



To

Ms Ursula von der Leyen  
President of the European Commission

Mr Josep Borrell Fontelles  
Vice-President of the European Commission for a Stronger Europe in the World  
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Mr Olivér Várhelyi  
Member of the European Commission for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement

2 April 2020

Dear President,  
Dear Vice-President/ High Representative,  
Dear Commissioner,

With our deep concern, we call your attention upon recent ideas, announced by UN General Secretary and some other political leaders, calling for review of the EU sanction regimes. These initiatives coincided with the statements made on 18 March 2020 by Speaker of the Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, calling to lift all international sanctions, including those of the EU and the UN, under the motive of response to the COVID-19 pandemic and oil prices slump<sup>1</sup>. President Putin raised the same ideas during recent video conference of G20 leaders.

It must be noted, that the EU sanctions vis-a-vis Russia have been adopted due to Russia's blunt violation of international norms and its own international commitments when it started hybrid and military war against Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea. The Minsk agreements have set very clear preconditions for lifting them, but the Kremlin did not implement them until now.

Changing of sanction regimes or lifting them is not a humanitarian action, but rather benevolence to authoritarian regimes, who continue to suppress freedoms and violate rule of law. It would mean a U-turn from EU values and abandoning those people who continue to fight for democracy. Unconditional lifting of sanctions would further fracture values and rules-based international system with far-reaching negative implications.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://m.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2020/03/18/n\\_14174197.shtml](https://m.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2020/03/18/n_14174197.shtml)

Therefore, we would like to ask you to consider very carefully any initiatives to start a discussion on easing or lifting current EU sanction regimes and not support them.

We would urge EU authorities to increase pressure on Russian leadership with a clear demand - to stop immediately hostilities on the border of occupied territories of Ukraine, in order to allow Ukrainian government and international organisations to take care about the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in those territories.

In addition to that Russian authorities should be asked to use proper resources for medical care in occupied territories of Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk regions in order to assist local people with a proper treatment against COVID-19 virus. If Russian authorities are not able to do it, EU and other international organisations should provide immediate assistance.

Sincerely,

Mr Andrius Kubilius,  
Member of the European Parliament  
Chair of the Delegation to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly

Mr Witold Jan Waszczykowski  
Member of the European Parliament  
Chair of the Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee

Mr Petras Auštrevičius  
Member of the European Parliament  
Chair of the Informal Group of Friends of European Ukraine