

Motion

Limiting Economic ties With the Russian Federation in Response to the War in Ukraine

submitted by the Lithuanian
Youth Council (LiJOT)

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On the 24th of February 2022, the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin launched an indiscriminate full-scale military assault on the Republic of Ukraine and its peaceful people. It is abundantly clear that these actions undermine the principles of international law, liberal democracy, and human rights. There have been numerous accounts of the Russian soldiers committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. With the abhorrent and indiscriminate bombing and cities across Ukraine, with Russian soldiers continuously breaking international humanitarian law, which tragically reached new lows after the massacre at Bucha, there are no boundaries that the dictatorial regime of the Russian Federation is willing to stop at to satisfy its agenda, which threatens the peace and stability of Europe and the globe.

The actions of the Russian Federation in Ukraine have caused unprecedented damage to millions of people in Ukraine. The war in Ukraine has reportedly resulted in 4.2 million refugees fleeing Ukraine¹, and, according to the Prime Minister of Ukraine, Denys Shmyhal, the damages account for a loss of 35% to 50% of the GDP of Ukraine, the budget loses about UAH 2B per day, and the damages to infrastructure amount to \$ 4.25B daily.

The barbaric conduct of the Russian military has been documented thoroughly and extensively: the murder of civilians, torture, and repeated sexual assault of women, pillaging and marauding, theft, and destruction: wherever the Russian military passes, a wasteland devoid of any colour, life and hope, remains.

The war in Ukraine has severely impacted scores of young people in Ukraine, both physically and emotionally. The ongoing war has left more than half of Ukraine's children displaced.² A tragic and dreadful consequence of the brutal actions of the Russian Federation, which jeopardises the well-being of the future generation.

There have been worrying signs of planned and coordinated assaults on Ukrainian minorities and human rights activists: a striking report has shown that the forces of the Russian Federation had lists of LGBTQ+ rights advocates and other human rights activists that should be targeted in the advent of the invasion of Ukraine.

These are stark reminders that the Russian Federation is not only waging this war on Ukraine as a country, furthermore, it is engaged in an existential battle against the ideals that are core to our understanding of what values are to be cherished and to be safeguarded: the inviolability of life, the rule of law, human rights, all the principles of democracy. These are values that lay at the foundation of our societies, in which people of the most different backgrounds, worldviews and experiences, can flourish and seek to coexist in harmony to prosper both on an individual level and as communities. The warmongering Russian Federation, through the atrocities that are committed in Ukraine, projects its own shortcomings and pitfalls that have plagued the country since the beginning of the dictatorship of Vladimir Putin and his oligarchic clique.

The fact that the European Union is still conducting business operations with entities with ties with this criminal regime, or with the government directly in light of the war in Ukraine, is staggering. Decades of such policy have not in any way, shape or form helped change the outlook of the governing regime towards the West, towards democratic reforms in the Russian Federation and it has only emboldened Putin to extensively disregard any warnings or pleas to stop on the ruinous path of seeking to restore and foster and stoke the chauvinist, nationalist, revisionist, and imperialist feelings in Russia to support his agenda. The full-scale assault of Ukraine in 2022 should come as no surprise to the European community, as the Kremlin has repeatedly launched similar wars in the past: occupying territories of Georgia in 2008 and annexing the Crimean Peninsula in Ukraine in 2014. The President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, went on the record to say that projects like Nord Stream 2 have been a mistake and that the European Union has been mistaken in disregarding the warnings of the newer members of the European Union, namely those in

1 <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

2 <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114592>

Central-Eastern Europe.³ This is an illustrative shift of yearlong policy of seeking fruitless dialogue and continuing to trade with a state that has for years terrorized, threatened and bullied of its neighbours, touting its military strength and pushing false narratives on social media to misinform, misguide and instigate vitriolic discussions regarding questions of grave importance to their societies, namely, LGBTQ+, gender equality and the values of liberal democracy.

In 2020, the EU was Russia's first trade partner, accounting for 37.3% of the country's total trade in goods with the world. In 2021, Russia was the EU's fifth largest trade partner, representing 5.8% of the EU's total trade in goods with the world. 36.5% of Russia's imports came from the EU and 37.9% of its exports went to the EU. In 2021, the total trade in goods between the EU and Russia amounted to €257.5 billion. The EU's imports were worth €158.5 billion and were dominated by fuel and mining products – especially mineral fuels (€98.9 billion, 62%), wood (€3.16 billion, 2.0%), iron and steel (€7.4 billion, 4.7%), fertilisers (1.78 bn, 1.1%). The EU's exports in 2021 totalled €99.0 billion. They were led by machinery and equipment (€19.5 billion, 19.7%), motor vehicles (€8.95 billion, 9%), pharmaceuticals (€8.1 billion, 8.1%), electrical equipment and machinery (€7.57 billion, 7.6%), as well as plastics (€4.38 billion, 4.3%).⁴

It is high time for the European community to hold the Russian government to account for the crimes and gross violations of international law. The European Union and its Member States must pursue a policy that shall no longer finance the morally corrupt regime that began this abhorrent war. The European community must do everything in its power to stop the senseless violence inflicted upon Ukraine and its people by the Russian Federation and its armed forces.

The members of the european youth forum

Understanding the immense grief and sorrow unleashed on the peaceful country of Ukraine and its people by the regime of the Russian Federation;

Stressing that the European Union and all its

Member States and societies have the moral imperative of supporting Ukraine in all its capacity;

Underlining that dependence on Russian gas and oil imports, along the still ongoing trade with the Russian Federation, continues to finance the war and criminal regime of Vladimir Putin;

Reminding that the dependence on Russian gas and oil is detrimental to the energy independence of European countries and stable transition to renewable energy across Europe;

Considering that many European countries are still conducting transactions that are related not only to the energy sector, but to many others, too;

Commending the heroic effort of the Ukrainian citizens in defending their country and the values of liberal democracy;

Emphasising that the current sanctions packages put forward by institutions of the European Union are welcome developments;

Considering that the dependence on Russian oil, gas and of the European Union constitutes a risk for the Union and its strategic autonomy to be free in its actions and policies, especially the ones concerning the transition to renewable energy and completely phasing out non-renewable energy sources;

Stressing the importance of aiding Ukraine in every feasible way;

Agree that the european youth forum

Chastises, rebukes, and condemns the war initiated by the Russian Federation, the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Ukraine;

Urges the Member Organisations of the European Youth Forum to campaign for harsher and timely measures to be implemented and enforced, if need be, to put a stop to the atrocities committed in Ukraine by the Russian Federation;

Calls upon governments of the European Union

3 President Steinmeier admits mistakes over Russia policy, Deutsche Welle: <https://www.dw.com/en/german-president-steinmeier-admits-mistakes-over-russia-policy/a-61362153>

4 <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/russia/>

to reverse policies that have for years helped the Russian Federation build capacity for such atrocities to be committed;

Asks for the Russian banks and other entities to be completely disconnected from SWIFT;

Calls upon the European community and its civic society to limit ties with organisations and entities that support the actions of the Russian Federation, as well as organisations and entities based in democratic countries, which do not unequivocally condemn the actions of the Russian war in Ukraine;

Urges the European institutions and people of Europe to support the implementation of harsher measures that could bring the Russian war machine to halt. This includes a full ban on oil and gas, as well as measures towards non-essential companies and entities that continue operations in the Russian Federation or keep trading with companies related to the country;

Renews the call to hasten the search for alternative, renewable means and ways to fuel the European industry;

Invites the Member Organisations of the European Youth Forum to continue providing any aid that is possible and necessary for Ukraine and it.