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Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022: including the latest developments of the war against Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia and their implementation**European Parliament resolution of 7 April 2022 on the conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022, including the latest developments of the war against Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia and their implementation (2022/2560(RSP))**

(2022/C 434/09)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia and Ukraine, and in particular those of 16 December 2021 on the situation at the Ukrainian border and in Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine ⁽¹⁾ and of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to the statements on Ukraine by the European Parliament's leaders of 16 and 24 February 2022,
- having regard to the declaration by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on behalf of the EU of 24 February 2022 on the invasion of Ukraine by the armed forces of the Russian Federation,
- having regard to the statement by the President of the European Council and the President of the Commission of 24 February 2022 on Russia's unprecedented and unprovoked military aggression against Ukraine,
- having regard to the Versailles Declaration of 11 March 2022,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 25 March 2022,
- having regard to the declaration by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on behalf of the EU of 4 April 2022 on Russian atrocities committed in Bucha and other Ukrainian towns,
- having regard to the decisions taken by the Council on sanctions and restrictive measures against Russia, which include diplomatic measures, individual restrictive measures such as asset freezes and travel restrictions, restrictions on economic relations with Crimea and Sevastopol and with the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, economic sanctions, restrictions on the media and restrictions on economic cooperation,
- having regard to the Nuremberg principles developed by the International Law Commission of the UN, which determine what constitutes a war crime,
- having regard to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC),
- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
- having regard to the Geneva Convention and the additional protocols thereto,
- having regard to the Helsinki Final Act and subsequent documents,
- having regard to the UN General Assembly resolutions of 2 March 2022 on the aggression against Ukraine and of 24 March 2022 on the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,
- having regard to the ruling of the UN International Court of Justice of 16 March 2022,

⁽¹⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2021)0515.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 125, 18.3.2022, p. 2.

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- having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights, the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances and the Vienna Document and the additional protocols thereto,

- having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas, in line with the UN Charter and the principles of international law, all states enjoy equal sovereignty and ‘shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state’; whereas the Russian Federation has been carrying out an illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine since 24 February 2022, and whereas on 16 March 2022, the International Court of Justice ordered the Russian Federation ‘to immediately suspend its military operations in the territory of Ukraine’;

- B. whereas thousands of Ukrainian civilians have lost their lives or have been wounded in the Russian aggression and invasion since 24 February 2022, while nearly 6,5 million Ukrainian citizens have been internally displaced and more than 4 million have fled to neighbouring countries, adding to the more than 14 000 people, both military personnel and civilians, who lost their lives in the previous eight years as a result of the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and the conflict it generated in eastern Ukraine;

- C. whereas the war in Ukraine continues to take innocent lives a month after the Russian aggression began; whereas the atrocities perpetrated by the Russian troops reached a new low with the discovery on Sunday 3 April 2022 of the bodies of civilian men and women lying on the streets of Bucha, a town inaccessible to the Ukrainian army for almost a month; whereas these facts clearly justify setting up an international commission to investigate all of the crimes committed by the Russian army since the beginning of the war;

- D. whereas the Russian army continues to carry out indiscriminate shelling and aerial attacks against residential areas and civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools and nurseries, which has led to the complete or almost complete destruction of Mariupol, Volnovakha and other cities and villages;

- E. whereas Ukraine has so far shown unprecedented levels of resistance and resilience and has denied Russia the ability to fulfil its initial objective for the war of occupying the entire country;

- F. whereas the Commission proposed and announced new sanctions on 5 April 2022 and is working on additional packages of sanctions; whereas the first EU sanctions against the Russian Federation were imposed in March 2014 following the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, and whereas the latest package was adopted on 15 March 2022 following Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine, which it launched on 24 February 2022; whereas the EU has also adopted sanctions against Belarus in response to its involvement in the Russian aggression and invasion;

- G. whereas sanctions are having an effect but EU purchases of fossil fuels from Russia still provide means to the regime that help finance the war;

- H. whereas the EU is paying up to EUR 800 million per day to Russia for the delivery of fossil fuels, which per year adds up to almost EUR 300 billion;

