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on the state of EU-Russia relations
(2015/2001(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

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The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolutions of 13 December 2012 containing the European Parliament's recommendations to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service on the negotiations of the new EU-Russia Agreement¹, of 12 September 2013 on the pressure exerted by Russia on Eastern Partnership countries (in the context of the upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius)², of 6 February 2014 on the EU-Russia summit³ and of 18 September 2014 on the situation in Ukraine and the state of play of EU-Russia relations⁴,
 - having regard to the conclusions and statements of the European Council (Foreign Affairs) and of the G7 leaders over the past 18 months on the situation in Ukraine and on relations with Russia,
 - having regard to the agreements reached in Minsk on 5 September 2014 and on 12 February 2015⁵,
 - having regard to the resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 27 March 2014⁶ and by the United Nations Security Council on 17 February 2015⁷,
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the draft report of the Committee for Foreign Affairs (A8-0000/2015),
- A. whereas the EU has for decades striven to build a mutually beneficial strategic partnership with Russia based on shared values and principles and on common interests; whereas the EU remains open to such a relationship and to dialogue leading to it, and wishes to return to a cooperative relation with Russia;
- B. whereas, in reaction to and despite Russia's aggression against Georgia and violation of its territorial integrity in 2008, the EU opted for an increased cooperation model as a way to appease Russia; whereas, in line with this, rather than taking restrictive measures, a series of generous initiatives for deeper cooperation – such as the common spaces, the Partnership for Modernisation, the negotiations on a New EU-Russia Agreement, and the Human Rights dialogue – have been launched or deepened;
- C. whereas Russia has – by illegally annexing Crimea and waging an undeclared war

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0505.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0383.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA-PROV(2014)0101.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA-PROV(2014)0025.

⁵ 'Protocol on the results of consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group', signed on 5 September 2014, and 'Package of measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements', adopted on 12 February 2015.

⁶ UNGA Resolution A/RES/68/262 on Territorial integrity of Ukraine

⁷ UNSC Resolution S/RES/2202(2015)

against Ukraine, with the direct participation of Russian military units, and by deliberately destabilising this neighbouring sovereign and independent country – profoundly and for a long time damaged its relationship with the EU by jeopardising the basic principles of Europe’s security order and by breaking its international commitments, notably under the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Budapest Memorandum;

- D. whereas Russia is the instigator of and, directly or indirectly, party to a number of ‘frozen conflicts’ in its neighbourhood – in Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Nagorno Karabakh – that constitute serious impediments to the development and stability of the neighbouring countries concerned;
- E. whereas in reaction to Russia’s covert military invasion of Ukraine, the EU has adopted a stage-by-stage series of restrictive measures; whereas similar sanctions have been adopted by a number of other countries in reaction to Russia’s aggression;
- F. whereas these restrictive targeted measures are not directed against the Russian people but aim at stimulating a change in Russian policy towards, and actions in, the common neighbourhood; whereas the sanctions could be lifted, partially or fully, as soon as Russia commits itself to implementing, fully and honestly, the provisions of the Minsk agreements and the return of Crimea to Ukraine; whereas the sanctions will be strengthened should Russia chose to do otherwise and refrain from taking any positive step to change its policy;
- G. whereas the EU has firmly supported Russia’s accession and participation in different international organisations and fora, such as the G8, the G20 and the WTO; whereas this strategy of including Russia in international decision-making bodies has not had the results expected but instead created tensions owing to Russia’s habit of breaching rules, e.g. its non-compliance with WTO standards and obligations (by introducing a number of discriminatory measures against individual EU Member States and other countries in its neighbourhood), its failure to implement more than a thousand judgements of the European Court of Human Rights, etc.;
- H. whereas Russia has developed policies and instruments for, and became an active user of, a new type of hybrid warfare, deliberately blurring the lines between military/paramilitary activity and political activism, employing a mix of weaponised information (information deliberately altered and aired to inflict damage to societal, political and institutional structures), using professional instigators of insurgency in foreign countries, targeting local minority-language groups abroad for destabilisation, controlling information space and combining cyber warfare with military means;
- I. whereas the intrusions of Russian jet fighters into the airspace of EU and NATO members states jeopardise the safety of civilian flights;
- J. whereas the World Media Freedom Index 2014 ranks the Russian Federation at 148th place out of 180; whereas the financing of state-controlled media outlets has been significantly widened and increased;
- 1. Reiterates that, in the light of Russia’s direct and indirect involvement in the war in

Ukraine, amounting to a deliberate violation of the core of the democratic principles and values sustained by the EU and widely shared internationally, the EU cannot envisage a return to ‘business as usual’; calls for a critical re-assessment by the EU of its relations with Russia, and for the drafting, as promptly as possible, of a soft-power contingency plan to counter the aggressive and divisive policies conducted by Russia against the EU and its partners;

