



TEXTS ADOPTED

Provisional edition

P8_TA-PROV(2015)0225

State of EU-Russia relations

European Parliament resolution of 10 June 2015 on the state of EU-Russia relations (2015/2001(INI))

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, of 18 September 2014 on the situation in Ukraine and the state of play of EU-Russia relations⁴ and of 12 March 2015 on the murder of the Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov and the state of democracy in Russia⁵,
- having regard to the conclusions and statements of the European Council, of the Foreign Affairs Council 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 and 19 September 2014 and on 12 February 2015⁶,
- having regard to the Wales NATO Summit Declaration of 5 September 2014,
- having regard to the resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 27 March 2014⁷ and by the United Nations Security Council on 17 February 2015⁸,

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0505.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0383.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0101.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0025.

⁵ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0074.

⁶ '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.

⁷ UNGA Resolution A/RES/68/262 on Territorial integrity of Ukraine.

⁸ UNSC Resolution S/RES/2202(2015).

- having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A8-0162/2015),
- A. whereas the EU has for many years striven to build a mutually beneficial strategic partnership with Russia based on shared values and principles, such as democracy and rule of law, 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, should the Russian authorities meet their international and legal obligations;
 - B. whereas, in reaction to and despite Russia's violation of Georgia's territorial integrity in 2008, the ongoing occupation of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, and the non-fulfilment by Russia of all its obligations under the 2008 ceasefire agreement, the EU opted for an increased cooperation model as a way to continue the engagement with Russia, for their mutual benefit; whereas, rather than taking restrictive measures, a series of 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, an action which was strongly condemned by the EU and which will not be recognised, and waging an armed conflict against Ukraine, with the direct and indirect participation of military and security services, and by deliberately destabilising this neighbouring sovereign and independent country – profoundly damaged its relationship with the EU by jeopardising the basic principles of Europe's security by not respecting borders and by breaking its international commitments, notably the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, the Budapest Memorandum, the 1990 Paris Charter for a New Europe and the bilateral Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership; whereas the humanitarian situation in Crimea and in Eastern Ukraine has considerably deteriorated, with a death toll of several thousand;
 - D. whereas Russia is directly or indirectly, involved in 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 and to their rapprochement with the European Union;
 - E. whereas the Russian Federation has blacklisted 89 EU politicians – among them current and former Members of the European Parliament – and officials and is denying them access to Russia;
 - F. whereas Russia – against the spirit of good neighbourly relations and in breach of international law, rules and standards – has, on the basis of a doctrine under which it considers itself to have the right to protect Russian compatriots abroad, taken deliberate actions aimed at destabilising its neighbours through illegal trade embargos or the conclusion of integration treaties with separatist and breakaway regions;
 - G. whereas, in reaction to the illegal annexation of Crimea and the hybrid war launched against Ukraine by Russia, 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;

