

## Will Donbass Unite with Russia?

Putin's recent decree simplifying the granting of Russian citizenship to the people of Donbass

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Global Research, April 25, 2019

Region: [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

*President Putin's decree simplifying the granting of Russian citizenship to the people of Donbass won't result in the region's unification with Russia but is one of several tactics designed to put pressure on Ukraine's new president to peacefully implement the Minsk Accords.*

### A Proactive Infowar With Substance

The whole world is talking about President Putin's [recent decree](#) simplifying the granting of Russian citizenship to the people of Donbass, which both the Mainstream and [Alt-Medias](#) are convinced for different reasons will result in the region's inevitable unification with Russia. That's probably not in the cards, though, since it's more likely that this is but one of several tactics designed to put pressure on Ukraine's new president to peacefully implement the Minsk Accords, which has always been Moscow's main goal since their signing. President-elect Zelensky [promised](#) to "launch a very powerful information war to end the war in Donbass", but it looks like President Putin just beat him to it by making a major soft power move that now has the whole world talking, to say nothing of reinforcing Moscow's years-long victory for the hearts and minds of the region's people.

### Donbass ≠ Abkhazia & South Ossetia

Even so, observers shouldn't over-exaggerate the impact of this decision despite it admittedly having very similar optics to the inter-war situations in Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia prior to Russia's recognition of them as independent countries after its 2008 peacemaking operations there. Actually, that's entirely the whole point — to make the people of Donbass, the Ukrainian government, and the international community expect this eventuality — because Russia can then "surprise" the world by not doing what everyone anticipates it's about to do (recognize Donbass as an independent country possibly prior to its de-facto integration into Russia along the lines of the South Ossetian model) and then make a big deal out of its "gesture of peace" as a superficial quid-pro-quo "concession" in exchange for post-Poroshenko Ukraine's peaceful implementation of the Minsk Accords.

### Playing "Hard To Get"

This isn't mere speculation either since [Reuters](#) reported last week that one of Russia's political allies in Ukraine and a close friend of Vladimir Putin's, Viktor Medvedchuk, was sending strong signals that a possible deal could be in the works whereby Russia would facilitate Donbass' political reintegration into Ukraine if Kiev enters into talks with Moscow and takes tangible steps to restore their lost strategic partnership. Evidently, Russia wants

Ukraine to come to it — or rather, Putin wants Zelensky to come to him — instead of the reverse, which explains why Moscow is playing “hard to get” and putting on a very tough front with moves such as the recent citizenship decree. Other pressure tactics include Prime Minister Medvedev [announcing](#) that Russia will ban crude oil, petroleum, and coal exports to Ukraine beginning in June and President Putin [refusing to congratulate](#) his Ukraine counterpart on his landslide victory.

### An Anti-Fascist Exit Strategy For “Replacement Migration”

It might therefore look like the Kremlin’s patience has all but run out with Kiev and that it’s finally preparing to de-facto integrate Donbass into Russia, but appearances can be very misleading sometimes, especially when it comes to Russia. While it’s true that the citizenship decree could grant Russia the right to conventionally intervene in Ukraine in defense of its nationals, it’s much more likely that this will just result in many of Donbass’ people migrating from their war-torn region to Russia in search of a better life, something that they’d be more inclined to do in the event that Moscow actively facilitates Donbass’ reintegration into Ukraine per a possibly forthcoming deal between Presidents Putin and Zelensky. That would satisfy Russia’s humanitarian interests by giving the locals the chance to flee if they fear an impending fascist takeover while simultaneously functioning as civilizationaly similar [“replacement migration”](#) for the host state’s dwindling population.

### Breadcrumbs And Loafs

Furthermore, the possible Russian-backed reintegration of Donbass into Ukraine could also set the basis for the much-sought-after “New Detente” between Moscow and Washington whereby the East Ukrainian region becomes just one of several pieces on the [“19th-Century Great Power Chessboard”](#) that could be “traded” as part of a much larger deal between these two Great Powers in the [New Cold War](#). For instance, [“Putinyahu’s Rusrael”](#) already created the on-the-ground conditions that made Trump’s recognition of [“Israel’s”](#) Golan Heights annexation possible, the same as Moscow’s recognition of “North Macedonia” goes along with the West’s plan for a [“New Balkans”](#). In other words, President Putin is giving the people of Donbass breadcrumbs such as access to measly Russian pensions of [approximately \\$200 a month](#) and the right to vote in elections while simultaneously trading full geopolitical loafs with Trump.

### Concluding Thoughts

Nobody should get their hopes up about Donbass uniting with Russia in the territorial sense after President Putin’s simplified citizenship decree because that much-publicized move is more about a tactical retreat than a strategic expansion. Instead of being used to enlarge Russia’s borders like both its supporters and detractors alike are anticipating, it’s actually much more likely to be utilized as an exit strategy for the Donbass people following their region’s Kremlin-facilitated reintegration with Kiev as part of a larger deal between the two fraternal Slavic Orthodox people and as the basis for a much grander “New Detente” between Moscow and Washington. President Putin simply wants his Ukrainian counterpart to come to him first in this “game of chicken” instead of the reverse, so his government is doing all that it came to bring him to the table on their own terms. Had Russia really wanted to integrate Donbass, it would have done so half a decade ago.

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*This article was originally published on [Eurasia Future](#).*

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