Pașcu: security challenge in Black Sea cannot be ignored or left entirely to Nato

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea has also raised questions about the strategic military situation in the Black Sea Basin. As MEPs prepare to vote on a resolution on this on Thursday 11 June, we spoke to report author and EP Vice-President Ioan Mircea Pașcu about the situation. The Romanian S&D member told us: "The deployment and the aggressive modernisation of the fleet put forward by Russia is a security challenge, which cannot be ignored or left entirely to Nato."

How important is the Black Sea Basin to the EU's security and how has the annexation of Crimea by Russia changed the situation?

Before the illegal annexation of Crimea we used to have a base for the Russian fleet in Sevastopol and some small defensive forces. Now, in just over a year, they have become a striking force that can project power to the Middle East, the Balkans, Central Europe and so on.

The report wants to increase the European Union's awareness of the Black Sea's importance, at a time when we are revising both our defence and security strategies. The deployment and the aggressive modernisation of the fleet put forward by Russia is a security challenge, which cannot be ignored or left entirely to Nato.

Are we headed for a new cold war?

No. The level of interaction that exists between the EU and Russia, which did not exist between the Soviet Union and the West, makes the relationship much more complex than before. The question now is, how do we respond to an aggressive Russia?

After the annexation the EU imposed restrictive measures and the G7 summit this week warned that sanctions against Russia could be tightened if the conflict in Ukraine escalates. What else can be done to address the crisis?

The sanctions and the channels of communication should stay open but, at the same time, the strategic reassurance of the eastern members of both the EU and Nato should continue.
Some people would like to resume cooperation with Russia. It’s not unreasonable, but how do you do that without encouraging Russia to believe it got away with it and can be more daring in the future?

In your report you call on the EU to sustain initiatives for the diversification of Black Sea energy resources. Can the proposed Energy Union be the answer to this?

The Energy Union, plus the fact that - as I saw in G7 - there are intentions to get rid of fossil fuel by the end of the century, will practically deny Russia one of its blackmailing instruments.

Find out more
Report on the strategic military situation in the Black Sea Basin following the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia
Ioan Mircea Pașcu
Ukraine top story
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