EU NEIGHBOURHOOD EAST FORUM

FRIENDS OF EUROPEAN RUSSIA FORUM

epp group in the european parliament

TRIO STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE OF EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

FORUM MISSION STATEMENTS

WESTERN STRATEGY TOWARDS RUSSIA

"We should set the European Trio process for the most advanced Eastern Partners to support the reforms of leading EU associated countries of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova"

EU NEIGHBOURHOOD EAST FORUM

"The success of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova is what the West can make happen, and it is currently the only instrument available for the West to help Russia transform into a pro-European country"

FRIENDS OF EUROPEAN RUSSIA FORUM

November – December 2019

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MISSION

EU NEIGHBOURHOOD EAST FORUM

The European Parliament is an important forum of political discussion in the European continent. The Eastern Partnership policy up until now took an important part in this discussion, as the European Parliament has established the European Parliamentary Assembly (Euronest), which plays a leading role in shaping the debate on the future of our relations with EU Eastern Partners. In order to facilitate this and to assist the Euronest, we propose to establish in the European Parliament an informal permanent forum of discussions open to all interested MEPs, which we could call as ***'The EU Neighbourhood East Forum'****.*

FRIENDS OF EUROPEAN RUSSIA FORUM

We believe that ***informal Forum 'Friends of European Russia'****, uniting like-minded MEPs, can make a meaningful input in eventual creation of such EU Strategy towards Russia. In addition, such Forum will send an important signal to the civil society in Russia and to the political opposition, that they have supporters also in the European Parliament in their struggle for more democratic, more transparent and respectful towards its citizen's future. In the EU, we need open and frank discussions, formal and informal, on Russia's European future.*

Non-papers November-December 2019

Prepared by Lithuanian Delegation of the EPP Group in the European Parliament

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STRATEGY ON THE FUTURE OF EASTERN PARTHNERSHIP

Non-paper 2019/10/14 **Prepared by Lithuanian Delegation of the EPP Group in the European Parliament**

https://tsajunga.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/LT-EPP-Trio-Strategy-2030.pdf

> *We should set the European Trio Process for the most advanced Eastern partners for the next decade, which should be supporting the leading EU Associated/DCFTA countries (Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova)*

I. A New Flagship Initiative – the Trio Strategy 2030: Our objectives

1) The EU has proved in the history that it has a huge soft transformative potential for neighbouring regions and countries. Since the World War II and especially since the fall of the Berlin Wall, a transformation of economically poor post-totalitarian or post-soviet countries into successful and democratic countries was happening only through the process of EU enlargements. Such a transformation of neighbouring Eastern Partnership countries would be beneficial also for the EU itself because, as the EU Commissioner J. Hahn has said, "We have to become smarter at exporting stability. If not, Europe will keep importing instability".

2) Up until now the EaP dimension, established by the EU in 2009, was very successful in supporting the efforts of a group of EaP countries – Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, which have each signed the Association Agreement with the EU, including its part on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (**the EU Associated Trio**), in moving more rapidly and effectively with implementation of necessary reforms and speeding-up ahead in the direction of deeper European political and economic integration with the EU.

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) strategy, which has also formulated tangible political flagship objectives, such as introduction of a visa-free travel for the citizens of the EU Associated Trio, was a powerful soft-power instrument, which EU has used in order to assist those countries and their ordinary citizens to sustain a high-level political motivation for European type of difficult structural reforms.

Overall, there has been a tangible progress on the implementation of the 20 Deliverables for 2020 in areas of political and economic integration, trade and investment opportunities, energy, transport, digital agenda and youth, while the new guidelines are now being discussed for the next decade to 2030.

3) Today, we find ourselves at a crucial point where we should add new additional long-term instruments in our strategy to help people of a leading group of the EU Associated Trio to keep their motivation and momentum for reforms for the next decade up to 2030. The EU integration reforms path is a difficult one, so the tailored-made instruments of EU soft power have become indispensable and crucial to assist these countries, which have made a geopolitical choice to join the EU family. The 10 years have passed since the establishment of the EaP strategy and now it is a proper time for the EU to move forward, promote a differentiated approach of the Eastern Partnership policy and present to the EU Associated Trio **a New Flagship Initiative – the Trio Strategy 2030**.

4) The EU could be more ambitious in using a 'more for more' principle and initiate a discussion on forward-looking strategic agenda and political objectives of the Eastern Partnership policy for the next decade. The goals and instruments of the EaP strategy should respond to the needs, expectations and interests of the countries, which have chosen an ambitious path of EU integration reforms.

By applying a 'more for more' principle, the EU would be sending to the people in the EU East Neighbourhood a strong soft-power signal saying that the EU is not only demanding more and more of painful reforms, but also is gradually opening the doors to the EU Associated Trio themselves.

5) A New Flagship Initiative – the Trio Strategy 2030 should have three major long-term strategic policy objectives for the period of 2020 – 2030. Our strategy should be not only demanding what the EU Associated Trio needs to do, but also suggesting what the EU can and should do for these countries up until 2030. These policy objectives can be formulated as follows:

- **a) The creation of the European Trio Process** – a new EU soft-power instrument to improve motivation to continue reforms, which will include tailor-made more intensive instruments of cooperation with the EU and its Member States. On the EU side, the differentiated treatment of EU Associated Trio (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova) could lead to an establishment of institutions and policy instruments, which would include more ambitious EU political and economic integration objectives to compare with the ones shared by the rest of EU Eastern partners (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus). This will help to achieve the main objective until 2030, which is to keep motivation and support from the of EU Associated Trio societies to the implementation of necessary and painful reforms.

- **b) The European Trio Process will be led by the EU institutions and a coalition of like-minded countries of the Trio Strategy 2030**. The European Trio Process will replicate the one initiated in 2014 by Germany to speed up the process of the integration of Western Balkans (so called 'Berlin Process' initiative). The creation and implementation of the Berlin process was supported by the EU institutions and led by a coalition of like-minded countries (Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Greece, United Kingdom, Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia) to reinvigorate the Western Balkan EU integration reforms. The coalition of Trio Strategy 2030, in analogy with the Berlin Process, could be formed of countries having a special interest in promoting the Eastern Partnership dimension and its success, and which will be also in the lead of forthcoming EU Presidencies for the period of 2020 – 2030 (e.g. Finland in 2019, Croatia and Germany in 2020, Czech Republic and France in 2022, Sweden in 2023, Poland and Denmark in 2025, Lithuania in 2027, Latvia in 2028 and so on).

