



## Weekly Top 10

**WASHINGTON, D.C. October 4, 2019**

**TO: NCSEJ Leadership and Interested Parties**

**FROM: Daniel Rubin, Chairman;  
Aleksander Smukler, President;  
Mark B. Levin, Executive Vice-Chairman & CEO**

Dear Friend,

Throughout the week [thousands of Ukrainians](#) gathered in Maidan Square to protest against President Zelensky's decision to move forward on a controversial new policy proposal referred to as the Steinmeier Formula. Named after the former German Minister of Foreign Affairs, the plan is seen by some as a "next step" for peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine in regards to the occupied territories in the Donbas. The original Minsk Agreements - overseen by France, Germany, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) - were signed in 2014 and 2015 respectively and successfully slowed down the level of conflict in the region but did not ultimately succeed in stopping the fighting altogether.

The plan calls for independent elections in the Donbas region under Ukrainian legislation that would be overseen by the OSCE. If the OSCE deems those elections fair the territories would then be given self-governing status and Ukraine would regain control of its easternmost border. The formula had not been formalized on paper until a meeting of the negotiating partners in Minsk and a subsequent [announcement by President Zelensky](#) on October 1. A recent poll by [the Kyiv-based Rating Group](#) said two-thirds of respondents were unable to rate the Steinmeier Formula, while 23 percent opposed the idea and 18 percent supported it.

Many in the Ukrainian political sphere view any sort of compromise with Russia as a form of capitulation. Zelensky has made it clear that he does not consider this step a form of capitulation because of his so-called 'red line' - to have all Russian troops withdrawn from the territory prior to holding elections. The next possibility for a significant demonstration against the plan is on October 14 - the National Day of Defender of Ukraine which is likely to mobilize more people.

On Wednesday, the Jerusalem Post published an [article](#) on the history of Babi Yar, the poetry which invigorated its memory, and the construction of a memorial center to honor those massacred in the ravine. The massacre that took place at Babi Yar is one of the darkest chapters of the Second World War [Yevgeny Yevtushenko's famous poem on Babi Yar](#) remains a powerful and symbolic piece of literature. An international conference is planned for May 2020 in Tel Aviv, with speakers expected to discuss many aspects of the planned center.

On Friday, NCSEJ Ukraine Representative Illya Bezruchko informed NCSEJ that the Security Service of Ukraine, SSU officers, together with the National Police, arrested a vandal who [desecrated](#) monuments honoring victims of the Holocaust in the Mykolaiv and Kirovograd regions.

Finally, I would like to recommend for you to listen to an episode of Morning Edition where NPR's Noel King talks to former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine John Herbst about "[Why Ukraine Is Strategically Important To America's Foreign Policy](#)".

Sincerely,



Mark B. Levin  
NCSEJ Executive Vice-Chairman & CEO

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*Officers of the Security Service of Ukraine, together with the National Police, investigating the site of vandalized Holocaust monuments in the Mykolaiv and Kirovograd regions.*

**NCSEJ WEEKLY TOP 10**  
**Washington, D.C. October 4, 2019**

**Zelensky can't have 'favorite' oligarchs**

**By Timothy Ash**

**Kyiv Post, October 3**

The National Bank of Ukraine said there are “no fundamental reasons” for the hryvnia’s recent decline, from roughly 24 to the dollar to close to 25 on Oct. 3. I hate it when central banks come out with this kind of defense. It is a market. There are buyers and sellers. Currencies go where they go.

Ukraine has a current account deficit, the basic balance is still negative, and its recent appreciation has been driven by a weight of hot money inflows, and amid concern around the stalled International Monetary Fund lending program, some of those are now leaving. So the currency weakens, that is fundamental.

[Read the full article here](#)

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**Will Ukraine make a deal with Kolomoisky? Three things to watch**

**By Oksana Bedratenko**

**Atlantic Council, October 2**

The IMF mission left Kyiv last week empty handed. Most had expected it to finalize a \$6 billion program. This week Oleksandr Danylyuk, the reformed-minded head of the National Security and Defense Council, resigned. The two events are tied together by oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky. Danylyuk pointed to an increased risk that the nationalization of Ukraine’s largest bank PrivatBank will be reversed. In December 2016, the state took Kolomoisky’s bank, after a \$5.5 billion hole was revealed. Kolomoisky’s increased influence is also a concern for the IMF.

In a tweet, Ukraine’s central bank governor Yakiv Smolii said IMF talks will resume this month in Washington and will center around “ending the pressure on reformers and preserving financial stability.” (The governor is referring to recent attacks on previous governor Valeria Gontareva who nationalized Kolomoisky’s bank.) Smolii also mentioned “court cases in Ukraine and beyond” in an apparent reference to PrivatBank cases, where important developments are expected this month. The no-news IMF visit and Danylyuk’s resignation shocked Ukraine’s eurobond market, putting

pressure on the local currency exchange rate and gave a lot of investors indigestion.

[Read the full article here](#)

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### **Ukraine, Georgia, Baltic States form PACE alliance against Russia**

**By Jack Laurenson**

**Kyiv Post, October 2**

The delegations of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine and Georgia to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) announced on Oct. 2 that they had formed a bloc at the Council in opposition to Russia's unconditional return to the Assembly.

