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Russia: new threats to European democracies

Report¹

Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

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1. Reference to committee: Urgent debate, Reference 4906 of 29 September 2025. In accordance with Rule 50.4 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, the report of a committee shall not contain an explanatory memorandum if the report is prepared under the urgent procedure.



Draft resolution²

1. The Parliamentary Assembly is deeply concerned by the growing, multi-faceted threat posed by Russia to Europe's security and stability. New military and hybrid threats build upon a long history of repeated and extensive violations of international law by Russia, including human rights violations against its own citizens and attempts to assert its *de facto* control and undue influence in neighbouring countries. It is imperative that Council of Europe member States fully grasp the magnitude of the threat posed by Russia and do everything in their power to strengthen their deterrence, preparedness and resilience capabilities against it, in order to safeguard Europe's democratic security and peaceful future.
2. Russia has responded to diplomatic efforts to end its full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine by escalating its attacks. In recent weeks, the intensification of Russia's missile and drone attacks on civilian infrastructures in Ukraine, including in Kyiv, have taken a devastating toll on civilian lives, destroying schools and residential buildings and damaging diplomatic facilities. The Assembly strongly condemns this further escalation of the illegal, unjustified and unprovoked full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine and reiterates its urgent call for just and lasting peace in Ukraine to ensure Europe's long-term security and Ukraine's European future.
3. Likewise, the Assembly is deeply alarmed by the increasing number of incursions by unidentified drones and Russian military aircraft into the airspace of Council of Europe member States. In September 2025, Estonia, Poland and Romania recorded unacceptable and intentional violations of their airspace that led Estonia and Poland to call for consultations under Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Drone activity near critical infrastructure and military sites in Danish and German airspace has also disrupted civilian aviation, including temporary airport closures in Denmark. These deliberate provocations are part of a wider strategy to test Europe's commitment to supporting Ukraine, Europe's internal cohesion and the strength of Euro-transatlantic relations. They recklessly increase the risk of an enlargement of military operations in Europe.
4. Furthermore, in recent months, Russia has intensified its hybrid warfare – combining hard and soft power – through sophisticated cyberattacks, intelligence operations and co-ordinated disinformation campaigns. Heightened military activities and growing hybrid threats have significantly challenged the security and stability of the Baltic Sea region. Russia has particularly increased its hybrid assault on European electoral processes. It has deployed an unprecedented, sophisticated combination of covert interference, information warfare and destabilisation tactics, through large-scale use of social media, vote buying and cyberattacks. These methods were on full display in the presidential elections in Romania, and in the Republic of Moldova's 2025 parliamentary elections, where unprecedented foreign interference and co-ordinated online manipulation networks targeted institutions and voters to derail the country's pro-European course and seek wider destabilisation. On the election day itself, attempted destabilisation persisted with bomb threats against polling stations in the Republic of Moldova and abroad. The Moldovan people and institutions demonstrated exceptional resilience and solidarity in defending the electoral process against such massive foreign interference, allowing the people's pro-European choice to prevail. Persistent risks caused by disinformation and foreign interference have also been highlighted in the context of the observation of the 2025 presidential election in Poland.
5. Referring to its [Resolution 2593 \(2025\)](#) "Foreign interference: a threat to democratic security in Europe", the Assembly firmly condemns Russia's interference in democratic processes across Europe and its attempts to destabilise European democracies, increase domestic polarisation and undermine trust in public institutions.
6. The Assembly also condemns the deployment by Russia of information warfare through state-sponsored media outlets and Russian cultural centres, used to destabilise political systems, distort public opinion, and undermine democratic processes across Council of Europe member States. It recalls that Russian oligarchs and affiliated actors residing in Europe have been implicated in exerting financial and political pressure, underscoring the necessity for co-ordinated, transparent, and robust responses at national and international levels.
7. In its current warfare, Russia has rewritten the concept of weaponry. The Assembly has already acknowledged the weaponisation of migration by Russia, and its attempts to destabilise democratic societies by exploiting or amplifying alleged minority grievances and misusing the status of the Russian language. These attacks have also undermined economic resilience and exacerbated societal divisions throughout the continent.

2. Draft resolution unanimously adopted by the committee on 30 September 2025.

8. Furthermore, Russia has intensified its diplomatic activity worldwide, strengthening ties with non-democratic countries that tangibly support its aggression against Ukraine by providing weapons, or troops or by making their territory available for hosting Russian weapons and launching attacks – such as Belarus, Iran and North Korea; relying on economic partners – in Europe and outside – to circumvent the sanctions system; and developing an alliance with a global player such as China to promote a new world order.

9. The Assembly reiterates that the strategy of Russia, aimed at destabilising European democracies using force, fear and foreign influence, should be strongly opposed and defeated. Russia must stop its unprovoked aggressions and provocations and be held accountable for its repeated crimes and violations of international law. In light of accelerating attacks and threats, the Assembly, at this critical juncture, stresses that enduring peace in Europe will only be achieved through democratic security and resilience.

10. In the light of these considerations, with regard to the need for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, the Assembly:

10.1. referring to its previous resolutions, in particular [Resolution 2588](#) (2025) “European commitment to a just and lasting peace in Ukraine”, calls for unwavering European commitment and greater unity, beyond Europe, in support of Ukraine and a just and lasting peace, which is indispensable for Ukraine’s European future and the security of the entire European continent;

10.2. insists that any peace negotiations must involve Ukraine and respect its right to determine its own future, including its sovereign right to continue its integration into the European Union, as well as membership of other international organisations; such negotiations must also include the necessary security guarantees;

10.3. considers that a just, lasting and effective peace can only be achieved by anchoring it in the international human rights framework as stressed by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights;

10.4. reiterates that enhanced support to Ukraine is also crucial in order to strengthen its capacity to effectively uphold human rights, the rule of law and democracy, which remains key to its democratic security and recovery and its accession process to the European Union;

10.5. calls on Council of Europe member and observer States, as well as relevant European institutions and international partners, to increase support for the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine “Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction” 2023-2026.