- H. whereas a constructive relationship between the EU and Russia must be sought in the long run, in the interest of both parties and with a view to facing common global challenges, such as climate change, new technological developments and the fight against terrorism, extremism and organised crime; whereas EU-Russia cooperation has positive outcomes in some fields such as the Northern dimension and cross-border cooperation; whereas Russia has been constructive in the recent Iran negotiations;
- I. whereas these restrictive targeted measures are not directed against the Russian people but against certain individuals and enterprises connected to the Russian leadership, who are taking direct advantage of the current stand-off with Ukraine, in the economic and defence sectors, and aim at stimulating a change in the policies of the Russian government towards, and actions in, the common neighbourhood; whereas the sanctions related to the destabilisation in Eastern Ukraine should be lifted once Russia has fully implemented the provisions of the Minsk Agreements; whereas these sanctions should be strengthened should Russia choose to continue directly or indirectly to destabilise Ukraine and to harm its territorial integrity; whereas the sanctions related to the illegal annexation of Crimea will remain until the peninsula is returned to Ukraine;
- J. whereas the Russian Federation, as a full member of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has committed itself to the principles of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights; whereas the EU has firmly supported Russia's accession to, and participation in, different international organisations and fora, such as the G8, the G20 and the WTO; whereas inclusion of Russia in these bodies has created tensions owing to Russia's repeated violation of 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), and its failure to implement more than a thousand judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and to guarantee basic human rights; whereas the EU-Russia Human Rights consultations have not been conclusive or brought concrete results;
- K. whereas the rule of law, as one of the fundamental principles of the EU, implies not only respect for democracy and human rights, but also compliance with international law, the assurance that the law is fairly enforced and applied, as well as the independence and impartiality of the judiciary; whereas these conditions are not met in Russia, where the authorities fail to uphold the rule of law and to respect fundamental rights, and where political rights, civil liberties and media freedom have deteriorated in recent years; whereas legislation has recently been passed with ambiguous provisions that are used to place further restrictions on opposition and civil-society actors; whereas the recent adoption of the law criminalising so-called 'homosexual propaganda' has led to an increase in homophobic and anti-LGBTI violence and hate speech, which the authorities have failed to address; whereas, following the illegal annexation of Crimea, respect for human rights, including freedom of expression, assembly and association, has suffered a serious deterioration in the peninsula, the Crimean Tartar community being particularly affected;
- L. whereas Alexey Navalny, a prominent opposition leader, has been charged and condemned on the basis of forged evidence, and is subject to continued intimidation and harassment, including through the imprisonment of his brother; whereas the Progress Party he chairs is being prevented from participating in the next parliamentary elections; whereas Nadia Savchenko, a Member of the Ukrainian Rada, is being illegally detained in Russia, in breach of international law;

- M. whereas the Corruption Perceptions Index ranks the Russian Federation at 136 out of 175 making Russia a serious concern with regard to international corruption and money laundering, which is a threat to European economies and their integrity;
- N. whereas Russia actively uses hybrid warfare, deliberately blurring the lines between military/paramilitary activity and political activism;
- O. whereas the World Media Freedom Index 2014 ranks the Russian Federation at 148 out of 180; whereas the financing of state-controlled media outlets has been significantly widened and increased; whereas the initiatives and activities of human rights defenders, independent civil society organisations, political opponents, independent media and ordinary citizens are often restricted or hindered; whereas the space for expression of independent and pluralistic opinions has narrowed and is continuously under threat; whereas the European Endowment for Democracy is targeting the issue of plurality of the Russian media, and whereas, together with its partners, it is invited to develop new media initiatives;
- P. whereas the irresponsible actions of Russian jet fighters near the airspace of EU and NATO Member States are jeopardising the safety of civilian flights and could be a threat to European airspace security; whereas provocative large-scale military manoeuvres have been conducted by Russia in the immediate vicinity of the EU, while threats of Russian military and even nuclear attacks have been made public; whereas Russia has suspended its participation in negotiations on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and violated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty;
- Q. whereas energy, which plays a central and strategic role in EU-Russia relations, is a key instrument of Russian foreign policy; whereas the EU's resilience to external pressures can be achieved through diversification of energy supply and a decrease in dependence on Russia; whereas the EU must speak with one voice and show strong internal solidarity when it comes to its energy security;
- R. whereas the Russian Federation has actively promoted the Eurasian Economic Union; whereas this project of economic integration should not be seen as competing with the European Union;
1. Reiterates that Russia's direct and indirect involvement in the armed conflict in Ukraine and its illegal annexation of Crimea, together with its violation of the territorial integrity of Georgia, and economic coercion and political destabilisation of its European neighbours constitute a deliberate violation of democratic principles and fundamental values and of international law; in this context, the EU cannot envisage a return to 'business as usual' and has no choice but to conduct a critical re-assessment of its relations with Russia, which includes the drafting, as promptly as possible, of a soft-power contingency plan to counter the aggressive and divisive policies conducted by Russia, and a comprehensive plan on its future relations with that country and with its Eastern European partners; underlines that the resolution of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine can only be political in nature;
 2. Stresses that at this point Russia, because of its actions in Crimea and in Eastern Ukraine, can no longer be treated as, or considered, a 'strategic partner'; points out that strategic partnerships must be based on mutual trust and respect for international law, which is based on democracy, state sovereignty and the freedom to choose internal constitutional

order and foreign policy orientations, territorial integrity of the State, and respect for the rule of law, human rights, and the principles of international diplomacy and trade;