The five delegations are from countries that are affected by Russian aggression, occupation or interference in one way or another. They stated that they would continue opposing the reinstatement of the Russian delegation's voting rights at the Council.

[Read the full article here](#)

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### **Albania's endangered Jewish museum celebrates 'rebirth'**

**By AFP**

**Times of Israel, September 29**

Solomon Museum, which recounts how Muslim and Christian Albanians sheltered hundreds of Jews during the Holocaust, reopens thanks to generosity of businessman BERAT, Albania — The sole Jewish history museum in Albania reopened in the southern city of Berat on Sunday, thanks to a businessman who rescued it from the brink of closure.

The small "Solomon Museum," which tells the story of how Muslim and Christian Albanians sheltered hundreds of Jews during the Holocaust, was the passion project of a local professor, Simon Vrusho.

[Read the full article here](#)

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### **'HOLOCAUST BY BULLETS' TO BE MEMORIALIZED IN EASTERN EUROPE**

**By Heddy Breuer Abramowitz**

**The Jerusalem Post, October 2**

Upon the 78th anniversary of Babi Yar: It was a poet's pen rather than a soldier's bayonet that first punctured the Iron Curtain.

Yevgeny Yevtushenko, a gentile, was 28 when he wrote and published his 1961 poem Babi Yar. It rattled many and, most importantly, brought into the public discourse a hushed-up massacre considered to be the largest to have taken place in a single location in the history of World War II at that time.

[Read the full article here](#)

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### **Slovenia: complex of Ljubljana's synagogue, Jewish museum & culture center closes indefinitely due to dangerous condition of building**

**Posted in: Cultural institutions (general), Damage / Threats / Vandalism, Mikvehs / other buildings, Museums, Synagogues**

**Jewish Heritage Europe, October 1**

The Jewish museum, cultural center, and synagogue in Ljubljana is being forced to close indefinitely because of the perilous state of the building hosting the complex.

An announcement on the center's Facebook page just before Rosh HaShana by the Center's director, Robert Walti, said the facilities "will close immediately after the celebration of Yom Kippur on October 10, when the urgent restoration of the roof and façade will start."

[Read the full article here](#)

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**AMERICAN JEWISH ORGS, PRAISING ROMANIA FOR PART IN COMBATING ANTISEMITISM**

**By Corneliu- Aurelian Colceriu/Agepres/ TNS**

**The Jerusalem Post, September 29**

BUCHAREST - Romania's Foreign Minister Ramona Manescu, had a series of meetings in the US with the main American Jewish organisations, where their leaders commended Romania for the leading part it has taken up in the fight against antisemitism Romania, according to a press statement released by Romania's Foreign Ministry (MAE).

According to MAE, attending the meeting at the Permanent Mission of Romania to the UN on Friday were leaders of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), B'nai B'rith, Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, National Coalition Supporting Eurasian Jews (NCSEJ), Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and the World Jewish Restitution Organization.

[Read the full article here](#)

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**Explainer: What Is The Steinmeier Formula -- And Did Zelenskiy Just Capitulate To Moscow?**

**By Christopher Miller**

**Radio Free Europe, October 2**

KYIV -- In the United States, Ukraine is in the spotlight over what some call "Ukraine-gate" -- the developments that have led to an impeachment probe involving a phone conversation between the presidents of the two countries in July. In Kyiv, there's been a bigger buzz about a different catchphrase -- the Steinmeier Formula.

That term has been splashed across front pages, led television news programs, and been debated at hipster cafes and family dinner tables since early September. That's when it emerged that President Volodymyr Zelenskiy was seriously considering supporting it -- the Steinmeier Formula, that is -- as a potential way to reinvigorate negotiations with Russia over the war that has killed more than 13,000 people in eastern Ukraine since 2014.

[Read the full article here](#)

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**'Steinmeier formula' to be put into law on special status for Donbass, says Zelensky**

**TASS, October 1**

KIEV, October 1. /TASS/. Ukraine has coordinated the 'Steinmeier formula' with the other participants in the negotiations on the Donbass settlement, and now it has to be added to a new law on a special status for the region, Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky told a briefing on Tuesday.

"We have replied to a letter from Mr. [Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Martin] Sajdik, saying that we are coordinating the text of the 'Steinmeier formula'," he said. "The Steinmeier formula must be implemented into a new law on a special status," he reported.

[Read the full article here](#)

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**Ukraine conflict: Anger as Zelensky agrees vote deal in east**

**By Jonah Fisher**

**BBC, October 2**

Hundreds of Ukrainians have protested after President Volodymyr Zelensky said he had backed an agreement that would bring elections to territory controlled by Russian-backed separatists.

Mr Zelensky came to power promising to end the five-year conflict in the east which has left 13,000 people dead.

Any vote would be under international standards and would not be held "under the barrel of a gun", he said.

Nationalists rallied in Kiev with banners demanding "no capitulation".

[Read the full article here](#)

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### About NCSEJ

Founded in 1971, the National Coalition Supporting Eurasian Jewry represents the organized American Jewish community in monitoring and advocating on behalf of the estimated 1.5 million Jews in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, including the 15 successor states of the former Soviet Union.

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