- I. whereas almost 500 international companies and corporations have chosen to suspend their operations in Russia or completely withdraw from the Russian market; whereas, however, some companies continue to conduct business-as-usual in Russia, putting profits from operations in the Russian market before security and social responsibility, thereby weakening the effects of sanctions and undermining condemnation of the Russian Federation by the international community;

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- J. whereas academic studies ⁽³⁾ show that the banning of fossil fuel imports from Russia would have an impact on EU economic growth that would correspond to estimated losses of less than 3 % of GDP, while the potential losses to the Russian economy over the same period would amount to 30 % of GDP and would be instrumental in stopping the Russian aggression;
- K. whereas President Metsola addressed the Verkhovna Rada on 1 April 2022 and met with the president and prime minister of Ukraine and the leaders of the political fractions on behalf of the European Parliament;
1. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as the involvement of Belarus in this war, and demands that Russia immediately terminate all military activities in Ukraine and unconditionally withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire internationally recognised territory of Ukraine; grieves with the people of Ukraine at their heartbreaking loss and suffering;
2. Underlines that the military aggression and invasion constitute a serious violation of international law, in particular the Geneva Convention and their additional Protocols and the UN Charter, and calls on the Russian Federation to return to fulfilling the responsibilities of a permanent member of the UN Security Council in maintaining peace and security and to respect its commitments under the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe and the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances; considers the Russian invasion of Ukraine an attack not only against a sovereign country, but also against the principles and mechanism of cooperation and security in Europe and the rules-based international order, as defined by the UN Charter;
3. Expresses its outrage and indignation over the reported atrocities, including the raping and execution of civilians, forced displacement, the looting and targeting of civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals, medical facilities, schools, shelters and ambulances, and the shooting at of civilians trying to flee conflict areas via pre-agreed humanitarian corridors committed to by the Russian armed forces in a number of occupied Ukrainian towns, such as Bucha; insists that perpetrators of war crimes and other serious rights violations, as well as the government officials and military leaders responsible, must be held accountable; recalls that in the event of war crimes and genocide, the international community is obliged to act and should utilise all tools at its disposal; fully supports the investigation launched by the ICC Prosecutor into war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights's Commission of Inquiry; calls for the EU institutions to take all necessary action in international institutions and proceedings and at the ICC or other appropriate international tribunals or courts to prosecute the actions of Vladimir Putin and Aliaksandr Lukashenka as war crimes and crimes against humanity, and actively participate in their investigation; calls for a special UN tribunal for the crimes in Ukraine to be set up; considers that it would be pertinent to take advantage of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to assist in any international investigations into war crimes committed in Ukraine; calls on the Member States and the EU to strengthen their capacity to effectively combat impunity for those who have committed or participated in war crimes;
4. Reiterates that deliveries of weapons must continue and be stepped up to allow Ukraine to effectively defend itself; reiterates its support for all defensive aid provided to the Ukrainian armed forces offered individually by Member States and collectively through the European Peace Facility (EPF); welcomes the decision to increase assistance to Ukraine through the EPF by another EUR 500 million and calls for a further increase in concrete contributions to urgently strengthen Ukraine's defence capacities, both bilaterally and under the EPF;
5. Calls for the establishment of safe passages and humanitarian corridors to evacuate civilians fleeing bombardments and for the boosting of the EU's humanitarian aid networks in Ukraine (including for fuel, food, medicines, drinkable water supplies, energy generators and mobile campuses); suggests that the Commission introduce peer-to-peer aid schemes for Ukraine in order to increase the effectiveness of assistance; calls for particular attention to be paid to the situation of children, both unaccompanied minors and those escaping with their families, and calls for every child seeking refuge to be treated first and foremost as a child, and for protection for all persons fleeing Ukraine to be ensured, regardless of their social or ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, ability or migration status; commends the Member States and

⁽³⁾ Including from Bachmann et al., the European Central Bank, Deutsche Bank Research, Oxford Economics, Goldman Sachs, etc. as summarised by the Sachverständigenrat zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung (German Council of Economic Experts) in its report of March 2022 entitled 'Auswirkungen eines möglichen Wegfalls russischer Rohstofflieferungen auf Energiesicherheit und Wirtschaftsleistung: Auszug aus der aktualisierten Konjunkturprognose 2022 und 2023'.