- **c) The European Trio Process will have an intensive agenda of tangible projects and programs,** which will take on board the best experience of increased cooperation and deeper integration from Berlin Process and the instruments of European Economic Area.

6) The success of implementing EU integration reforms by the EU Associated Trio will create new incentives in the EU East Neighbourhood for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus to choose an ambitious path of European integration.

The Trio Strategy 2030 should be complementary to the Eastern Partnership instruments and will not aim at replacing the existing initiatives in this area. On the contrary, it will contribute to the discussion on how we can make the Eastern Partnership policy more effective.

II. The main principles of the Trio Strategy 2030

1. Promoting a differentiated approach of the Eastern Partnership policy: what should we do?

We should build upon the tangible achievements of the EU Eastern Partnership within the last decade marked by a signing and entry into force of the EU Association Agreements and launching of the visa-free regimes.

We should set up a forward-looking strategic agenda, which should go beyond and concentrate on an increased cooperation and deeper integration of the EU Associated Trio with the EU. It could focus on updating and upgrading the multilateral track of cooperation by taking an example from the Berlin Process and the instruments of European Economic Area.

We should include in the EU long-term strategy additional instruments and approaches to support the EU Associated Trio in order to help them to sustain the implementation of ambitious reforms over the next decade.

We should emphasise that, by supporting the EU Associated Trio, the international community will be also sending a message and example of success to remaining countries of EU Eastern Partnership to choose an ambitious path of European integration reforms.

We should support geopolitical aspirations of the EU Associated Trio to deepen their ties with the EU and welcome the progress over the last years in delivering reforms, especially in areas of macroeconomic stability, justice reform, anti-corruption, public administration reform and decentralization, energy and digital market, better regulation, corporate governance and public investment management. We should also recognise the need to continue these reforms in the framework of the EU Association Agreements and other international obligations such as the implementation of agreements with the International Monetary Fund and EU macro-financial assistance programs. These reform measures will be of a key importance for the EU Associated Trio to advance on their path towards deeper EU integration.

We should underline, that the EU Association Agreements are the roadmaps for EU related reforms in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, which require our support, and to recall the fact that there is a wide and steady support of the citizens in these countries to enter the family of the EU countries.

We should note that keeping a momentum of reforms and investments in the Eastern Partnership region in general and in the EU Associated Trio in particular, remains crucial for the aspirations to advance more in the EU integration path.

We should create the New Flagship Initiative and to show to the citizens of associated EU East Neighbourhood countries that the doors of the EU will remain open. We need to have an advanced integration perspective for the EU Associated Trio in order to assist public actors and private interests, as well as civil society organisations, in giving a powerful impetus to further implementation of crucial reforms. Each country's progress nevertheless must be assessed against the individual efforts to comply with the Copenhagen criteria and the conditionality process of the EU Association Agreements, including its part on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA).

We should create the EU long-term conditional framework of national reform agenda and investments. One of the first steps into this direction is an announcement made by EU Commissioner J. Hahn in 2018 on the Reform Contract for Investment to Ukraine.

We should make a full use of EU support instruments and to boost the implementation of our strategy by setting of reform support group for the EU Associated Trio. The EU has an excellent example to follow, which is a Support Group for Ukraine (SGUA).

2. Making the Trio Strategy 2030 work: how can we set a process and what agenda?

We should invite the EU and its partners to build the European Trio Process, which would follow an example of the Berlin Process led by Germany and launched by a group of EU countries and institutions to reinvigorate an EU dialogue with the Western Balkan countries in 2014. It will help to mobilise a support to reforms and investments into an economic growth of the EU Associated Trio. The international community, EU and G7 partners, donors and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) should be involved in this process.

We should ensure that the European Trio Process will lead to more stability, justice and economic growth, and would lay the foundations to strengthen the European perspectives and economic growth in the region over the next decade. The European Trio Process should aim at making additional progress of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova in the reform implementation and attracting investments. It should help improving investment climate and support reforms for economic growth.

We should demand that the European Trio Process will be contributing to the implementation of the EU Association Agreements and the Association Agenda to include, among others, the EU political oversight of the reform implementation in the EU Associated Trio.

We should include in the forward-looking agenda the following objectives:

- **a) consolidation of investment policy linked to investment intensive sectors** of Energy, Environment, Transport and Digital Agenda, which would be supported by investment platform and coordination of IFI instruments,
- **b) working with an increased number of EU programs and instruments**, such as a new generation of sustainable trade and stabilisation agreements, agreements for Conformity Analysis and Assessment (ACAAs), Common Transit Convention, European Connectivity Agenda, Energy (ENTSO-E, TEN-E) and Transport (TEN-T), Horizon 2020 plus or integration in to EU Youth Strategy,
- **c) employing a new generation of institutions and policies**, establishing the EU Support Group for the Trio, adopting EU policy initiatives for the EU association countries in areas of European Green Deal, Sustainable Europe Investment Plan, SME Strategy and Access to Finance, Youth Guarantee, Digital Europe of New Generation of Technologies, Promoting European Way of Life and European Democracy, the peoples say at a Conference of the Future of Europe.

3. The European Trio Process: what elements and drivers?

The European Trio Process should have agenda drivers (Annual Leaders' Summits) and important investment-led flagship initiatives (Connectivity Agenda, List of Major Infrastructure Project, Internal Market Creation, Investment Policy, Digital Europe, Research and Innovation, Youth, Employment, Institution-building for Trio platforms).

The European Trio Process should become a geopolitical process, supported by the EU. As was the case with the Berlin Process for Western Balkans, the EU should support establishment of a coalition of like-minded countries for the Trio Strategy 2030 and contributed to its agenda setting. The coalition of like-minded countries will be a driving force for the EaP strategy success – each of the countries in the coalition will be also in the presidency of EU Council over the period from 2020 to 2030.

