

On the War in Eastern Ukraine

The armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, ongoing since 2014, is not - and has never been - a civil war. From the very beginning of the armed conflict, there has also been, besides the political conflict in Ukraine, a specific form of external aggression of the Russian Federation. They have tried to instrumentalise local representatives mercenaries, even Russian armed forces to implement Russia's interests.

The so-called Donetsk and Luhansk "People's Republics" can barely survive and only because of support from the Russian Federation. In combat, operations are maintained by ongoing supplies of weapons from Russia. Ukraine lost control of nearly 400 km of the Ukrainian-Russian border, and Russia counteracts resuming such control in any way possible, thus blatantly violating the sovereignty of its neighbour country. The military invasion is supported by a campaign, filled with disinformation, and deceitful diplomacy all over the world.

Therefore, there are sufficient grounds to consider the Ukrainian territory, taken up by the pseudo-republics, to be occupied.

In general we European Greens appreciate that the international community and in particular the European Union made the decision to react to this Russian aggression not with military action but by finding a political solution together with Ukraine and Russia. The international community rightly agreed on sanctions in response to Russia's infringement of international law and should hold on to these as long as the Russian government does not keep to the international norms, rules and values as formulated in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe in 1990. Therefore we will not endorse any repeal of the sanctions towards Russia, as long as the Russian government is not willing to fulfil the Minsk agreement.

No election can be held on a territory where the state cannot exercise its own jurisdiction, even temporarily. Resuming state jurisdiction is the minimal necessary precondition for application of national electoral legislation and other laws and regulations of Ukraine. Otherwise, the election will become a mere farce and serve to discredit democratic institutions, as happened once before with the illegal "referenda", which served as a basis to make the promulgation of Donetsk/Luhansk People's Republics and the annexation of the Crimean legitimate in the spring of 2014. Therefore, it is necessary that elections will only be held according to transparent rules in the Ukrainian law as provided by the Minsk agreement.

Ukraine needs to be able to continue its transition into a true democracy. Elections in the territories of Donetsk, Luhansk and Crimea can only be truly fair and free when citizens no longer suffer from military operations.

Unfortunately, this style of military and political behaviour is nothing new for the Russian Federation since the time of USSR breakdown. In 1992, Russia triggered military aggression and Moldovan territorial disintegration, as a result of the Transnistria War. Georgia also became the victim of brutal violations of international law in 1992 and 2008, losing part of its territory. We have to analyse if the political reactions of the international institutions to the above mentioned conflicts as well as the Ukrainian one, have been appropriate and early enough to stop the aggression against Ukraine.

Russia has a geopolitical interest in preserving frozen conflicts, which we can not accept. But the Russian military aggressions against Ukraine are not only geopolitical. Their actions target international values which Ukraine seeks to share, the established rules of international co-existence, and the rules for interrelationships in the civilized world, which are based on the principles of equality and mutual respect.

We reaffirm our hope that Russia recollects and accepts its commitment to the principle of the rule of law in Europe as stated in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, which it signed once among others in 1990. Therefore we appreciate the negotiations for a political and peaceful solution of the conflict. For us it is essential that during these negotiations nothing will be agreed on about Ukraine and its territory without the approval of the legally elected Ukrainian government.

The European Green Party urges the Greens in the European Parliament to do everything in their power to promote and stand up for a peaceful solution of the conflict in Ukraine, to reengage into building trust and mutual understanding and to work on a diplomatic solution in order to restore the territorial integrity of Ukraine and to prevent further progression of such events, desirable only for Russia, in Ukraine and in other countries.

In view of the above, the 5th Congress of European Greens insists that the European Union keeps working on a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. The Congress asks that the EU and all its member states continue to uphold economic and political sanctions against Russia and its leaders. Furthermore, the EU should intensify its support for the democratic transition in Ukraine through aid programs for economic relief, democracy strengthening and capacity building.