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Ukraine's neighbouring countries for their rapid and positive response to the flow of more than 4 million refugees fleeing the war; welcomes the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive (*) and calls for the promotion of mechanisms to relocate refugees among the Member States, including fast coordinated transportation for refugees, in particular for unaccompanied children and children with disabilities who require specific care;

6. Underlines that the EU's reaction and its political engagement must rise to the hostile challenge and match the effort of our like-minded Ukrainian partners, who are fighting and sacrificing for European values and principles, which stretch beyond the present membership of the EU;

7. Expresses its undivided solidarity with the people of Ukraine and their strong aspirations to transform their country into a democratic and prosperous European state; acknowledges Ukraine's will to be involved in the European project, as expressed through its application for EU membership submitted on 28 February 2022; reiterates its call on the EU institutions to work towards granting EU candidate status to Ukraine, as a clear political signal of their commitment, in line with Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union and on the basis of merit, and, in the meantime, to continue to work towards its integration into the EU single market in line with the Association Agreement; welcomes the Versailles Declaration of the European Council, which states that Ukraine is a member of our European family;

8. Strongly condemns the Russian rhetoric hinting at a possible resort to the use of weapons of mass destruction by the Russian Federation and emphasises that any such deployment would be unacceptable and would be met with the severest consequences; condemns, furthermore, the taking over by Russian forces of active or decomposed nuclear facilities and sites in the territory of Ukraine, highlighting that the good handling of these facilities is a crucial matter of health for the entire region; underlines the crucial role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in securing the safety of nuclear facilities in Ukraine; supports the Ukrainian authorities' call for the UN Security Council to immediately take measures to demilitarise the exclusion zone of the Chernobyl nuclear power station and to allow the IAEA to immediately take full control of the site of the nuclear power station;

9. Welcomes the swift adoption of sanctions by the Council and commends the unity of the EU institutions and Member States in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, as well as the high level of coordination among the G7; calls on all partners, in particular EU candidate countries and potential candidate countries, to align with the sanctions packages; welcomes the newly established Russian Elites, Proxies and Oligarchs Task Force, the aim of which is to coordinate the work of the EU, the G7 and Australia on sanctions against Russian and Belarusian oligarchs; invites the European External Action Service and the Commission to intensify their outreach to countries that have not yet joined the EU in introducing sanctions against the Russian Federation, using the EU's leverage and the full range of their available tools to that end, and providing assistance if necessary; deplors the non-alignment of certain EU candidate countries with the EU's sanctions; calls for the establishment of a clear plan of action vis-à-vis non-EU countries that are facilitating the evasion of sanctions by the Russian Federation; urges the Council to adopt further severe sanctions that reflect the unabated escalation of the Russian aggression and the shocking atrocities committed by the Russian military forces, which undeniably amount to war crimes;

10. Calls on Member States to support the sending of UN peacekeepers to protect the 15 nuclear reactors in Ukraine, in close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency mission; stresses that in accordance with its Resolution 377, the UN General Assembly does have subsidiary decision-making powers when the Security Council is not in a position to take adequate decisions on peacekeeping matters;

11. Calls on EU leaders and the leaders of other states to exclude Russia from the G20 and other multilateral cooperative organisations, such as the UN Human Rights Council, Interpol, the World Trade Organization, UNESCO and others, which would be an important sign that the international community will not return to business as usual with the aggressor state;

(*) Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof (OJ L 212, 7.8.2001, p. 12).

