



The Treaty of Westphalia determined basic principles of the relationships between European states which have lasted for centuries. The conclusion of the invasion – whatever it may be, whenever it comes – could be similarly epoch-making. What the EU thinks and does then will be significant, even though currently unthought. This brief article explores starting points.

As of October 2023, the EU believes

It should suspend multilateral ties with Russia

For instance, there is an EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee but inter-parliamentary relations with the Russian Federal Assembly are currently suspended. Russia's chairmanship of the Arctic forum was suspended after the invasion – now Norway has taken it over.

Sanctions should be imposed and reinforced

In November 2022 the violation of 'restrictive measures' (sanctions, of which there have been 11 rounds so far) was added to the list of 'EU crimes' included in the Treaties.

According to the European Commission, since February 2022, the EU has banned over €43.9 billion in exported goods to Russia and €91.2 billion in imported goods. This means that 49% of exports and 58% of imports are currently sanctioned, compared to 2021.

Sanctions now apply to almost 1800 individuals and entities altogether. In the latest round in June 2023 the EU sanctioned an additional 71 individuals and 33 entities.

There are €21.5 billion of assets frozen in the EU and € 300 billion of assets from the Central Bank of Russia blocked in the EU and G7 countries.

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Russia is a state sponsor of terrorism

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20221118IPR55707/european-parliament-declares-russia-to-be-a-state-sponsor-of-terrorism>

Russia' actions are criminal

MEPs voted in favour of creating a tribunal to investigate the crimes of Russia's aggression against Ukraine <https://euobserver.com/world/156762>

Resolution on one year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2023-0123_EN.html

Following its expulsion from the Council of Europe on 16 March 2022, the Russian Federation ceased to be a High Contracting Party to the European Convention on Human Rights

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/russia-ceases-to-be-a-party-to-the-european-convention-of-human-rights-on-16-september-2022>

Ukraine should be in the EU

In May 2023, European Parliament President Roberta Metsola said Ukraine's EU accession

negotiations should start as soon as possible

<https://www.ebu.ch/news/2023/05/when-a-country-looks-at-the-eu-as-its-home-the-eu-should-fling-its-doors-wide-open-says-european-parliament-president>

In June 2023 the European Parliament condemned Russia's destruction of Kakhovka dam and calls to start accession negotiations with Kyiv this year

<https://euneighbourseast.eu/news/latest-news/european-parliament-condemns-russias-destruction-of-kakhovka-dam-and-calls-to-start-accession-negotiations-with-kyiv-this-year/>

It should be helping with finance, hardware and refugees

The EU, its Member States and its financial institutions are making available €40.5 billion to support Ukraine's overall economic, social and financial resilience. This has been in the form of macro-financial assistance, budget support, emergency assistance, crisis response and humanitarian aid.

In addition, military assistance measures are over €25 billion, of which €5.6 billion have been mobilised under the European Peace Facility.

Resources are being made available to help Member States cater for needs of Ukrainians fleeing the war in the EU, to the amount of about €17 billion.

BUT

Various kinds of "support fatigue" are now being reported. And how is the EU going to fulfil its promises like supplying a million shells? (which North Korea is doing for Russia)

Some pertinent questions have recently been raised about what happens if Ukraine loses because EU help dries up:

- Although an ongoing war is not an existential threat to Euro-Atlantic security, Ukraine losing would be
- If it does, what happens with the enormous numbers of weapons and refugees?
- What would be the effect on NATO?
- How will the members states explain the failures to live up to their rhetoric?
- What do claims of liberal democratic values and economic reach mean in practice?

HOW WARS END

All wars end some time. There are five basic ways, found repeatedly through history

- Disengagement – one or both sides decides to stop fighting
- Conquest – territory occupied
- De facto surrender – an armistice or similar which results in one side imposing its will on the other
- Formal surrender – both sides recognise who won and who lost
- A negotiated agreement – with or without outside help, an armistice, ceasefire, or truce come into effect, which may or may not lead to a formal peace treaty, or a frozen conflict along the line of actual control

THEN WHAT?

The EU may or may not have a role in any formal end to the war. But as a neighbour of both participants, it has vital future interests.

Dr Stefan Meister, head of the Program for International Order and Democracy at the German Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin, has proposed seven principles which the EU should follow to form the basis of a new post-war EU strategy toward Russia

<https://carnegieeurope.eu/2022/11/29/paradigm-shift-eu-russia-relations-after-war-in-ukraine-pub-88476>

- Put Ukraine first

- Upgrade the EU's neighbourhood policy
- Do not abandon Russian civil society
- Devise a smarter visa policy
- Resist full disengagement
- Strengthen European energy security
- Become a peace actor

Considering what happens after the war is currently politically unthinkable. But the unthinkable has to be thought at some point.

Author Robin Ashby chairs the Eurodefense Observatory on EU-Russia issues. Any views expressed above are his own

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