



EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE EURONEST
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Plenary Session

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RESOLUTION

on Security challenges in the Eastern Partnership countries and enhancing the role of the EU in addressing them

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The Euronest Parliamentary Assembly,

- having regard to the Constituent Act of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly of 3 May 2011,
 - having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit of 24 November 2017, in Brussels, and its previous declarations.
 - having regard to the Global Strategy for the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy of June 2016, entitled ‘Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe’, having regard to the Commission and the European External Action Service Joint Staff Working Document of 9 June 2017 on “Eastern Partnership - 20 Deliverables for 2020: Focusing on key priorities and tangible results’,
 - having regard to the report of 18 May 2017 by the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy Review,
 - having regard to the European Parliament recommendation of 15 November 2017 to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service on the Eastern Partnership, in the run-up to the November 2017 Summit,
 - having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 23 November 2016 on EU strategic communication to counteract propaganda against it by third parties,
 - having regard to the bipartisan resolution of the Parliament of Georgia of 21 March 2018 on grave violations of human rights in occupied Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali Region, and the Otkhozoria-Tatunashvili list,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the Euronest PA Sixth plenary session held in Kyiv on 31 October and 1 November 2017, in particular with respect to the issue of cybersecurity,
- A. whereas the EU and Eastern European Partners share a vital interest in ensuring peace and security in Europe as a primary condition for their stability, prosperity and development;
- B. whereas internal security, stability and peace in the EU and Eastern European Partners require the respect for and upholding of international law and order, sovereignty and fundamental values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

- C. whereas the Eastern Partnership pursues the common goals of promoting stability, confidence-building and cooperation, supporting democratic reforms, strengthening and consolidating democratic institutions, good neighbourly relations, peaceful conflict resolution and regional cooperation, enhancing people-to-people contacts and boosting trade, in order to increase political dialogue and association as well as economic cooperation and integration; whereas, along the principle of differentiation, every partner country is offered to enhance its political and economic relations with the EU, to the extent that complies with its ambition; whereas pursuant to Article 49 of the TEU and in line with the Rome Declaration of 25 March 2017, any European state may apply to become a member of the EU, provided it adheres to the Copenhagen criteria and the principles of democracy, that it respects fundamental freedoms and human rights including those of minority groups and that it upholds the rule of law;
- D. whereas all the Eastern European Partners as sovereign states should decide freely on the course of their foreign and security policies, without external pressure or being exposed to the risk of military or economic reprisals, as is required by international law;
- E. whereas, at the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit, the participants highlighted the role of the Eastern Partnership in strengthening state, economic and societal resilience in the European Union's neighbourhood as also outlined in the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy and the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy;
- F. whereas good governance and progress towards democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights as well as sustainable economic development and poverty reduction are important elements for ensuring stability and strengthening internal security and reinforcing resilience of partner countries, helping them to create an enabling environment for the development of more resilient and competitive economies whereas a vibrant and independent civil society as well as independent media are vital to create resilient societies;
- G. whereas, unprecedented security challenges in Europe in terms of both conventional and hybrid warfare, extremism and radicalization, cyber-crime, terrorism and organised crime have emerged and cannot be solved without shared responsibility and cooperation;
- H. whereas the EU has renewed its commitment to promote stabilisation and resilience of its Partners and has earmarked further resources in the Eastern Neighbourhood Policy framework for this purpose; whereas the EU has included the fight against cybercrime and corruption, and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, amongst priorities in the security field; whereas, it is of utmost importance to ensure that the EU's post-2020 multiannual financial framework maintains a separate financial instrument for the neighbourhood as a clear evidence of the political importance the EU attaches to the region and to ensure the long-term tangible impact of reforms;
- I. whereas, both in the EU and the Eastern European Partners, citizens, companies and administrations rely heavily on information and communication technologies and thus are increasingly vulnerable to cybercrimes; whereas responding to cyber incidents require abilities, expertise, technologies and intelligence that need to be developed in EU Member States and Eastern European Partners; whereas it is obvious that the Russian government has been responsible for cyber-attacks against several EU states and partner states;