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12. Underlines that the full and effective implementation of existing sanctions throughout the EU and by the EU's international allies must be a priority now; calls on the Member States to identify and, where necessary, swiftly create a legal basis to secure full and effective compliance with sanctions within national jurisdictions without delay; calls on the Commission and EU supervisory authorities to closely monitor the effective and comprehensive implementation of all EU sanctions by Member States and to address any circumvention practices;

13. Urges the Member States to ensure that national penalties for breaching EU sanctions are effective, proportionate and dissuasive; welcomes the announcement of a sanctions information repository and a roadmap (including criteria and a timetable) for moving from the detection of systematic non-compliance with EU sanctions to infringement procedures before the Court of Justice of the European Union;

14. Calls on the Council to impose further sanctions on public figures who are spreading aggressive propaganda in Russia in support of the Russian aggression against Ukraine;

15. Recalls that tax revenues from Russia's largest foreign companies make up a significant part of Russia's budget and are estimated to account for a third of military spending; welcomes, in this regard, the decisions of numerous Western companies to refuse to conduct business in Russia or supply their products and services there; calls on private businesses to withdraw their investments, relocate production sites from Russia and cut running contracts; calls on large IT companies to significantly or completely restrict users in Russia from accessing their products, services and operating systems;

16. Calls for the effectiveness of the existing sanctions to be increased, inter alia by excluding, in coordination with the EU's like-minded international partners, banks from the Russian Federation from the SWIFT system and by banning any Russian-flagged, -registered, -owned, -chartered or -operated vessels, any vessels originating from or heading to a Russian port or any otherwise Russian-linked maritime vessels, including Sovcomflot, from entering EU territorial waters and docking in EU ports; calls for the prohibition of road freight from and to the territory of Russia and Belarus and suggests extending the export ban to deliveries that were contracted prior to the entry into force of the sanctions, but which have not yet been fully completed; demands the introduction of secondary sanctions on all entities registered in the EU and non-EU countries that are aiding the Russian and Belarussian regimes in circumventing sanctions;

17. Calls for an immediate full embargo on Russian imports of oil, coal, nuclear fuel, and gas, for Nordstream 1 and 2 to be completely abandoned, and for a plan to continue ensuring the EU's security of energy supply in the short-term to be presented; calls on the Commission, the European External Action Service and the Member States to establish a comprehensive plan of action for the EU concerning further sanctions and to communicate clearly on red lines and measure-for-measure steps to roll back sanctions in the event that Russia takes steps to restore Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and completely removes its troops from the territory of Ukraine;

18. Stresses, once again, the importance of the diversification of energy resources, technologies and supply routes, in addition to further investing in energy efficiency, renewable energy, gas and electricity storage solutions and sustainable long-term investments in line with the European Green Deal; highlights the importance of securing energy supplies from the EU's trading partners through existing and future free trade agreements to further reduce the EU's reliance on Russia, particularly for raw materials; calls, furthermore, for common strategic energy reserves and energy purchasing mechanisms to be established at EU level with the aim of increasing energy security while reducing external energy dependency and price volatility; calls for work to be started on creating a gas union, based on common purchases of gas by Member States;

19. Urges the Member States to terminate collaboration with Russian companies on existing and new nuclear projects, including in Finland, Hungary and Bulgaria, where Russian experts can be replaced by Western ones, and to phase out the use of Rosatom services; calls for an end to scientific cooperation with Russian energy companies, such as Rosatom, and other relevant Russian scientific entities; demands that sanctions on Belarus mirror those introduced against Russia in order to close any loopholes allowing Putin to use Lukashenka's aid to circumvent sanctions;

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20. Urges international energy organisations to reconsider the role of Russia in their activities, including the potential suspension of cooperation projects between Russia and the IAEA, as well as the suspension of Russian participation in multilateral projects;

21. Stresses that all assets belonging to Russian officials or the oligarchs associated with Putin's regime, their proxies and strawmen, as well as those in Belarus linked to Lukashenko's regime, should be seized and EU visas revoked as part of a complete and immediate ban on golden passports, visas and residence permits; underlines that a broader segment of Russian officials, governors, mayors and members of the economic elite that abide by the current policy of the Putin regime and benefit from it should be targeted by the sanctions;

22. Calls for work to start on a Marshall Plan-like fund (the Ukraine Solidarity Trust Fund) to rebuild Ukraine after the war, launch a massive investment programme and unleash the country's growth potential; considers that the fund should be generous and financed inter alia by the EU, its Member States, donor contributions and Russia's compensation for war damages, including Russian assets which were previously frozen as a result of sanctions and should be legally confiscated in accordance with international law;