3. Is deeply concerned by the fact that Russia now openly positions itself and acts as a challenger of the international democratic community and its law-based order, not least by seeking to redraw by force borders within Europe; is alarmed by the growing atmosphere of hatred directed against opposition activists, human rights defenders, minorities and neighbouring nations, and the deterioration in the situation of human rights and rule of law in Russia; condemns the intimidation of critical voices through violence, trials, imprisonments and other measures used by the state;
4. Condemns the arbitrary measure of banning EU politicians and officials from access to Russian territory, and stresses that the Russian leadership is repeatedly trespassing against international law and is violating universal standards and impeding transparency; considers this act to be counterproductive and detrimental to the already weak channels of communication between the European Union and Russia; stresses that the targeted EU politicians and officials should be informed of the motives for their being denied access to Russian territory and should have the right to appeal such a decision before an independent court;
5. Is of the opinion that, in the long run, a constructive and predictable relationship between the EU and Russia is possible and desirable for their mutual benefit, especially in view of the existing political, trade, transport and energy relations, people-to-people contacts including through Erasmus+ and the Common Steps¹, cross-border cooperation, climate change, environment, and sectorial cooperation, bearing in mind that reciprocal sanctions are harmful to both economies, that common challenges and interests on the world scene must be addressed, and that the divisive nature of the perception of security in Europe can be overcome by increased dialogue; welcomes, in that regard, the positive outcome of EU-Russia cooperation in various areas such as the fight against terrorism, extremism and organised crime, the Northern dimension partnership, the nuclear talks with Iran, and in the Middle East Peace Process; calls on Russia to participate constructively in finding a solution to the conflict in Syria;
6. Underlines that EU-Russia relations must henceforth be based on respect for international law and a dialogue, whereby the EU would be ready to re-engage and relaunch cooperation with the authorities in Moscow in a number of specific fields of common interest; underlines that a resumption of cooperation would be envisaged on the condition that Russia respects the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, including Crimea, fully implements the Minsk Agreements (which include full control of the border by the Ukrainian authorities, the unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops and weapons, and an immediate halt to the provision of assistance to rebel groups), and stops destabilising military and security activities at the EU Member States' borders; stresses that the OSCE has shown itself to be a structure capable of making a contribution to crisis resolution; stresses that such potentially renewed cooperation must not be conducted at the expense of international principles, European values, standards and international commitments; stresses that the EU must clearly define both its expectations of Russia, especially as regards respecting international law and contractual commitments and acting as a predictable partner, and the measures it will take after 31 December 2015, should Russia fail to honour its commitments (or before that date if there are serious developments on the ground), and the resumption of cooperation it would be ready to offer in the event of

¹ Common steps towards visa-free short-term travel of Russian and EU citizens.

compliance; stresses that such cooperation should adhere fully to international human rights standards;

