

## Russia must immediately withdraw its forces threatening Ukraine

- Parliament condemns the large Russian military build-up near Ukraine
- Sanctions against Russia should include a suspension from the SWIFT payment system
- Russia does not decide Ukraine's future



Parliament warns that any aggression by Moscow must come at a high economic and political price © AFP/Aleksey Filippov

### **Against the backdrop of increasing Russian military threats against Ukraine, MEPs say any aggression by Moscow must come at a high economic and political price.**

In a resolution adopted on Thursday by 548 votes in favour, 69 against and 54 abstentions, Parliament condemns the current large Russian military build-up on the Ukrainian border. MEPs demand that the government in Moscow immediately withdraw its forces and stop threatening its neighbouring country.

While highlighting that the military build-up also presents a threat to peace, stability and security in Europe, it is also a tool to extract political concessions from the West at Ukraine's expense, MEPs say.

With Ukrainian NATO aspirations in mind, the text emphasises that "any country's choice of alliances must not be subject to a third country's approval" and therefore rejects Russia's attempts to include some countries in its 'sphere of influence' to shape their future.

### **Russia must pay a high economic and political price for any new aggressions**

The EU must be ready to send Russia a stark warning that military hostilities against Ukraine will not only be unacceptable, but would also come at a high economic and political price, the text says. EU countries must remain ready to agree swiftly on severe economic and financial sanctions against the Russian government to address immediate threats, rather than wait for another invasion to take place before taking action.

Any new sanctions package should include the Russian officer corps and flag officers involved in the planning of a possible invasion, as well as the immediate circle and oligarchs "in the orbit of the Russian President and their families". It should also entail the freezing of financial and physical assets in the EU, travel bans, the exclusion of Russia from the SWIFT payment system, the targeting of sectors important to the Russian economy and the disruption of the financing of the country's intelligence services and the military.

### **Reduce dependence on Russian energy**

MEPs also demand that the EU take credible steps to reduce its dependence on Russian energy imports and show stronger energy solidarity with Ukraine. This should be done by interlinking the EU's and Ukraine's energy infrastructures more closely.

The resolution urges that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline should not be made operational, regardless of whether it at some point fulfils the provisions of the EU Gas Directive.

### **Ceasefire agreements must be adhered to**

Parliament also urges Russia and the Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine to adhere to the ceasefire agreements. In addition, MEPs call on Russia to engage constructively in the so-called Normandy Format (gathering representatives of Germany, Russia, Ukraine and France) to try to resolve the war in Donbas and the Trilateral Contact Group, as well as to

implement its international obligations, particularly under the Minsk Agreements and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The resolution also expresses its full support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognised borders.

### Further information

[Adopted text will be available here \(16.12.2021\)](#)

[Watch a video recording of the plenary debate with EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell \(14.12.2021\)](#)  
[EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material](#)  
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