The European Trio Process will be driven by Annual Leaders' Summits of a coalition of like-minded friends, which would have a support from the EU and International Financial Institutions. The Annual Leaders' Summits could have a rotating presidency and follow an agreed agenda as well as other specific initiatives to support the implementation of EU Association Agreements.

The European Trio Process should focus on access to EU internal market creation, in particular, by setting a Connectivity Agenda in areas of energy, transport and digital infrastructure to improve connections between the EU and associated countries, individually, and as a region.

The European Trio Process will establish and manage a list of major regional connectivity investment projects linked with Trans-European Network (TEN) and EU Connecting Europe Facility. The progress on the implementation of the projects will be regularly reported at the Annual Leaders' Summits. The list of major infrastructure projects could work as a link between reforms and investments and could be accompanied by a report on reform implementation in areas of EU market creation and better investment climate.

The European Trio Process should be supported by the EU Association Investment Platform, which can be launched and managed by the EU institutions (e.g. SGUA plus for the EU Associated Trio) in cooperation with IFIs and National Investment Councils to assist Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova in the investment process.

The European Trio Process should help to improve investment management, especially in the area of public investment projects implemented together with International Financial Institutions.

The European Trio Process could also encourage regional political and economic cooperation of the EU Associated Trio and could propose in the first Leaders' summit to consider establishing the Regional EU Association Council with participating countries of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. This Council together with EU institutions could establish instruments of regional cooperation in areas of trade agreements, technical assistance, sharing the best practices facilities, economic growth agenda, investment trust funds, youth exchange and professional training, rule of law and democracy peer reviews.

4. The global benefits of the European Trio Process

The European Trio Process will contribute to a success of EU associated countries. In this way, via the example of success of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, the EU will also have a major positive transformative impact on opinion of Russia's ordinary people in helping them to strive for an open democratic European country.

At the end, the European Trio Process will make Russia's aggressive strategy towards Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova redundant.

The Eastern Partnership policy with inclusion of the European Trio Process and with an addition of the Trio Strategy 2030, can have a crucial importance in coming closer to final implementation of most ambitious goal on our continent of "Europe - whole, free and at peace". It will take time and will demand a lot of political will and resources from both sides, from the EU Associated Trio and the EU itself. This approach follows the recent European Parliament resolution on MR80 year anniversary, which said that it is **the only way, how the dividing lines on European continent, which were established by Hitler and Stalin 80 years ago, finally could be eradicated.**

We should set the European Trio process for the most advanced Eastern Partners to support the reforms of leading EU associated countries of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova

THE EU NEIGHBOURHOOD EAST FORUM

Mission Statement

The perspective of Eastern Partnership countries and their people, who neighbour the European Union and Russia, is important not only to the future of the region itself, but also to the future of the whole European continent. We have to consider this region as an opportunity for the European Union to advance stability and security in the neighbourhood and in such a way to assist Russia to transform itself into an open European democracy.

Today, the Eastern Partnership region and its countries have many challenges and many differences. Some of the partners (Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova) have chosen a successful path of European integration reforms and signed with the EU ambitious Association Agreements, which include the creation of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area.

The European choice of other partners is more ambivalent. Armenia, which has signed the CEPA with the EU, is living through big political changes. Azerbaijan, which has in force the PCA, is a country with very favorable naturalconditions and rich natural resources. Belarus is still not able to have a positive record of respecting the international law and improving human rights, as well as to have democratic elections, which would be recognised as legitimate by the Western community.

Nonetheless, there is a chance that European integration success of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, supported by the EU Association Trio strategy, can be also an example to the remaining countries in the region.

It can even inspire Russia and its people to seek a transformation into an open European democracy.

For example, the Presidential election in Ukraine is a case, which offered an example of democratic change to the rest of the former Soviet Union. By looking at Ukraine we see that everything is possible.

Since the World War II and especially since the fall of the Berlin Wall, a transformation in the European continent of post-totalitarian or post-soviet countries into successful and democratic countries was happening only through the process of integration with the EU. There is not a single European country, which by staying alone was able to keep a motivation and political will for painful reforms. We have to acknowledge that the success of transformation process in those countries was mainly due to the EU soft power of integration and a promise of enlargement to move forward with the implementation of necessary reforms.

EU NEIGHBOURHOOD EAST FORUM

Ten years ago the EU showed it had a responsibility for the future of the region and it has initiated the implementation of Eastern Partnership strategy. Since then a lot has been achieved, but there is still much more to be done. It will depend not only on the will of the Eastern Partnership countries to make reforms, but also on the EU being smart and dynamic in using a soft power of the EU integration.

The objective of the EU Neighbourhood East Forum

The European Parliament is an important forum of political discussion in the European continent. The Eastern Partnership policy up until now took an important part in this discussion, as the European Parliament has established the European Parliamentary Assembly (Euronest), which plays a leading role in shaping the debate on the future of our relations with EU Eastern Partners.

However, taking into account the fact that the Eastern Partnership as a region is very dynamic and has many political developments, and that the information the European Parliament is receiving from this region, does not always reflect a complete picture of the events in those countries, it would be beneficial to have a constant political attention by MEPs on the EU strategy and instruments to support the Eastern Partners.

In order to facilitate this and to assist the Euronest, we propose to establish in the European Parliament an informal permanent forum of discussions open to all interested MEPs, which we could call as ‘The EU Neighbourhood East Forum’.

This forum could be a place of seminars, meetings, talks or conferences, exchange of views on reports or studies, or even a place of political debates. It could be a place for meetings with public activists, politicians and experts, for meetings with European Commission members and their staff, diplomats and EU Member State representatives.

Forum will be welcoming and supporting all activities, which will help EU Eastern Partners to embark on the European path of integration reforms.

The key to the European ambition to have European continent, that is whole, free and at peace, is in the Easter Partnership region and the European Parliament has a unique chance to pick it by wisely employing the Euronest and ‘The EU Neighbourhood East Forum’.

We invite you to join ‘The EU Neighbourhood East Forum’ by replying positively to this invitation.

Resolution adopted at the EPP Congress, Zagreb (Croatia), 20th - 21th November 2019

EPP Resolution on the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership and its future

Bearing in mind that:

a) Eastern Partnership is a tailor-made concept of cooperation for all six countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. Their further progress on the European path is very much dependent on compliance with European values and standards, to which these countries have committed themselves.

b) the EU has proved its enormous transformative power through the Enlargement Policy, as confirmed by the success of the Central and Eastern European countries in their development from post-totalitarian regulated economies to European style democracies and social market economies, which was achieved due to the process of integration into the EU,

c) this transformative power by enlargement shall be used in the Western Balkans and also in Eastern Partnership countries, willing to join the EU,

d) this year marks the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership (the EaP) which was established in 2009 as part of the European Neighborhood Policy and throughout the decade it has proven to be an effective instrument for providing tailored support based on the 'more for more and less for less' principle for the EaP countries in their implementation of the European reforms,

e) the EPP in its Resolution on Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, adopted during the EPP Congress in Helsinki on 7-8 November 2018, confirmed unequivocal support for a European perspective for the EaP countries, which signed the association agreements with the EU, depending on the implementation progress of European reforms,

f) the countries of EaP, especially those demonstrating their willingness to join the European Union, continue to face aggressive hybrid threats by the Kremlin in order to keep them in the sphere of its influence and to impede the process of their EU integration in order to not allow them become successful European countries,

That is why the EPP Congress:

1. declares the EaP Policy as one of the EPP strategic priorities for the next decade and its readiness to elaborate on ambitious and concrete proposals for the EaP policy review, which would provide an opportunity to set out political objectives and goals for the next decade and ways to reinforce relationship with the EU Associated Trio, i.e. Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, which continue on the ambitious path of EU integration, on the basis of the "more for more and less for less" differentiation principle, and also thus provide attraction for the other three countries of the EaP to move on their reform agenda;

2. reiterates its strong support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, condemns the occupation of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, as well as the Ukrainian territories in Donbas region, stresses that it will never recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia, reiterates that EU sanctions against Russia will continue until full restoration of territorial integrity of Ukraine;

3. commends the progress achieved so far through the EaP policy, especially in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia (EU Associated Trio), culminating in conclusion of the Association Agreements and DCFTA's, with ambitious reform roadmaps and launching the visa-free regimes;

4. reminds that there is broad and consistent public support for EU integration in the EU Associated Trio countries and considers that the EU should send a strong encouraging signal to the societies of the EU Associated Trio, that the EU remains committed to the further deepening of political association and economic integration with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova and that the doors of the EU remain open when the relevant membership criteria are met, so as to strengthen further public support for the painful reforms;

5. stresses that in order to build upon the momentum of the EaP there is a need for the EU to move forward and ensure a qualitatively differentiated approach of the Eastern Partnership policy by presenting an new additional instrument, a new Flagship Initiative - Trio Strategy 2030 - a long-term strategy towards the EU Associated Trio countries, which would be a strong soft power instrument to consolidate democratic institutions and common values as well as to boost reform agenda in these countries and which would be implemented consequently until 2030;

6. proposes that the Trio Strategy 2030 shall entail concrete tailor-made EU instruments to promote a 'more for more and less for less' principle and further strengthen and deepen

the EU cooperation with the EU Associated Trio countries that will further facilitate the implementation of reforms and strengthen their commitment to shared values and principles, such as democracy, the rule of law, the fight against corruption, strong and independent judiciary that are not used as an instrument against political opponents, respect for human rights, good governance, and adherence to the OSCE/ODIHR recommendations on free and fair elections, in addition, such Initiative would also clearly demonstrate the benefits of this path to the remaining countries of the EaP;

7. emphasizes that the EU could be sending a strong soft-power signal to the peoples in the EU Neighborhood by not only demanding more and more of difficult systemic reforms, but also by implementing new Flagship Initiative - Trio Strategy 2030 and in such a way gradually opening the doors of further integration to the EU Associated Trio countries;

8. suggests that the new Flagship Initiative could be based on three main guiding elements:

(i) **A differentiated treatment of the EU Associated Trio** - entailing creation of additional new instruments on the EU side, such as reform and investment agendas, screening-like instruments and facilitating institutions, such as Support Groups for all three countries of the EU Associated Trio, to help those countries drive forward the political association and economic integration with the EU;

(ii) **The establishment of the European Trio Process** - which will establish deeper integration instruments between the EU and the EU Associated Trio countries and will be based on analogy of successful "Berlin Process" initiated in 2014, which created a Coalition of like-minded EU Member States and gave an impetus for integration process of the Western Balkans;

(iii) **Calendar until 2030** - the European Trio Process shall be guided by the EU institutions and a coalition of like-minded countries for the "Trio Strategy 2030". This coalition shall be formed by the countries, which have a special interest in promoting the Eastern partnership dimension and its success and which will be in the rotating Council Presidency starting from 2020 until 2030 (for example: Croatia and Germany -2020; Czech Republic and France - 2022; Sweden - 2023; Poland - 2025; Lithuania -2027; Latvia - 2028),

9. maintains that the European Trio Process shall also help to mobilize international community, the EU and G7 partners, international donors and IFIs to partake in the ambitious process;

10. stresses that the European Trio Process agenda shall be steered by regular leader´s meetings and supported by tools and cooperation frameworks similar to those which are used by "Berlin Process" in Western Balkans - such as the Connectivity Agenda for accessing the EU internal energy, transport and digital market, extended EU Connecting Europe Facility or the List of Major Infrastructure Projects, and it shall be supported by the new formats of cooperation like the EU Association Investment Platform, cooperation of Association Trio National Investment Councils, boosting a technical assistance to improve public investment management capacity, etc.;

11. invites the EU institutions and the EU Associated Trio countries to consider the EPP Congress proposal on the establishment of the Trio Strategy 2030 with a view to the adoption of such a Strategy at the next EaP Summit in 2020;

12. notes that the continued success of the EaP with inclusion of the European Trio Process and with an addition of the Trio Strategy 2030, will be crucial for both the Eastern Neighborhood countries as well as for the EU, because it is the best input for the creation of a Europe that is "whole, free and at peace", moreover, it is also part of a long-term EU strategy towards Russia, as the success stories of the EU Associated Trio by the power of example, will also give hope to Russian people that a positive change is possible in Russia; this success story by promoting peace will eradicate the dividing lines on the European continent which still separate the EaP region from the rest of the EU.

13. Further setbacks to democracy, reforms and the rule of law and the erosion of a European orientation will jeopardise a Trio Strategy 2030, as described above.

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Prepared by Lithuanian Delegation of the EPP Group in the European Parliament

Western Strategy towards Russia

Central and Eastern Europe's approach

Non-paper 2019/10/14 **Prepared by Lithuanian Delegation of the EPP Group in the European Parliament**

https://tsajunga.lt/aktualijos/vakaru-strategija-rusijos-atzvilgiu/

The EU's strategy for relations with Russia must, first and foremost, be geared towards efforts aimed at assisting a post-Putin Russia to transform into a non-aggressive democratic country that follows European standards

The European Union is situated next to a complicated neighbourhood. Russia has been and will remain, for many years to come, the biggest threat to the geopolitical security of the EU. This threat is mainly felt in Central and Eastern Europe and the Eastern Partnership countries; however, it reaches the entire transatlantic community, too [1].

The EU needs to have a long-term strategy for relations with Russia without having any illusion that in the near future Russia, under Putin's rule, may become a non-aggressive democratic state that abides by the European standards. The EU's strategy for relations with Russia must, first and foremost, be geared towards efforts aimed at assisting a post-Putin Russia to transform into a non-aggressive democratic country that follows European standards. This idea is getting increasingly more attention in Central and Eastern Europe [2, 3], but the EU and the West at large still lack a strategy for relations with Russia.

The strategy should also be clear on this - since efforts to pursue contacts or better relations between Putin's Russia and the EU or individual Member States are hopeless and even harmful, because they only delay the prospect of Russia's transformation into a pro-European country.

Any efforts to return to ‘business as usual’, ‘reset’ with Russia or questioning of continuation of sanctions regime would seriously hurt unity of the EU in reaction to continued Russian aggression towards Ukraine, worsening human rights situation in Russia, attacks on Russian citizens abroad, interference in democratic processes in the West, cyber attacks, use of weaponised information and disinformation, etc. Sanctions regime must continue, and if need bee, further strengthened. The effect of sanctions would be even bigger if they are part of wider longer-term strategy, whose ultimate goal is to help Russia to transform into a European country.

The analysis of the centuries-long history of Western Europe, as compared with that of Russia, suggests that Russia’s becoming a European country is an inevitable historical process; however, it is one that will take a very long time.

This process should also represent the EU’s principal interest in geopolitical security. Furthermore, Russia’s transformation into a pro-Euroepan state has to be a general objective of the Russian people and the whole Western world, including Central and Eastern Europe, as this is the only way to guarantee peace and good relations between neighbours across the European continent.

Central and Eastern Europe on its own is unable to exert influence over Russia’s development, but what we can do is get engaged in shaping Western policies towards Russia, provided that we know what kind of Western policy we want and seek.

Until now, our vision of such policy has been limited to continued Western sanctions against Russia and voicing of our understandable defence need for NATO’s enhanced capabilities in our region in order to deter Russia. After all, that was all that we asked the West in our discussions on the aggressive Russia under Putin’s rule.

Now we start to see that the two instruments alone are no longer sufficient. ***The deterrence strategy has to be complimented by a long-term Western strategy towards Russia, which would help strengthen the prospect of a pro-European Russia.*** And we do have an opportunity and a responsibility to assist the West with designing and implementing a strategy of the kind.

Why keeping the Western sanctions regime is crucial but only one part of the strategy, and why it is important to believe in the prospect of Russia's European transformation in future?

Russia is a post-imperial state whose public and the political elite, just like in other countries of the kind, suffers from huge psychological and behavioural problems developed as a result of the country’s post-imperialistic complexes. This has led to the current aggressive behaviour of the ruling regime in Russia, which causes great suffering to the neighbouring countries.

This is why we need to focus on not only the ways to defend ourselves against Russia’s aggressiveness, but also find intelligent means to assist it in overcoming its post-imperialistic complexes and transforming into a democratic country.

It is time for the West to develop a policy on Russia that is longer-term, proactive and based on a clear and overarching concept. The West had a similar approach during the Cold War when it pursued a long-term strategy of containing Russia, originating with George Kennan’s Long Telegram, the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. This strategy helped to create the EU and NATO, thereby resolving the historical conflict between Germany and France.

However, the transatlantic community continues to struggle with the second tectonic conflict on the European continent, that involving Russia and the rest of Europe.

While the post-imperial, kleptocratic and aggressive Russia under Putin is the cause of this conflict, it is up to the West to propose a long-term strategy to resolve this conflict. This strategy must be of the same scale and as systematic as the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan and the containment strategy were. The problem of Russia has been and continues to be as significant in the early 21st century as it was in the late 20th century. The changing nature of the problem requires new instruments to address it and revolves around several important elements.

The greatest geopolitical problem of Central and Eastern Europe lies in the fact that everyone in the West, the EU included, does not have a long-term strategy for supporting Russia's transformation.

It sometimes seems that only a single strategy exists and dominates in the largest Western capitals, and that is to forget Putin's aggressiveness as soon as possible and return to 'dialogue with Putin' [4]. This Western posture takes us nowhere. It does not assist Russia's transformation. On the contrary, it only undermines it. Maintaining a so-called dialogue with Putin is a hopeless strategy of the West, leading them to a geopolitical dead end – a strategy which, unfortunately, is still popular in some of the biggest Western capitals.

In the absence of a long-term Western strategy towards Russia, we keep noticing a number of momentary improvisations by Western leadership (which, by the way, Putin is capable of using very skilfully). Consider, for instance, the cases of some Western leaders calling, all of a sudden, for dialogue with Putin and declaring that Russia – even under Putin's leadership – is a pro-European country.

Without doing much and without changing his behaviour, but by taking advantage of this kind of momentary activeness by some Western leaders, Putin is aiming for his biggest goal yet, i.e. to finally break the isolation by the West, just like he did it at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Hence, Putin's strategy towards the West has been, and remains, unchanging. He is focused on making sure that the West continue to lack a long-term strategy towards Russia while staying satisfied with various momentary initiatives, such as pursing a dialogue, a reset policy or partnership ideas.

Given the circumstances, what should be the objective of politicians from Central and Eastern Europe, who are best positioned to understand the threats posed by Putin's regime?

We are convinced that now is the right time to make use of this period and of different formats in the West to make sure that it brings about not only set of random one-off initiatives, but also raises primarily the issue of a long-term Western strategy towards Russia. As part of Central and Eastern Europe, we should be the first to do so, for very good reasons, we are the ones who are mostly concerned about our geopolitical security on the European continent, we are the biggest allies of Ukraine in its fight against Russia's aggression, and we are the most sensitive to Putin's manoeuvres among the EU and NATO member countries.

The very discussion on a Western strategy towards Russia, basically, features two essentially different paradigms, which tacitly dominate the entire Western approach towards Russia. Some believe that some day Russia will return on the path of democratic development. That is why they need an intelligent and wise long-term strategy of the West to assist Russia in an uneasy transformation. Others yet think that it is hopeless to expect a democratic Russia. They maintain that Russia presents a 'special case' where it will never be capable of becoming a democracy and the West should simply deal with it and learn how to live in the neighbourhood of a wild and nuclear Russia, without entertaining any expectations that it will one day become a more normal state of European character. Having no faith in Russia's capability to transform, the proponents of the latter approach tend to get adjusted to the neighbourhood of the current Russia by searching for dialogue with the leaders of the regime.

It is worth noting that Putin is making deliberate efforts to intimidate the West with his unpredictability and aggressiveness in order to, basically, convince the West that only the second of the two mentioned scenarios of Russia's development is realistic. Once the West ceases to believe in the prospect of a democratic Russia, the authoritarian regime of the Kremlin will feel much safer, because in that case the West would only be left with the option of coexisting with the authoritarian Russia and pursuing 'dialogue with Putin'. This would eventually consolidate Putin's long-sought victory against the West and against the future of a democratic Russia.

We are convinced that the second scenario, albeit convenient for Putin and some of his friends in the West, is misleading and obsolete. All empires on the European continent are destined to fail. While some of them have already walked that painful path, Russia, however, remains the last country on the European continent to continue on that difficult road of collapsing empires. Russia *can* be assisted, but this requires a clear strategy. This is our primary and fundamental assumption that the negotiations on a long-term Western strategy towards Russia should rest upon.

What should be the objective of the long-term Western strategy towards Russia?

First, we need to really help Russia return to the path of democratic European development. This goal can be achieved through a clear long-term strategy of the West and its consistent implementation rather than by pursuing a so-called dialogue with Putin or appeasing him. With the strategy in place, we should expect to see real change in Russia no sooner than the end of Putin's rule, while at the same time being aware that it will probably take several decades to see the results of this kind of strategy.
This means that not only Central and Eastern Europe, but also Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Washington and other major Western capitals and organisations, including the EU, NATO and the Council of Europe, need to take ownership of the said strategy. Therefore, we should primarily aim at a very clear strategic result, i.e. making the great West owners of the said strategy.

What should the long-term strategy of the West consist of?

We envisage this strategy as consisting of three major parts, namely:

1) deterrence
2) containment
3) transformation

I. A **deterrence strategy** has a clear and well-established objective of deterring Russia's military threat. Securing military presence of NATO member countries, particularly that of the US, in our region and further strengthening it account for a vital instrument of the deterrence strategy. The US Administration's National Security Strategy, published in 2017, identified Russia and China as major threats to the US national security. It would be good if the EU was likewise capable of having a clear security strategy of its own where it would identify Russia as a threat to not only the US but also the EU.

This would make it much easier to explain why EU Member States must allocate 2 % of their GDP for defence and what the EU's own defence capabilities may or may not be needed for. This would ultimately make deterrence of Russia a genuine objective of the EU's security policy.

Sanction regime, which was introduced by the West as a reaction to Russia's aggression to Ukraine, must continue, unless Russia fully implements the Minsk agreements and return illegaly annexed Crimea back to Ukraine. Eny effort to weaken this sanction regime will be sending a wrong signal to Moscow - that the West is losing unity, therefore, is weak. This, in turn, will only further induce aggessiveness of the Putins policies. Therefore, any aggressive action of Putin's Russia must be met with decisive sanctions mechanism. The West must make clear that current sanctions is not the maximum, indeed, they may be softened if Russia implements its committments, but equally, they can be further expanded, if Russia continues blatant violations of international law and norms.

Sanctions should entail asset freezes and visa bans with regard to gross human right violations, massive money loudering and corruption inside Russia. Such Global Magnitsky Act type sanctions mechanism has already been adopted not only by US but also in a number of countries in Europe. It would be a very important tool to at least partially fight impunity, protect human rights defenders. Such mechanism should become part of the EU legislation.
The West should also help to strengthen defence capabilities in neighbouring countries, which seek trans-atlantic integration.

II. A **containment strategy** is necessary for the purpose of effectively countering Russia's hybrid threats by preventing it from influencing the sentiments of our citizens, occupying the hearts and minds of our people, and affecting the outcome of elections and activities of political parties in foreign countries. The challenges are well known to all. The most effective ways to respond to them is, perhaps, something that we may be less aware of. It is nevertheless clear that NATO should be much more active in this field. It must have centralised capabilities which would primarily assist with tracing dirty political money, including movement of the Kremlin's finances used for hybrid aggression, and which would help individual countries halt such efforts by Russia. This would definitely contribute to containing Russia's hybrid influence, particularly in the areas where national capabilities are limited, such as following the movement of the financial flows of the Kremlin's oligarchs through different offshore accounts.

Clear and coordinated response to propaganda and efforts to distort truth, also deny historic facts, is also important. This is a part of active hybrid measures actively disseminated by bots, and troll factories by using social media. EU and NATO should evaluate such Russian media as RT and Sputnik for what they trully are - channels for blunt lies and disinformation, and not usual media.

During last decade, EU and NATO realised that energy dependency and monopolies are used by Putin's Russia for purposes of exerting political pressure on EU and NATO members, and this is a challenge which should be addressed by a joint effort. The West should continue to definitely eradicate dependency on Russian energy resources and supply, not implement new projects which increase this depencency. It is important to evaluate also energy projects being developed in the EU and NATO neighbourhood, as they are not only for ensuring income, but also for creating new points of tension or even physical threat, as for example in the case of the Astravets NPP.

III. A **strategy of transformation** refers to our thinking about not only the ways to defend ourselves from Russian threats, but also the means to assist Russia's transformation into a European country. A transformation of this kind is the only way to no longer be situated next to a threat posed by the Russia of today. The transformation will not happen overnight or even in a year or two. It is, however, necessary and doable. While the future of Russia is for Russians to determine, the West can help in that. This will nevertheless require an appropriate long-term Western strategy towards Russia.

So far, development of the transformation strategy has received very little attention in the West. This is where the EU's joint efforts should be currently focused on.
The underlying idea behind the transformation strategy is simple. Basically, there are two things that can assist the people of Russia in seeking, on their own, a transformation of their country, namely:

1) a 'success belt' along the Russian border (including Ukraine, in particular) to set a good example for Russians;
2) a clear message of the West to the people of Russia on how the future relations between the West and Russia could look like had Russia finally returned to the path of democratic pro-European development.

One should not underestimate the impact of Russia having successful, democratic, and market-oriented neighbours along its borders. If they can succeed, Russia can too.

Therefore, one of our current major goals should be having a clear Western strategy on ways to build a 'success belt' along the Russian border (starting from Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova). Here in Central and Eastern Europe, we have created a success story by consistently implementing reforms and pursuing integration into the EU and NATO while, at the same time, the West kept opening the doors for us wider and wider. Unfortunately, the West are still not capable of promising the same kind of integration for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

Our strategic goal should thus be very clear. We should aim for a long-term Western strategy towards Russia that would focus beyond helping Central and Eastern Europe to defend itself against Putin's aggressive Russia today, tomorrow and over the next decade. The strategy should also provide for immediate financial and political investment by the West into building a 'success belt' along the Russian border, in order to deliver Russia's positive transformation into a pro-European country in the long term.

The prospect of a transformed Russia can be relished only after Russia itself bids farewell to the aggressive Russia of Putin.

However, in order to see this happen in the long-term even in the post-Putin Russia, the West should and must act effectively and immediately by investing their political and financial resources into building a 'success belt' along the Russian border, starting with support for the economic success of and European perspective for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

What Lithuania offered back in 2017 with its Marshall Plan for Ukraine (an initiative later renamed the European Plan for Ukraine) [5, 6] has been intended to kick-start the implementation of this strategy by mobilising the West to pursue concrete actions.

Ukraine's success is needed not only for preventing the return of the imperial Russia to the Ukrainian land, but also for the successful pro-European Ukraine to pass its success story on to ordinary citizens of Russia.

This is why it is the Western 'weapon' posing the greatest danger to the Kremlin's regime and feared most by Putin.Putin's strategic goal in Ukraine is to prevent the development of a successful state. That is why the West should do their utmost to thwart Putin's strategy towards Ukraine.

The success of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova is what the West can make happen, and it is currently the only instrument available for the West to help Russia transform into a pro-European country

Therefore, an initiative capable of assisting the countries in becoming successful, which can relatively be referred to as a Marshall Plan for the Eastern Partnership, is the most important Western geopolitical instrument which the West has to put into effect with all its political and financial might and which can help the West resolve the tectonic conflict (the last of its kind on the continental Europe) between the authoritarian Russia and the democratic Europe.

The political might of the EU in creating success stories in its neighbourhood has always relied on its geopolitical soft power of offering the prospect of integration to the neighbouring countries. This has been best demonstrated by the successful experience of Central and Eastern Europe following the fall of the Berlin Wall, proving that this level of success could have only been achieved by welcoming the integration of those countries into the EU.

The fact that the EU is still incapable of offering a clear prospect of integration to the most advanced of the Eastern Partnership countries (Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova) does not mean that it cannot make right now any serious moves, clearly showing that the EU has been taking and will continue to take serious strategic steps forward once the Eastern Partnership countries make solid progress on the path of integration.

The way to do this is obvious. The EU has to modify strategically the Eastern Partnership and urgently take the initiative to draft and start implementing a new flagship instrument we dubbed the Trio Strategy 2030, which would be dedicated to the most advanced trio of the Eastern Partnership countries, namely, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. We have outlined the main elements of this strategy in a dedicated non-paper on Our Strategy on the Future of Eastern Partnership [7].

Hence, the key elements include:
a) promotion of a differentiated approach of the Eastern Partnership by singling out the trio of associated partners and offering them new EU policy instruments;
b) establishment of a coalition of like-minded EU Member States that are interested in the success of the Eastern Partnership, as was the case with the Berlin Process for the integration of the Western Balkans;
c) implementation of the EU's new practical instruments to accelerate the integration and economic success of the trio.

Western dialogue with ordinary citizens of Russia rather than with Putin

The West need to change the interlocutor and the content in their dialogue with Russia. The dialogue with Putin is counterproductive, because Putin is not going to change and any overzealous Western attempts to seek dialogue with him will be further regarded as a manifestation of Western weakness. Any signs of Western weakness provoke Putin into behaving even more aggressively.

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As regards strategic issues and Russia's future, instead of directly talking with Putin, the West must indirectly engage with a pro-European Russia of the future, which does not exist yet but may emerge after the end of Putin's era. The West need a strategy that would demonstrate the potential of relations with a post-imperial and non-aggressive Russia (which *is*going to happen one day!) and the prospect of a pro-European Russia by already presenting possible models of integration of a pro-European Russia into the Western structures, as proposed by renowned experts [8-10].