- J. whereas, since November 2017, the Commission has engaged in consulting on the issues arising from the spread of false information across traditional and social media and the way to counter it;
- K. whereas, in September 2015, the EU established the East Strategic Communication Task Force (StratCom East), as an instrument to counter Russian propaganda and disinformation, which remains insufficiently funded;
- L. whereas unresolved conflicts affecting Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova, and an on-going Russian military aggression in eastern Ukraine cause grievous loss of life and remain a major challenge to democratic development and security of the region;
- M. whereas Russia generates and sustains some of those conflicts, as part of its strategy of playing a predominant regional role in Eastern Europe as well as of using military presence as a leverage to exert pressure on partner countries, in contradiction with its international commitments to uphold the international legal order; whereas Russia illegally maintains military forces in the occupied territories and separatist regions of Georgia and Moldova respectively and provides leadership, personnel and military equipment to separatist forces in Ukraine; whereas Russia illegally maintains military forces and considerable amounts of ammunition and military equipment in the occupied territory and separatist region of Transnistria in the Republic of Moldova, and conducts joint military exercises with the military forces of the Transnistrian regime;
- N. whereas the occupation by Russian Federation of Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region / South Ossetia following the 2008 Russian-Georgian war and the annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russian Federation in 2014 have become a brutal demonstration of a disregard to international law; whereas the total militarisation of these territories by the occupying Russian authorities poses a significant threat to regional and all-European security; whereas the deterioration of the human rights situation is observed in the occupied territories, in particular the killing and political persecution of Georgian and Ukrainian citizens especially Crimean tatars;
- O. whereas the EU supports the full and genuine implementation of the Minsk arrangements in eastern Ukraine and the prolongation of sanctions tied to a full implementation; whereas the EU supports the 1999 Istanbul OSCE decision as regards the Republic of Moldova as well as the conversion of the current peacekeeping operation on the Nistru river into a civilian mission with an international mandate, and the OSCE Minsk Group and its Co-Chairs in their efforts to solve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and avoid any new eruption of violence and military fighting; whereas the EU demands the full implementation of the EU-brokered ceasefire agreement between Georgia and Russia by the Russian Federation and supports the Geneva International Discussions established to address consequences of the 2008 Russia-Georgia war employing respective instruments of conflict resolution such as GID co-chairmanship, deployment of EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia's occupied territories, full support to non-recognition and engagement policy, and the reversal of ethnic cleansing carried out by the Russian Federation;
- P. whereas the EU carries out actions aimed at complementing these efforts by promoting confidence- and peace-building activities across the conflict divide, inter alia through the good-willed efforts of the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, and through the implementation of the "European Partnership for the peaceful settlement of the

conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh” (EPNK) programme, aimed at bringing the civil societies closer;

- Q. whereas hazards posed by chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials are a major concern for the security of populations; whereas the nerve gas attack by the Russian government on former intelligence officer Mr Sergei Skripal and his daughter Ms Yulia Skripal, in Salisbury on 4 March 2018, must be seen as a threat to European security as such;
- R. whereas a more coherent and assertive EU approach and the determination to address the Russian Federation with one voice using all the instruments at the EU’s disposal, in particular with regard to conditionalities and sanctions, can make EU action more effective in addressing the security challenges of the Eastern Partnership countries;

Advancing stability by strengthening Eastern European Partners’ democratic governance, economic and social development

1. Stresses that progress towards good democratic governance, respect for human rights, rule of law, independence of the judiciary and reduction of corruption in Eastern European Partners is the key for maintaining their security and reducing societal vulnerabilities to internal and external destabilising attempts; calls on Eastern European Partners to pursue political reforms or initiate new ones on the basis of democratic principles and rule of law, bearing in mind that those reforms are essential to build up citizens’ confidence in state institutions; calls on Eastern European Partners, as well as the EU, to ensure equal rights for all citizens, including for national minorities and their languages;
2. Stresses that upholding good governance in law enforcement, security and defence institutions is key to protect Eastern European Partners from attempts of destabilisation; urges the parliaments of Partners to fully exercise their democratic oversight over law enforcement agencies and military and security services;
3. Underlines the role of human rights defenders organisations, independent media and civil society organisations in contributing to democratisation processes and exercising civic oversight; calls on Partners to ensure that they enjoy a robust protection; urges Partners to fully implement outstanding judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, particularly involving violations of Article 18 of the European Convention on Human Rights;
4. Supports Partners’ efforts aiming to develop or transform their economies, removing monopolies and concentration of ownership in private sector, warranting a stable economic and legal framework, promoting international trade and making them attractive for foreign investors; takes the view that Partners should give a new impetus to economic reforms, in order to advance towards well-functioning and sustainable social market economies; stresses that further steps need to be considered to deepen bilateral and multilateral regional integration among Eastern European Partners, as appropriate, and to strengthen regional infrastructure, including energy infrastructure;
5. Encourages the Commission and Partners’ governments to engage in discussions on the prospects for the advancing the European course of the Partners by seeking new avenues

for deeper integration, that, as an illustration and depending on the depth and scope of Partner's ambitions, could lead to accessions of associated countries to the EU customs union, energy union and digital union, in line with mutual interests;

6. Underlines that EU financial support to its partners should be conditional on concrete reform steps and their effective implementation, and that the EU's incentive-based approach will continue to benefit those partners most engaged in ambitious reforms, more for more; stresses further that EU support should be tailor-made to match the level of shared ambition for cooperation with each partner; in this regard, calls on the Commission to further reinforce programs dedicated to Association countries to provide robust assistance targeting complex reforms of Associated partners, notably to support legal approximation and sectorial integration efforts;
7. Recommends parliamentarians and civil servants from central administrations and the judiciary of partner countries to make the most extensive use of the Commission's Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument (TAIEX) in the process of adapting national laws, regulations and quality standards to match those of EU Member States;

Strengthening cooperation in the field of security and defence

8. Calls for strengthening dialogue in the field of security and defence between, on the one hand, the EU and its Member States, and, on the other, Eastern European Partners, where appropriate, and for further cooperation in the field of Common Foreign and Security Policy/Common Security and Defence Policy/ (CFSP/CSDP); welcomes the EU's value-based engagement in a number of CSDP missions, for instance the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia and the EUBAM in Ukraine; welcomes Partners' contributions, in particular those by Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, to CSDP;
9. Expresses deep concerns over the use of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) weapons and Russia's involvement in the attack against former intelligence officer Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia Skripal, on 4 March 2018; calls on Russia to respect its commitment to the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention, that bans the production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons and their precursors; calls on the EU to reinforce cooperation with its Partners in order to mitigate the risks arising from CBRN materials and related technological expertise;

Advancing towards a peaceful settlement of regional conflicts

10. Reiterates that sovereignty, independence and the peaceful settlement of disputes are key principles of the European security order; stresses that the resolution of conflicts in Eastern Europe is essential to enhance security and stability of the whole continent; considers that those conflicts remain a major threat to the independence and sovereignty of Partners, to the security of the region and beyond, and a potential source of instability for the whole of Europe; continues to firmly support the principle of territorial integrity of Partners within their internationally recognised borders; maintains that the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the 1990 OSCE Charter of Paris represent the cornerstones of a peaceful European continent;
11. Is of the opinion that the EU should assume greater responsibility in tackling security

crises in its neighbourhood; calls for increased efforts of the EU in the mediation processes of conflicts, in formats in which the EU is already present; believes that the EU, especially the Vice-President/High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), should play a more active and more effective role as an actor in conflict resolution and peacebuilding; strongly supports EU assistance to partner countries for building their capacities and fostering resilience, including on counterterrorism, strategic communications, cyber-defence, ammunition storage and security sector reform; calls for the upcoming negotiations on the post-2020 EU financial instruments devoted to the European Neighbourhood Policy, to take due account of the needs in this respect;

12. Condemns Russia's foreign policy that aims at keeping influence in the policy-making of its neighbours, through encouraging and supporting de facto authorities of separatist regions in Ukraine and Moldova and of occupied territories of Georgia and so undermining the restoration of their sovereignty over those regions and territorial integrity, and preventing the safe and dignified return of IDPs; considers the on-going Russian military aggression in Eastern Ukraine as the most important challenge to security in Europe; reiterates its support to the full implementation of the Minsk arrangements but is disappointed in the lack of progress; takes note of on-going talks between US and Russian Special Representatives on a possible deployment of a UN-mandated peacekeeping operation in Eastern Ukraine; invites the leaders of the Normandy Format to engage in discussing this option and taking new initiatives; continues to support all efforts for a lasting peaceful solution which respects the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, in particular by the deployment – with the consent of the Ukrainian authorities – of a peace-building and peace-keeping mission to the whole territory of Ukraine; calls for safe and unrestricted access for international monitoring along Ukrainian –Russian the border;
13. Welcomes the fact that the EU's policy of non-recognition of Georgia's and Ukraine's occupied territories by the Russian Federation has remained firm; calls on all EU political actors as well as those from the partner countries to refrain from engaging in any initiatives undermining the policy of non-recognition;
14. Believes that the prolongation of sanctions against individuals and entities in Russia is an inevitable outcome of the failure to implement the Minsk arrangements and continues to see such implementation by all sides as the basis for a sustainable political solution to the conflict caused by Russian military aggression in Eastern Ukraine; insists that the EU should keep open the option of further gradual sanctions if Russia continues to violate international law to the detriment of its neighbours; stresses that the annexation of Crimea into the Russian Federation remains illegal under international law; calls on the international community to elaborate the international format of negotiations on de-occupation of the peninsula (in line with EP resolution of 16 March 2017); strongly condemns, in this connection, the systematic violations of the human rights of the citizens of Georgia by representatives of the Russian Federation occupation forces, including their murder, torture and kidnapping, while welcoming the adoption of the bipartisan resolution of the Parliament of Georgia of 21 March 2018 on grave violations of human rights in occupied Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali Region, and the Otkhozoria-Tatunashvili list; welcomes, in this respect, the adoption by the Parliament of Georgia of the bipartisan resolution, which establishes a blacklist of those responsible for, or

who cover up, such violations (Otkhozoria-Tatunashvili list), and calls on the Member States and the Council to blacklist through national and EU-wide sanctions those who appear or who will appear on the Otkhozoria-Tatunashvili list;

15. Condemns the continuous infringement of basic human rights, including freedom of movement and residence and the right to property and education in one's native language, by the de facto authorities of Transnistria;
16. Calls on the EU to increase its diplomatic efforts in the Geneva International Discussions on the consequences of the Russia-Georgia conflict and in the 5+2 format for the settlement process of the Transnistrian conflict; welcomes all efforts for peaceful conflict-resolution and initiatives aimed at facilitating reconciliation, confidence-building and engagement of societies divided by conflict and occupation lines through providing more opportunities for trade, education and improved livelihood;
17. Condemns further reinforcement by the Russian Federation of the military build-up in the occupied territories of Georgia, fortification of the occupation line through installation of barbed wire fences and other artificial barriers; continuous infringement of basic human rights, including violations of rights to life, freedom of movement and residence, property, education in native language, as well as arbitrary detentions and kidnappings; condemns the deprivation of life in custody, in Tskhinvali, on 22 February 2018, of Mr Archil Tatunashvili, and the murder of another Georgian citizen, Mr Giga Otkhozoria, along the occupation line of Abkhazia in 2016; highlights that hundreds of thousands of IDPs and refugees are still deprived of the right to safe and dignified return to their homes, while ethnic Georgians in the occupied territories of Georgia remain a target of intensified policy of ethnic discrimination;
18. Calls upon the Russian Federation to reverse the recognition of so-called independence of Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and fulfil its international obligations, including under the EU mediated 12 August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement between Georgia and Russia, *inter alia* to withdraw its military forces from the territory of Georgia; Urges the Russian Federation to immediately provide EUMM unimpeded access to the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia;
19. Takes the view that the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict should be based on international law and the Basic Principles of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs of 2009 based on the principles of the Helsinki Final Act; urges all parties concerned to concentrate on negotiations to be held at the highest level, with the objective of defining a roadmap of concrete steps for the conflict resolution; calls on the sides of the conflict to maintain the ceasefire, to reduce tensions on the line of contact and to implement confidence-building measures;
20. Calls for closer cooperation and further coordination between the EU, the OSCE and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in implementing field activities aimed to reach peaceful settlements of conflicts in Eastern Europe;
21. Observes that economies of occupied territories of Georgia and breakaway regions of Moldova remain heavily dependent on Russia; takes the view that the EU should facilitate economic, cultural and social links between those regions and the concerned

Partners, by proposing specific trade arrangements, that would comply with the principles and provisions of the EU-Moldova and EU-Georgia Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas, and find ways to include them in some EU programmes;

22. Commends the efforts of the European Parliament to bring together young leaders and NGO representatives from Armenia and Azerbaijan in order to facilitate dialogue, promote mutual understanding and pave the way for the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; takes the view that such an initiative should be held on a regular basis and that similar initiatives should be launched, including for the protracted conflicts in Georgia and Moldova;