11. With regard to the need to ensure accountability, the Assembly:

11.1. referring to [Resolution 2605](#) (2025) “Legal and human rights aspects of the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine”, welcomes the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights of 9 July 2025 in the case of Ukraine and the Netherlands v. Russia, which held the Russian Federation responsible for widespread and flagrant abuses of human rights in Ukraine – including the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17, torture, rape as a weapon of war, summary executions, and unlawful and arbitrary detentions;

11.2. welcomes the landmark signing of the agreement between the Council of Europe and Ukraine on the establishment of the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine on 25 June 2025, as well as the finalisation of a draft convention establishing an international claims commission for Ukraine;

11.3. stresses the need to expedite the establishment of a comprehensive accountability system, bearing in mind that reparations should remain a core component of any peace settlement;

11.4. asks Council of Europe member and observer States and like-minded countries, to:

11.4.1. work without delay towards the establishment of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Management Committee of the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine and to join the enlarged partial agreement as soon as possible, in accordance with their national procedures;

11.4.2. conclude co-operation agreements with the future Special Tribunal;

11.4.3. work towards the adoption and opening for signature of the convention establishing an International Claims Commission for Ukraine, taking into account the Assembly’s Opinion No. [...];

- 11.4.4. intensify efforts to establish the third component of the international compensation mechanism, an international compensation fund, which could be funded by repurposing and transferring frozen Russian State assets;
 - 11.5. recalls the need to ensure accountability for deliberate and systematic attempts to erase Ukrainian cultural identity and all war crimes;
 - 11.6. calls on national parliaments to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy to mobilise broader support for Ukraine, in particular for accountability mechanisms and its accession process to the European Union.
12. With regard to the need for increased pressure on Russia, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member and observer States, as well as relevant European institutions and international partners to:
- 12.1. reinforce the current sanctions regime against Russia, its allies and their political and military leaderships, notably by:
 - 12.1.1. renewing efforts to reduce sanctions circumvention, including through secondary sanctions against third countries and other economic actors facilitating it;
 - 12.1.2. enlarging the list of targeted individuals and entities, including all senior financial officers, all Russian banks and all shadow fleet vessels;
 - 12.1.3. enlarging the sectoral scope of sanctions, by targeting the supply chain of larger groups of dual-use materials, machineries and technologies;
 - 12.1.4. lowering further oil price caps and tightening energy-related sanctions;
 - 12.1.5. strengthening the co-ordination among national authorities in terms of compliance enforcement of sanctions;
 - 12.2. pursue further diplomatic isolation of Russia through co-ordinated efforts to exclude Moscow from key forums and rally global partners in defence of international law; these efforts should include sport diplomacy, which is widely used by Russia to project its influence;
 - 12.3. strengthen accountability mechanisms for all Russian violations of international law and their respective rules.
13. With regard to increased hybrid warfare, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member and observer States, as well as relevant European institutions and international partners, to:
- 13.1. develop non-military responses to violations of airspace and related threats – alongside adequate military responses when needed – through a comprehensive strategy and cross-cutting action, combining deterrence, preparedness, protection and reactivity measures, for both infrastructures and populations, in order to enhance the resilience of democratic societies. Such a comprehensive resilience strategy should ensure co-ordination among public authorities across sectors, including legislators, law enforcement, education and health services, as relevant. It should also seek to preserve national unity as Russia aims at polarising and dividing European countries and their societies;
 - 13.2. implement robust countermeasures against foreign interference, particularly in the context of electoral integrity, including updating national legal frameworks to criminalise covert foreign involvement in political funding, electoral campaigns, and information operations, and enhance transparency and oversight of media and financial flows;
 - 13.3. offer solid counternarratives to Russian propaganda seeking to undermine European core values, notably by supporting free media such as Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty;
 - 13.4. operate closely with and provide support to States targeted by Russian threats to help them to resist covert Russian attempts to undermine elections and national sovereignty;
 - 13.5. as the current security situation requires a unified response from like-minded countries, reinforce international co-operation and co-ordinated measures to defend European democracies and develop an ever stronger and agile multilateralism that can react quickly to Russian threats and ensure accountability;
 - 13.6. improve the efficiency and resilience of the European security architecture.

14. While defence issues are excluded from its remit, the Council of Europe should contribute to enhancing the comprehensive and long-term security of its member States within the scope of its mandate, making them more resilient to countering threats and preventing conflicts. In this context, the Assembly:

14.1. welcomes the New Democratic Pact for Europe, launched by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, which should help reinforce democratic security in Council of Europe member States;

14.2. considers that the Council of Europe should strengthen its work on democratic security, in order to take into account the rapidly evolving nature of the threats and challenges faced by Europe, including from Russia. Projects on fighting disinformation should be further developed, possibly with the support of the Council of Europe Development Bank. The Council of Europe should also play a proactive role in the discussions on the European political and security architecture, within the scope of its mandate;

14.3. invites Council of Europe member States to adopt a strategic, long-term approach to shaping the Council of Europe's support for Ukraine, bringing together the closely related aspects of democratic security, resilience and reconstruction;

14.4. stresses the need to develop interparliamentary dialogue and co-operation with relevant security forums, including the Parliamentary Assembly of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).