This could include a wide spectrum of promising future relations, including, among others, a visa waiver, a customs union, and a free trade and association agreement with the EU. This would be a kind of a Marshall Plan for Russia, which could even now be expressly presented in the Western strategy for relations with Russia. Finally, this would help ordinary Russians and the Russian elite unconnected with Putin's kleptocratic regime to understand what they are losing today because of the aggressive behaviour of the regime and what they would win with a pro-European Russia (after Putin) evolving in the long term.

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All in all, this is how a Western strategy towards Russia could look like. To make it happen, the West should have more faith in Russia's capability to transform one day and embark on the path of democratic European development. Likewise, they should trust in their own potential to assist Russia on this uneasy path of transformation through a long-term strategy of support and its consistent implementation. Even if it takes several long decades for Russia to transform and even if a post-Putin Russia remains geopolitically aggressive towards the EU and the West at large for many years to come [11], it is imperative for the latter to come up of and pursue right away a far more unifying and long-term strategy that would help to deter Russia's aggressiveness, prevent Russian hybrid attacks and, eventually, assist Russia's transformation.

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Central and Eastern Europe should take the lead in forming a coalition of supporters of the Western strategy towards Russia. Naturally, the first partners could include our immediate neighbours, namely, the Scandinavian countries, Germany, and the UK, which has lately had a few words to say about Putin's Russia. Willing to get involved in the development of the outlined Western strategy towards Russia, the Eastern Partnership countries that have been mostly affected by Russia's aggressive expansionist behaviour, namely, Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, could also become active participants of the coalition.

However, in order to achieve the ambition of helping the appropriate Western strategy towards Russia see the daylight, Central and Eastern European countries themselves, first of all, have to nurture this ambition. This requires an overwhelming consensus among the politicians of these countries. The Members of the European Parliament elected in these countries could be the effective catalysts of change in the search for an ambitious pact of this kind. Then, an implementation plan and concrete actions must follow. This was also true when back in the day Central and Eastern Europe joined efforts to become members of NATO and formed the Vilnius 10 group to further their cause. This ultimately led us to the successful integration of our region.

It is time we replicate this practice.

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FRIENDS OF EUROPEAN RUSSIA FORUM

FORUM OF THE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT "FRIENDS OF EUROPEAN RUSSIA"

Mission Statement

Non-paper **Prepared by Lithuanian Delegation of the EPP Group in the European Parliament**

The future of Russia, her success in becoming a European-type country, would bring a lot of benefit for Russia herself, for the European continent and globally. Unfortunately, Russia today is rather a source of many internal, regional and international problems and challenges. **However, that does not mean that a positive transformation of Russia is not possible.**

Is European Russia possible?

Russia is inherently a country of European culture, her historical input into Western culture is undeniable. Unfortunately, Russia gravely suffered from Stalinist repressions and Soviet totalitarian system - a long period during which Russia's Western-type cultural foundations have been deliberately and systematically destroyed.

Transformation of Russia from the last continental empire to a democratic state, which started in 1991, has stalled since 2000, when the global wave of democratization has subsided in Russia. Since then, the human rights, democracy, rule of law situation deteriorated, freedoms were suppressed, political opponents are harassed and killed, corruption became systemic, while intensifying aggressive military and hybrid activities towards the neighbors and the West became a "new normal". **Russia goes through a difficult phase of post-imperial nostalgia and aggressive disillusionment; this estranged Russia from the path of democratic European development.**

However, there is a **new generation of modern Russians**, led by the opposition, who feel enraged about corruption in the highest echelons of power, who **want their universal rights be respected in the same way as they observe it is done in the West, in the EU, in the neighboring Baltic states, and even more and more so in Ukraine.**

We believe, that Russia eventually will return to its European roots, to a European-style democratic transformation. This will be a very difficult but inevitable path, and **the West can help this scenario to come to realization.**

What the EU can do?

The EU needs a neighbor that respects its own commitments, international rules and does not treat democracies as its enemy. The EU, being a union of values, not only interests, would like to see Russia becoming more democratic, more transparent state, respecting rights and freedoms of its own citizens. **The EU and the World need a European Russia, and the West can help the Russian people to steer the path of transformation into the European Russia.**

However, at this point, the EU has no clear vision what it wants to achieve in its dealings with Russia and how to achieve it. **The EU needs a long-term Strategy towards Russia.**

For us it is clear - so-called “strategy to reset the dialogue with Putin“ is **not** a strategy which could assist the transformation. Quite the opposite - such a strategy would only help to consolidate the undesirable status quo. It means also, that the sanctions introduced in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its territorial integrity must continue until Russia implements the Minsk agreements and returns illegally anexed Crimea to Ukraine. The society in Russia, willing a positive change, and not its elite, have to become the core of the new EU strategy. **Therefore, firstly, the EU must strive not for a dialogue with Putin, but for a dialogue with the people of Russia.**

Thirdly, open discussions in the EU, including the European Parliament, how relationship between the EU and Russia could possibly look like in future (free trade, visa free, etc.), once Russia returns to a European type of development. This could also create an incentive among Russian citizens to seek for transformation and tangible changes in relationship with the West.

Mission of the Forum

We believe that informal Forum “Friends of European Russia”, uniting like-minded MEPs, can make a meaningful input in eventual creation of such EU Strategy towards Russia. In addition, such Forum willsend an important signal to the civil society in Russia and to the political opposition, that they have supporters also in the European Parliament in their struggle for more democratic, more transparent and respectful towards its citizen’s future. In the EU, we need open and frank discussions, formal and informal, on Russia’s European future.

We invite you to join the Forum "Friends of European Russia” which will provide a platform:
· for meetings, discussions or conferences, exchange of views on reports or studies;
· exchange of views with civil society in Russia, political opposition, experts and analysts, representatives of academia, independent media and culture, supporting democratic development of Russia;
· meetings with the European Commission, diplomats and EU Member State representatives;

· meetings with the European Commission, diplomats and EU Member State representatives;
· discussions with the EU, Russian and EaP representatives on how to encourage future transformation of Russia by the power of example of the success stories of the European integration in Russia’s neighborhood (especially Ukraine);
· creation of a pool of expertise on Russia, which would be available for Members, encourage networking among like-minded Members.

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