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## **DRAFT REPORT**

on a European Parliament recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the direction of EU-Russia political relations  
(2021/2042(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

Rapporteur: Andrius Kubilius

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## **DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RECOMMENDATION**

**to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the direction of EU-Russia political relations  
(2021/2042(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia, in particular those of 12 March 2019 on the state of EU-Russia political relations<sup>1</sup>, of 19 September 2019 on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe<sup>2</sup>, of 19 December 2019 on the Russian ‘foreign agents’ law<sup>3</sup>, of 17 September 2020 on the poisoning of Alexei Navalny<sup>4</sup>, of 21 January 2021 on the arrest of Alexei Navalny<sup>5</sup> and of 29 April 2021 on Russia, the case of Alexei Navalny, the military build-up on Ukraine’s border and Russian attacks in the Czech Republic<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to Rule 118 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9-0000/2021),
- A. whereas Russia is continuing its aggressive behaviour on the border with Ukraine and interfering with acts of terrorism on the territory of EU Member States, such as Czechia, and its eastern neighbours, inter alia by supporting the illegitimate regime of Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus;
- B. whereas the situation in Russia is deteriorating dreadfully because of President Putin’s systemic repression of democratic forces such as when just two weeks after the arrest of Alexei Navalny Russian authorities detained more than 11 000 peaceful demonstrators, bringing the total number of Russians detained since January 2021 to more than 15 000;
- C. whereas these domestic developments are a warning to the EU of what may come in the preparation and in the aftermath of the September 2021 parliamentary elections in Russia, when Mr Putin, in the same manner as Mr Lukashenko in Belarus, is waging a war against the people of Russia;
- D. whereas in its resolutions of 17 September 2020, 21 January 2021 and 29 April 2021 Parliament called for a review of the EU’s policy vis-à-vis Russia, including the five guiding principles agreed in 2016, emphasised that future EU relations with Russia would depend on the pace of Russia’s democratic transformation and called for the EU institutions to devise a new strategic approach on the assumption that any dialogue with

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 23, 21.1.2021, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2019)0021,

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2019)0108.

<sup>4</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2020)0232.

<sup>5</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2021)0018,

<sup>6</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2021)0159,

Russia must be based on respect for international law and human rights;

- E. whereas the five EU guiding principles for relations with Russia have deterred the Kremlin regime from further aggression against Ukraine, but they are silent with respect to containing President Putin's war against the people of Russia;
- F. whereas the new EU strategy should be centred on the 'push-back, contain and engage' principles aimed at strengthening the EU's capacity to combat the Kremlin's threats, especially in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region, including Belarus, as well as in Russia itself, by defending human rights and assisting Russia's transformation into a democracy in accordance with the principle of 'democracy first';
- G. whereas the EU strategy on Russia should be based on the assumption that the people of Russia can transform their country into a democracy;
- H. whereas the EU strategy on Russia should work in the interest of the EU and offer Russia a constructive dialogue aimed at promoting the values of human rights and democracy;
- I. Recommends that the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) review, together with the Member States, the EU policy vis-à-vis Russia, including the five guiding principles, and develop a comprehensive EU strategy towards Russia based on the following principles and actions:

***Detering the Russian threat – pushing back against the security threat***

- (a) the EU, together with NATO and international partners, should deter Russia and keep stability in the EaP region by pressing Russia not to interfere in the region and to return the occupied territories in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood;
- (b) the EU should be ready to call for the exclusion of Russia from the SWIFT payment system if the Russian authorities continue their aggressive threats and military action against EU Member States and EaP neighbouring countries;
- (c) the EU must have a clear goal and plans on how to cut its dependency on Russian gas and oil, at least while President Putin is in power;

***Containing the Russian threat – fighting Russian interference in the EU and Eastern neighbourhood countries***

- (d) the EU should initiate security compacts with EaP countries that have an association agreement with the EU and propose a new EU integration strategy for Eastern Partners building on former Commission President Romano Prodi's formula of 'everything, but the institutions';
- (e) the EU should continue its work on the containment of Russian hybrid threats with instruments able to eliminate Russian hybrid influences from the EU and its Member States;

***Engagement to support democracy – pushing back with sanctions, financial controls and international investigations***

- (f) the EU should establish with the US a transatlantic alliance to defend democracy globally and propose a democracy defence toolkit, which should include joint actions on sanctions, anti-money laundering policies, rules on the conditionality of economic and financial assistance, international investigations, and support for human rights activists and defenders of democracy;
- (g) in line with the ‘democracy first’ principle, the EU should strengthen the requirement of conditionality in its relations with Russia by including in any dialogue or agreement with Russia measures aimed at protecting human rights and the holding of free elections; accordingly, the EU and its Member States should revise their investment support and economic cooperation projects, starting with the halting of the Nord Stream 2 project;
- (h) the EU should increase its ability to prepare and adopt sanctions against the Russian authorities for their systemic repression of democratic forces in Russia and to centralise EU decision-making by making the triggering of sanctions automatic in cases of corruption or violation of human rights, including by updating the EU global sanctions mechanism (EU Magnitsky Act) to address cases of corruption;
- (i) the EU should establish partnerships on its sanctions policy with EU-based non-governmental organisations such as Bellingcat, so that these organisations can assist it in preparing and investigating cases in a comprehensive way;
- (j) the EU should establish a centralised anti-money laundering framework, including an EU authority for financial controls, to be put under Parliament’s supervision and to be entrusted with the protection of the EU and its Member States from illicit financial practices and influences from Russia;
- (k) the EU should initiate and contribute to international investigation of crimes committed by President Putin’s regime against the people of Russia together with the crimes committed by Mr Lukashenko’s regime in Belarus, within the framework of an impunity platform and an EU Justice Hub; in the context of those investigations, the EU should establish a task force of advisers to assist national and international investigations, trials and the setting-up of EU tribunals, and report periodically to Parliament on the state of political freedoms in Russia;

***Engagement to support democracy – supporting a pro-democracy society in Russia***

- (l) the EU should confront the Russian-language propaganda of President Putin’s regime and support the establishment of a Free Russia Television with 24/7 airtime;
- (m) the EU must be prepared not to recognise the parliament of Russia and to ask for Russia’s suspension from international organisations with parliamentary assemblies if the 2021 parliamentary elections in Russia are recognised as fraudulent;

- (n) the EU should adopt and announce a strategic vision for its future relations with a democratic Russia, which should include a broad offer with conditions and incentives such as visa liberalisation, free trade investment and modernisation programmes, and a strategic partnership; it should also convey the potential benefits that it is willing to offer in return for a democratic transformation of Russia;

***Engagement to support democracy – Eastern Partnership success as an inspiration for the people of Russia***

- (o) the EU should adopt an ambitious strategy to support the successful development of EaP countries, which would serve as a good example and would incentivise the Russian people to support democracy; accordingly, the EU should propose to EaP countries that have an association agreement with the EU a new momentum of European integration with a view to keeping their motivation for reforms;

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2. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council, the Commission, Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the governments and parliaments of the Eastern Partnership countries and the G7 countries, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the President, Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation.