Invasion of Ukraine: MEPs call for tougher response to Russia

• MEPs demand progress to grant Ukraine EU candidate status
• EU should restrict imports of most important Russian export goods, such as oil and gas
• Sanctions must strategically weaken the Russian economy and industry
• Provide Ukraine with defensive weapons more swiftly
• SWIFT ban should be extended to Belarus

In the aftermath of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, MEPs demand tougher sanctions on Russia and new efforts to grant Ukraine EU candidate status.

In a resolution adopted on Tuesday, Parliament condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine and demands that the Kremlin end all military activities in the country. It also denounces the role of Belarusian dictator Aliaksandr Lukashenka in the assault.

MEPs categorically reject the Russian “rhetoric hinting at the possible resort to weapons of mass destruction”, while reminding Russia of its international obligations and warning of the dangers of a nuclear escalation of the conflict.

They also call on the European Commission and EU countries to provide further emergency humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, in cooperation with UN humanitarian agencies and other international partner organisations.

The text was approved by 637 votes in favour, 13 against with 26 abstentions.

Working towards EU candidate status for Ukraine

The resolution calls on the EU institutions to work towards granting the country EU candidate status. Any such procedure should be in line with Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union and based on merit, the text says. In the meantime, the EU should continue to work towards Ukraine’s integration into the EU single market along the lines of the existing EU-Ukraine Association Agreement.
Stronger sanctions against Russia

While welcoming the swift adoption of EU sanctions, MEPs want to see broader restrictive measures aimed at strategically weakening the Russian economy and industrial base.

In particular, imports of the most important Russian export goods, such as oil and gas should be restricted, they say. New EU investment in Russia and new Russian investment in the EU should be banned. All Russian banks should be blocked from the European financial system and Russia should be banned from the SWIFT system.

A range of sanctions, including the SWIFT ban, should be extended to Belarus based on its direct support of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Weapon deliveries, refugee protection

In addition, the text calls on EU countries to provide Ukraine with defensive weapons more swiftly, in line with Article 51 of the UN Charter, which allows for individual and collective self-defence. It also favours increased EU intelligence cooperation with Ukraine regarding the ongoing aggression.

Parliament also welcomes the EU’s commitment to activate its Temporary Protection Directive, in order to provide all Ukrainians fleeing war with immediate access to protection. The responsibility for receiving the refugees arriving at the EU’s external borders should be shared equally among EU countries.

Targeted sanctions against individuals, no more “golden visas” for wealthy Russians

Targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for high-level corruption in Russia and Belarus as well as oligarchs and officials close to the countries' leadership should be adopted swiftly, MEPs demand.

EU and allied countries with residence by investment schemes (so-called “golden visas”) should review all beneficiaries of such residence status and revoke those attributed to Russian high-net-worth individuals and their families, in particular those linked to sanctioned individuals and companies, says the text.
Further information
The adopted text will be available here (01.03.2022)
Watch a video recording of the debate (01.03.2022)
Aggression is confrontation with Europe: speech of President Metsola on Ukraine (24.02.2022)
How the EU is supporting Ukraine
Press release: The decision of Russia’s President is a serious violation of international law (22.02.2022)
Press release on resolution (in Ukrainian)
Press release on resolution (in Russian)
Free photos, videos and audio material
Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Security and Defence

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