23. Calls for the EU to swiftly increase financial transparency, to close all loopholes aimed at hiding beneficial ownerships within the framework of the negotiations on the anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism legislative package, and to ensure that any money stored by Russian oligarchs in the Union is confiscated; calls, in this context, for any financial institutions in non-EU countries that are engaged in or enable money laundering to be blacklisted;

24. Calls for an EU solidarity mechanism to deal with the economic and social consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine and of the imposed sanctions; acknowledges that effective sanctions against the Russian Federation and the flow of millions of refugees fleeing Ukraine as a result of the Russian aggression and invasion are generating unavoidable economic and social challenges across the EU and its Member States; calls for compensation measures and alternative supplies of goods and energy sources in order to reduce these negative impacts, as well as for effective measures against unacceptable speculation that is further aggravating them, including by learning from the successful measures implemented by the EU in response to the COVID-19 pandemic;

25. Welcomes the declarations of many European cities that they have ended their cooperation and partnership schemes with Russian cities and organisations; calls on local governments and cities to review and terminate their partnership agreements with the cities of the Russian Federation, and in return to establish cooperation with Ukrainian sister cities;

26. Stresses the importance of ensuring Ukraine's agricultural sector can properly function again as quickly as possible, making all possible efforts to safeguard the upcoming sowing and production season and enabling safe transport and food and fuel corridors to and from the country; calls for the opening of green land corridors to bring into Ukraine anything needed to maintain agricultural production (e.g. pesticides and fertilisers) and to bring out of Ukraine all agricultural products that can still be exported;

27. Expresses its utmost support for the decision of the ICC Prosecutor to open an investigation into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Ukraine and underlines the importance of swift work and progress in order to secure the necessary evidence; calls, therefore, for financial and practical support for the ICC's important work e.g. by allowing the EU Advisory Mission Ukraine to assist with the documentation of evidence;

28. Calls for the EU and its Member States to establish a global anti-corruption sanctions mechanism and to swiftly adopt targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for high-level corruption in Russia and Belarus;

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29. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to support all legitimate international and national processes to investigate alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in Ukraine with a view to holding all perpetrators and accomplices accountable before a court of law;

30. Reiterates that Russian disinformation is part of Russia's war efforts in Ukraine and that the EU's sanctions against Russian state-owned media channels can easily be circumvented by using virtual private networks, satellite television and smart TV functions; calls on the Commission and the Member States to fully implement the ban on Russian state-owned propaganda channels;

31. Calls for the disclosure requirements of European financial institutions to be extended in order to inform competent authorities about all assets held by certain Russian and Belarusian citizens, and not only their deposits; recalls that EU citizens can use the Commission's whistleblower tool to anonymously report violations of past, current and planned sanctions against Russian and Belarusian individuals and entities; believes that the scope of the individual sanctions lists should be extended to current and past beneficiaries of close connections with the Russian and Belarusian Governments; calls on the Commission to make full use of the anti-money laundering framework and to include Russia and Belarus in the list of high-risk jurisdictions as referred to in Article 9 of the fourth Anti-Money Laundering Directive⁽⁵⁾; calls on the Commission to propose the creation of a dedicated body to monitor the enforcement of financial sanctions and other EU restrictive measures; calls on the Commission to map and publish the assets frozen and seized by each Member State; welcomes the efforts of civil society and investigative journalists in unveiling the assets owned by Russian oligarchs;

32. Welcomes the decisions of international organisations, including in the area of culture and sports, to suspend Russian participation; calls on the Member States to lower the Russian Federation's level of representation and reduce the number of Russian and Belarusian diplomatic and consular staff in the EU, in particular where their actions involve espionage, disinformation or military matters; calls for continued coordination with transatlantic allies and like-minded partners such as those in NATO, the G7 and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the members of the European Free Trade Association, associated states and candidate countries; underlines that the EU should react decisively when presumed partners fail to support EU positions;

33. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the United Nations, NATO, the G7, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the President, Government and Parliament of Ukraine, the President, Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation and the President, Government and Parliament of Belarus.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 141, 5.6.2015, p. 73.