Overcoming information warfare

23. Reiterates its condemnation on subversive policies of propaganda, disinformation and social media infiltration that aim to weaken democratic societies, by discrediting institutions, manipulating public opinions, spreading false narratives, feeding social tensions and fostering general mistrust in media; denounces, in this respect, the information warfare that Russia conducts in its neighbours, using state-controlled media outlets to plant deliberately false news, in order to influence targeted countries' domestic politics, including elections, and to undermine the Eastern Partnership;
24. Commends the efforts of the StratCom East to explain, analyse and raise awareness of Russia's disinformation narratives; calls on the EU and the EU Member States to allocate more human and financial resources to the Task Force, in order to enhance its capacity to collect and analyse data and provide national relevant bodies of EU Member States and Partners with its expertise on countering disinformation;
25. Urges the EEAS and the EU Delegations to intensify efforts to counter false information spread in partner countries, through providing support to local media and communicating fact-based information in response to the exposure of falsehood;
26. Takes note of the Commission's proposals for new policy initiatives to counter "fake news" and disinformation spread online, that follows public consultation and a High-Level Expert Review; calls on the Commission to share with relevant bodies in partner countries, knowledge and expertise acquired;
27. Calls on the Partners to take measures to counter Russian disinformation campaigns and propaganda, through concrete policy measures and legislative steps; takes the view, in this regard, that disinformation should be tackled in an efficient way, safeguarding freedom of expression and excluding censorship as well as protecting media freedom and improving media resilience to outside pressures; calls on the EU and its Partners to set up a structured cooperation on legislative and regulatory issues regarding media and social platforms, including penal provisions that may address disinformation practices and their perpetrators; takes the view, in that respect, that penal measures should target in priority, platforms airing hate-speech content and their sponsors;
28. Proposes that new sanctions were imposed on those Russian oligarchs who shelter and launder illicit funds in Member states helping Russia to enable its antidemocratic activities and who fund, cover and manage multibillion euro operations such as election

meddling, cyber-attacks, fake news and propaganda campaigns;

29. Urges Partners to develop education programmes and campaigns towards a large public, raising awareness on the practices of malicious manipulation of opinions and on the way to identify propaganda media outlets;

Building up cyber-security defence

30. Underscores the increasingly aggressive nature and sophistication of malicious cyber-attacks against information systems, that aim to destabilise public and private communication infrastructures;
31. Welcomes the Commission's cybersecurity package adopted on 13 September 2017, aiming to further improve EU cyber resilience and response; commends its external dimension, including the objective of establishing "cyber dialogues" with non-EU countries to facilitate cooperation in cybersecurity; takes the view that engaging in "cyber dialogues" with Partners should be given priority;
32. Supports the framework for a joint EU diplomatic responses to malicious activities - the cyber diplomacy toolbox; welcomes the development of the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security agency (ENISA) by the EU to promote a cyber-culture and foster the proper functioning of the digital internal market, as well as the creation of a European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, under the EU-NATO cooperation;
33. Welcomes various other initiatives at international level, aiming to reduce the risk of cyber-attacks and boosting national cyber-capabilities, in particular the instalment of a United Nations Group of Governmental Experts in the Field of Information and Telecommunications and the OSCE Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) to foster "cyber diplomacy";
34. Urges the EU, its Member States and their Partners to develop cyber security resilience, by creating new capabilities for mitigating cyber threats, deterring potential aggressors, analysing cyber incidents and attacks and investing in research on new cyber-defence tools; recommends the Commission to set up or develop cyber security cooperation activities with Partners, including through effective use of ENISA and the European Centre of Excellence, with a view of developing joint expertise, response mechanisms and interoperability in case of cyber-attacks;
35. Is concerned that different State actors, such as Russia, have been involved in malicious cyber activities pursuing political, economic or security objectives that include attacks on critical infrastructure, cyber-espionage, disinformation campaigns or limiting access to the internet; underlines that such activities could constitute wrongful acts under international law and could lead to a joint EU response, such as using the EU cyber-diplomacy toolbox;
36. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the President of the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the VP/HR, the Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, the EEAS, the governments and parliaments of the EU Member States and the Eastern European partner countries.