

Drawing lessons from the Russian war in Ukraine: making the EU more sovereign and democratic

The Congress of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party convening in Dublin, Ireland, on 2-4 June 2022:

Expresses:

- that the attack of the Russian Federation on Ukraine represents a most blatant violation of international law and the largest security threat that Europe has faced in decades;
- its outrage over the atrocities committed by the Russian Armed Forces against the innocent civilian population of Ukraine and calls for full accountability for those responsible for these war crimes;
- the need for even stronger sanctions from the EU Member States and their allies on the Kremlin and Russia's ability to finance its war, including where they will hurt the Russian economy most, in particular the domain of fossil fuels;
- the need for full and unreserved humanitarian and political support to the Ukrainian government and people, who are defending themselves with an unparalleled courage; as well as support to the Russian dissenting persecuted and imprisoned for their anti-war stance;
- praise to the citizens, civil society and governments of EU Member States and other countries neighbouring Ukraine for their support to refugees from Ukraine.

Notes that:

- this war has united the EU in its response, but also laid bare some of the structural deficiencies of the EU's governance as well as of its geopolitical abilities;
- the events of this war necessitate a deep reflection and reform of EU governance, to make the EU sovereign and democratic in a world where geopolitical threats are waged by autocratic regimes;
- the EU should be a Union based on democratic liberal values that is able to defend its own territory, energy independent, a geopolitical player in the world, economically powerful and innovative, and a bastion of Rule of Law and human rights, never swapping the values of democracy, freedom and justice for short-term gains;
- the EU is already also a mutual defence alliance (cf. Art. 42 TEU) and must therefore effectively be able to provide credible security assurances to all its Member States.

Calls for the ALDE party and its member organisations to:

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- enhance the military capabilities of the EU, in particular a common strategic culture and a deep integration of armed forces for the EU to be able to respond to geopolitical threats in its neighbourhood, together with other NATO allies;
- replace unanimity voting with qualified majority voting, including in foreign and security affairs;
- this should now be implemented in form of a Treaty revision as soon as possible. Also the European Commission and particularly the High Representative should be strengthened in this regard, in order to be capable of acting quickly and effectively by themselves;
- modernise the EU accession and enlargement policy, moving it away from a paralysed system of vetoes and towards a powerful tool of EU geopolitics and values, as well as to give Ukraine a clear perspective of EU membership by granting it candidate status, alongside other countries from the region, such as Moldova and Georgia, proving their commitment to EU values and integration if these countries meet the Copenhagen Criteria, and helping them in the way of their integration;
- acknowledge that the reception of refugees from Ukraine has shown that the EU is able to respond to refugees arriving, by giving them rights and by sharing solidarity between civil society, national authorities and EU agencies. Therefore calls for the Council to agree to a fully-fledged EU asylum and migration policy, including responsibility-sharing for receiving refugees and border checks in full respect of EU law, thereby making the EU sovereign to deal with migrants and asylum-seekers and no longer vulnerable to blackmailing by dictators such as Lukashenko;
- become more resilient against other potentially hostile actors, particularly China, by: 1) preventing their control over our critical infrastructure; 2) limiting their influence on media, academia, religious groups and political parties in Europe, by e.g. prohibiting foreign financing; 3) reducing our dependence on individual countries for critical imports and essential commodities, without isolating Europe or principally undermining free trade; 4) ensuring reliable own energy supply sources, especially by speeding up the build-out of renewable 'freedom' energies, but also by exploiting domestic gas and oil deposits and quickly building up new LNG terminals and pipelines within Europe; 5) strengthening the EU's trade defence mechanisms such as the anti-coercion instrument in order to ensure protection from interference and coercion by third countries;
- upgrade the fiscal capabilities of the EU to be able to further deal with the impact of major crises, as this could also help cushion the effects of economic sanctions against Russia, thereby supporting citizens and business evenly across the Union and maintaining support for these sanctions;

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- rule out returning to ‘business as usual’ with the current Russian regime anytime soon;
- a strengthening of the EEAS in terms of personnel and funding. The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy should be strengthened by granting him/her equal speaking rights in the UN General Assembly;
- a strengthening of the presence of EU representatives in international organisations through systematic staff development and recruitment;
- working towards a permanent European seat on the UN Security Council.

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