounding: Yes!** Photo credit: Christopher Bobyn

By ROMAN SOHN AND ARIANA GIC as published in the EU Observer KYIV AND TORONTO, Sep 27, 2017 Ever since the Euromaidan revolution in 2014, Ukraine's governments have been under close scrutiny to meet the expectations of the supporters of a pro-European, liberal, and democratic model. The expectations that Ukraine becomes a utopia set a very high bar to meet. The bar is so high, in fact, that it could not possibly be met even by wealthy western nations that have enjoyed peace and stability. Expecting the impossible meant that criticism of Ukraine's 'failure' to swiftly undertake sweeping social change was inevitable. In recent months, a mounting wave of criticism of the Ukrainian government has flooded the media in Ukraine and abroad. Unfortunately, these criticisms are often unreasonable, ignoring the reality of what can be achieved under even ideal circumstances, the vast difficulties of conducting reforms, the time required for meaningful institutional change to occur, and the challenge of reform during war time. Remarkably, Ukraine is expected to pursue its utopian programme at the same time as it is trying to defend itself against Russia's unprovoked, multi-vectored war. It is a war which includes a massive information assault to discredit the Ukrainian state, unrestrained hate propaganda to dehumanise Ukrainians, unprecedented economic pressure, political subversion, intimidation of Ukrainian citizens by kidnappings, unlawful prosecution, terrorist attacks, and military invasion on its territory. It is a war waged by a nuclear state whose population, economy, resources, and military force are several times larger than Ukraine's, and a war waged by a country which is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council with the power to manipulate the global agenda. Defending against an enemy like Russia is a gargantuan and all-consuming task on its own. [...]

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