

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Civil Society warns Council of Europe that the time is not right to lift sanctions against Russia

A Joint Statement by 38 Civil Society Organizations from 17 countries within the International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR)

At its June part-Session, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (further PACE) will vote on **lifting the sanctions imposed on Russia** after the illegal annexation of Crimea. The fact that the vote is taking place at all represents a significant and worrying change of Council of Europe (further CoE) policy towards Russia.

After the 2014 annexation of Crimea, PACE ruled to apply sanctions against Russia and suspended the voting rights of the Russia delegation to PACE.^[1] PACE considered that Russia's actions on the territory of Ukraine constituted **any doubt, a grave violation of international law** and that they were in clear contradiction to the commitments Russia had undertaken upon accession to the CoE as **violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, Russia has created a threat to stability and peace in Europe.**"

In subsequent resolutions PACE called on Russia to reverse the illegal annexation of Crimea; investigate deaths, disappearances and human rights violations committed by police and (para) military forces in the region; disband paramilitary forces; cease harassing Crimean Tatar institutions and organizations; and cease pressure on independent media. The European Union^[2] and the United States^[3] also imposed sanctions/restrictive measures against Russia/Russian citizens. In an act of retaliation, Russia suspended its annual 33 million Euro contributions to the CoE in 2017.

We believe that sanctions constitute an essential tool for de-legitimising Russia's illegal actions against Ukraine and for preventing the further spread of the conflict.

Furthermore, normalising the forceful annexation of a territory of a sovereign state, accompanied by flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and human rights will create a serious security threat not only for Ukraine but for the entire region.

For the above reasons we call on PACE and the Committee of Ministers to demonstrate unity in upholding the values and principles on which the Council of Europe is based and fully keep sanctions in place until Russia meets the conditions for which these sanctions were imposed.

Read the statement here:

^[1]Resolution 1990 (2014), Reconsideration on substantive grounds of the previously rarified credentials of the Russian delegation

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[2] On EU restrictive measures see: https://europa.eu/newsroom/highlights/special-coverage/eu-sanctions-against-russia-over-ukraine-crisis_en

[3] On US sanctions see: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/ukrainerussia/index.htm>