7. Commends the solidarity and unity demonstrated by the Member States in the context of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and direct involvement in the war in Ukraine, allowing the adoption and further extension of responsive measures, and their linkage to the full implementation of the Minsk agreements; calls on the Member States to regard as an absolute priority the preservation of this unity and to abstain from bilateral relations and agreements which could harm this unity or be interpreted as such; reiterates that unity of action and solidarity amongst the Member States and with candidate countries is essential for ensuring the credibility, legitimacy and effectiveness of the EU's policies and its ability to withstand external challenges and pressures, while at the same time fostering a more profound and cooperative relation with the Eastern Partnership countries;
8. Underlines, in this regard, that the deepening of EU integration and coherence between its internal and external policies is the key to a more coherent, effective and successful EU external and security policy, including vis-à-vis Russia; calls, therefore, on the Member States to carry on with, and intensify their efforts towards, the effective elimination of decision-making bottlenecks and, also with candidate countries, the consolidation of common policies, in particular in the areas of trade, financial services and transactions, migration, energy, external borders management, information and cyber security;
9. Reiterates its call on the EU and its Member States to make full use of the provisions and instruments of the Lisbon Treaty, with a view to reinforcing the forward-looking and strategic nature of the European common foreign and security policy; is furthermore of the firm conviction that the central role of human rights in every aspect of the external action of the EU is a prerequisite for ensuring its respected and credible role as a global actor;
10. Reiterates its conviction that energy policy is a significant element of EU external policy; firmly supports, therefore, 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, particularly Russia; is of the firm conviction that the challenges to, and vulnerability of, European solidarity, and the exposure of individual Member States and candidate countries, to the use of energy as a political and diplomatic bargaining chip can only be combated effectively through the full application of EU energy legislation, and in particular the implementation of the Third Energy package and the completion of a free, transparent, integrated, synchronised, energy-efficient – with an adequate proportion of renewables – and resilient European internal energy market with diversified supply, and to which competition legislation must apply unequivocally; calls on the EU to provide adequate support to the Contracting Parties of the Energy Community that have committed to the implementation of the EU energy acquis, with a view to enhancing their negotiating positions vis-à-vis external energy suppliers;
11. Stresses the necessity and relevance of the suspension of cooperation with Russia in the defence sector in view of its aggressive attitude, and calls on the Member States and candidate countries to refrain from taking any decisions that could jeopardise this united position; is therefore of the view that, notwithstanding their bilateral nature, agreements in the field of defence cooperation with Russia should be assessed carefully at EU level, with a view to defining an appropriate and consistent approach; notes the importance of the cooperation between the EU and NATO in that regard;

12. Is deeply concerned by the ever-growing restrictions on media and internet freedom, 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; condemns the ban on broadcasting of Ukrainian and Tatar TV channels in Crimea;
13. Renews its call for the development of strengthened analytical and monitoring capabilities of Russian propaganda, especially in the Russian language, in order to be able to identify, and respond swiftly and appropriately to, deliberately biased information spread in various EU languages; calls on the Commission to earmark without delay adequate funding for concrete projects aimed at countering Russian propaganda and misinformation within the EU and abroad, and at providing objective information to the general public in Eastern partner countries, and to develop the appropriate instruments for strategic communication; welcomes, in that regard, the conclusions of the European Council of 20 March 2015 on an action plan to counter disinformation campaigns; calls on the Commission and the Member States to also devise a coordinated mechanism for transparency of and 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 opinion in the EU and its Eastern neighbours, and to take appropriate measures;
14. Is deeply concerned at the recent tendency of the Russian state-controlled media to rewrite and reinterpret historical events of the twentieth century, such as the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its secret protocols, as well as the selective use of historical narrative for current political propaganda;
15. Is deeply concerned at the ever more intensive contacts and cooperation, tolerated by the Russian leadership, between European populist, fascist and extreme right-wing parties on the one hand and nationalist groups in Russia on the other; recognises that this represents a danger to democratic values and the rule of law in the EU; calls in this connection on the EU institutions and Member States to take action against this threat of an emerging 'Nationalist International';
16. Is deeply concerned with Russia's support for and financing of radical and extremist parties in the EU Member States; considers a recent meeting in St Petersburg of the far right parties an insult to the memory of millions of Russians who sacrificed their lives to save the world from Nazism;
17. Calls on the EU to provide support to projects aimed at promoting and 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; calls on the Commission to make available adequate funding for initiatives developing Russian-language media alternatives to Russian state-controlled media, in order to provide Russian-speaking audiences with credible and independent sources of information;
18. Reiterates that uncompromising respect for the rule of law is a core and founding principle of the EU and calls for its strict, swift and unconditional application in the event of any breach of the rules; calls on the Commission to apply with the same determination the principle of free and fair competition in the Single Market, including in the proceedings against Gazprom; takes the view that the EU and its Member States have to put a stronger emphasis on the need for Russia to approach constructively its WTO membership and to

comply fully with subsequent commitments, including by ending unjustified trade restrictions and providing non-discriminatory access to its market;