2. Stresses that at this point, Russia, because of its actions, can no longer be treated as, or considered, a ‘strategic partner’; points out that strategic partnerships are only conceivable with countries that do not jeopardise the international order, which is based on democracy, state sovereignty (including the choice of internal constitutional order and foreign policy orientation), the inviolability of state borders, respect for the rule of law and the principles of international trade, and mutual trust;
3. Is deeply concerned by the fact that Russia now openly positions itself, and acts, not as a partner of, but as a rival to the international democratic community, seeking to challenge the current international order, and is in the process of redrawing borders within Europe; is extremely worried by the tendency of the Russian authorities to systematically denigrate liberal democracy and to consider democratic neighbouring countries as a threat to their own rule;
4. Underlines that EU-Russia relations must henceforth be based on the rule of law and on preconditioned dialogue, whereby the EU would be ready to relaunch cooperation with the authorities in Moscow on the condition that Russia unambiguously and without pretence takes its share of responsibility and fully implements the Minsk Agreements; stresses that in order to ensure that such a dialogue – if renewed (for which the return of Crimea to Ukraine would be a prerequisite) – is not conducted at the expense of European values, standards and international commitments, it would be necessary to specify very clearly the EU’s expectations of Russia, along with the retaliatory measures it would take should Russia not keep to its commitments;
5. Commends the solidarity and the unity demonstrated by the Member States in the context of Russia’s undeclared war against Ukraine, allowing the adoption and further extension of responsive measures; calls on the Member States to consider as an absolute priority the preservation of this unity; reiterates that unity and solidarity amongst the Member States, as well as between the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries, is essential for ensuring the effectiveness of the EU’s policies and its ability to withstand external challenges and pressures;
6. Underlines, in this regard, that the strengthening of internal policies, notably through closer integration, is the keystone of an efficient and successful EU external policy; calls, therefore, on the Member States to carry on with, and intensify their efforts towards, the effective elimination of decision-making bottlenecks and the consolidation of common policies, with the aim of minimising the vulnerabilities of these policies and maximising their resilience, in particular in the areas of trade, financial services and transactions, migration, energy, external borders management, information and cyber security;
7. Firmly supports the swift creation of a robust European Energy Union, specifically the

interconnection of national energy networks in order to reduce considerably the dependence of individual Member States on external energy suppliers; is of the firm conviction that the challenges to and vulnerability of European solidarity, and the exposure of individual Member States, to the illegitimate use of energy as a political and diplomatic bargain chip can only be combatted efficiently through the full implementation of the Third Energy package and the completion of a transparent, integrated, synchronised and resilient European internal energy market;

8. Stresses the relevance of the suspension of cooperation with Russia in the defence sector, and calls on the Member States to refrain from taking any decisions that could jeopardise this united position; is therefore of the view that, notwithstanding their undisputable bilateral nature, agreements in the field of defence cooperation between some Member States and Russia should be assessed carefully at EU level, with a view to defining an appropriate and consistent approach; calls for the EU's cooperation with NATO to be consolidated further;
9. Is deeply concerned by the ever growing restrictions on free media, the tightening of online media control, the use of coercion to curb impartial reporting and the erosion of journalistic standards in Russia, as well as the increasing monopoly on the information available to Russian-language audiences abroad by state-owned media outlets; deplores that Russian state-controlled media have become players in the EU information sphere without keeping to the norms of independent journalism, including the rejection of hate speech;
10. Renews its call for the development of EU reconnaissance capabilities of weaponised information and the preparation of information contingency plans, including the strengthening of analytical and monitoring capabilities, especially in the Russian language, in order to be able to identify, and respond swiftly and appropriately to, purposefully biased information; calls on the Commission to earmark without delay adequate funding for concrete projects aimed at countering Russian propaganda within the EU and abroad; calls on the Commission and the Member States to devise as well a mechanism for the collection, monitoring and reporting of financial, political or technical assistance provided by Russia to political parties and other organisations within the EU, with a view to assessing its involvement in, and influence over, political life and public debate in the EU;
11. Calls on the EU to provide support to grass-roots projects aimed at developing high journalistic standards, freedom of the media, and unbiased and trustworthy information in Russia, and at deconstructing propaganda within the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries; supports the initiative to develop Russian-language media channels, with a view to providing a credible and accessible alternative to biased information for Russian-speaking minorities in the EU and in the Eastern Partnership countries;
12. Reiterates that uncompromising respect for the rule of law is a core and founding principle of the EU, and rejects past attempts to put forward pragmatic interpretations of the rules to accommodate Russia as a trade partner; calls, therefore, on the strict, swift and unconditional application of the rule of law – in the event of any breach of the rules – and of the principle of free and fair competition, including in the proceedings against

Gazprom;

13. Expresses its deep concern for the state of human rights and the rule of law in Russia, and strongly condemns the crackdown on independent civil society and the persistent and multiform repression of activists, political opponents and critics of the regime, which has in some cases led to their murder (Anna Politkovskaya, Natalya Estemirova, Boris Nemtsov, Sergey Magnitsky, Alexander Litvinenko, and others); demands that all assassinations of political activists, journalists and whistle blowers be investigated properly and independently; reiterates its call on the Council to deliver on its commitment to defend these principles, and to adopt restrictive measures for the officials involved in the well-documented Magnitsky case;
14. Stresses the importance of continued political and financial support to independent civil society activists, media and NGOs; encourages the EU to reach out to Russian officials and civil society organisations that are inclined to develop an alternative vision of political and diplomatic relations with the EU;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation, and the Governments and Parliaments of the Eastern Partnership countries.