19. Calls on Russia to cooperate fully with the international community on the investigation into the downing of flight MH17, and condemns any attempt or decision to grant amnesty or delay prosecution for those identified as responsible; reiterates its call on Russia to return immediately the wreckage and all of the black boxes of the Polish Government plane which crashed in Smolensk; calls on all the EU Institutions to raise these requests in any bilateral contact with the Russian authorities;
20. Calls on the Government of the Russian Federation to acknowledge the scope and gravity of the problem of violence and harassment against LGBTI people in Russia, and to commit to taking steps to end these abuses and to repeal the provisions of Law No. 135-FZ of June 29, 2013 (the 'gay propaganda' law) banning distribution of information about LGBTI relationships; calls on the EEAS, the Commission and the EU Member States to raise the issue of homophobia and violence against LGBTI people and activists in meetings with relevant Russian officials, including at the highest level; calls on the EEAS, the Commission and the EU Member States – in line with the June 2013 EU guidelines – to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by LGBTI people, to contribute to combating any form of anti-LGBTI violence by seeking assistance and redress for victims of such violence and by supporting civil society and governmental initiatives to monitor cases of violence, and by educating law enforcement personnel;
21. Bearing in mind the enrichment of a society through the development of genuine and independent civil society, expresses its deep concern at the deteriorating state of human rights, including the rights of freedom of expression, association and assembly and the rights of LGBTI people, and the rule of law in Russia and in Crimea following its illegal annexation; strongly condemns the government's continued crackdown on dissent by targeting independent NGOs through the so-called "foreign agents law" and the persistent and multifarm repression of activists, political opponents and critics of the regime; draws particular attention to the assassinations of Anna Politkovskaya, Natalya Estemirova, Boris Nemtsov, Sergey Magnitsky, Alexander Litvinenko and others; demands that all assassinations of political activists, journalists and whistleblowers be investigated properly and independently, that those responsible be brought to justice as a sign of the uncompromising fight against impunity, and that targeted restrictive measures be considered if the investigations carried out are not in line with international standards; reiterates its call on the Council to deliver on its commitment to defend these principles, and to adopt, upon a proposal which should be submitted without delay by the VP/HR, restrictive measures for the officials involved in the well-documented Magnitsky case; underlines that the obligation for Russia to comply with human rights and the rule of law standards proceeds directly from its membership of the UN, the Council of Europe and the OSCE;
22. Stresses the importance of continued political and financial support for independent civil society activists, human rights defenders, bloggers, independent media, outspoken academics and public figures and NGOs, with a view to promoting democratic values, fundamental freedoms and human rights in Russia and in occupied Crimea; calls on the Commission to programme more ambitious financial assistance to Russian civil society from the existing external financial instruments; encourages the EU to reach out to Russian officials and civil society organisations that are inclined to develop a vision of political and diplomatic relations with the EU based on partnership and cooperation; underlines the need to promote, as much as possible, people-to-people contacts and to

maintain, despite the current state of relations, strong dialogue and cooperation between EU and Russian students and researchers, between civil societies and between local authorities, with a view to diffusing tension and improving mutual understanding;

23. Calls on the Commission to propose legislation ensuring the full transparency of political funding and financing of political parties in the EU in line with the recommendation of the Council of Europe with regard, in particular, to political or economic stakeholders outside the EU;
24. 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.