I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

576TH PLENARY SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, 22.2.2023-23.2.2023

Resolution of the European Economic and Social Committee on 'Ukraine: One year after the Russian invasion — the European civil society perspective'

(2023/C 146/01)

Rapporteurs: **Stefano MALLIA**
Oliver RÖPKE
Séamus BOLAND

Legal basis	Rule 52(4) of the Rules of Procedure
Adopted at plenary	23.2.2023
Plenary session No	576
Outcome of vote (for/against/abstentions)	160/1/4

THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (EESC)

On Ukraine's accession to the EU

1. points out that Ukrainians continue to lose their lives defending democracy and the country's determination to become an EU Member State has to be acknowledged in a tangible and meaningful manner;

2. underlines that enlargement is a mutually beneficial process as it contributes to the EU's stability, strengthens its geopolitical position, promotes peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples ([1]) and brings benefits for all through a larger single market, whereas at the same time the enlargement process will support Ukraine to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and human rights;

3. stresses the need for EU unity as regards Ukraine's accession process and suggests following the example of other Eastern European countries that joined the EU between 2004-2013. That calls for setting up Euro-integration working groups under the auspices of respective ministries, whereby officials would be trained on harmonisation with the EU standards, norms, procedures and EU *acquis* in general;

([1]) Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union.

4. notes that whilst the EU accession process must be respected, it is clear that the accession process with Ukraine (like with all Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership candidate countries) must be conducted in the most practical manner and on the basis of implementation of relevant reforms in the area of democracy, rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms, market economy and implementation of the EU *acquis*.

On a special international tribunal on crimes of aggression against Ukraine and sanctions against the Russian Federation

5. fully supports the resolution of the European Parliament which calls for establishing a special international tribunal on crimes of aggression against Ukraine [2]. Such a tribunal should be implemented in close cooperation with the International Criminal Court and the UN. The Committee also urges the EU to take the lead on international assistance in the investigation of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide;

6. supports the resolution of the European Parliament on '*Recognising the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism*' [3] and welcomes, in particular, the clause calling for the EU and its Member States to develop an EU legal framework for designation of states as sponsors of terrorism and states which use means of terrorism. The implementation of such an EU legal framework should result in significant restrictive economic, political, social and cultural measures against such countries;

7. expresses its support for the proposal to include the Wagner Group on the EU terrorist list;

On preventing 'Ukraine fatigue'

8. emphasises that if Ukraine were to lose the war against Russia, it would be catastrophic for democracy worldwide. The EU must do everything in its power to prevent 'Ukraine fatigue'. As a peace project itself, the EU has the moral obligation to support Ukraine for as long and with whatever it takes, including with humanitarian aid and infrastructure;

On Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery

9. points out that the EU already needs to design plans and tools needed for Ukraine's reconstruction now. The Multi-agency Donor Coordination Platform is a strong sign that the international community stands and will continue to stand with Ukraine, but besides its focus on short-term assistance it needs to put equal attention on the long-term reconstruction of Ukraine;

10. underlines that reconstruction and recovery plans for the Ukrainian society and territory should include fair working conditions, enforcement of labour law, promoting decent work and the right to a safe and healthy working environment, as well as training opportunities for all;

11. underlines that the task of reconstructing Ukraine will be immense and all necessary provisions have to be put in place now so Ukrainians can return to a normal life as soon as possible once the war is over and can build a competitive economy that embraces the green, digital and just transition and generates prosperity for all Ukrainians. Furthermore, these processes should include support for the creation of jobs that Ukraine lost due to Russia's invasion;

12. calls for the involvement of social partners and organised civil society organisations in devising, implementing and monitoring the reconstruction and recovery plans. Such involvement will guarantee transparency and fairness and ensure that resources are deployed where they are most needed;

13. recalls that helping Ukrainian businesses, in all of their diversity, to survive in times of war and to support them in building the basis for a thriving economy during reconstruction is in the mutual interest of the EU and Ukraine. Beyond Ukraine's association to the Single Market Programme, there is a need to further grant Ukraine access to other key EU programmes. Continued and improved support measures are needed for businesses regarding knowledge-sharing, logistics and access to direct and indirect financing;

---

[2] European Parliament resolution of 19 January 2023 on *the establishment of a tribunal on the crime of aggression against Ukraine* (2022/3017(RSP)).

[3] European Parliament resolution of 23 November 2022 on *recognising the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism* (2022/2896 (RSP)).

14. calls for the reestablishment of social dialogue in Ukraine under martial law despite the challenges it might present. Social dialogue is at the core of International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and it will become one of the main instruments in the consultations between the government, employers and workers on issues relating to the economic and social rebuilding of the country;

15. welcomes the positive tripartite agreements on the labour law reforms in Ukraine and the expected improvement of legislative provisions on collective agreement, and emphasises the need to involve experts from Ukraine, the ILO and the EU in the process of implementing international labour standards and social and labour guarantees;

On support to civil society and people-to-people contacts

16. commends the solidarity shown by civil society organisations in the EU and Ukraine, which delivered first aid and offered support to those fleeing the war;

17. highlights the importance of setting up an EU mechanism to empower Ukrainian civil society by providing funding and facilitating its participation in EU civil society networks. Particular attention should be given to provide and coordinate financial and administrative support to the EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform under the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and to other Ukrainian civil society organisations, including Brussels-based umbrella networks and Ukrainian diaspora organisations;

18. calls for expanding the budget under the Erasmus+ programme for Ukraine in 2024 to allow an additional 1 000 beneficiaries from Ukraine to benefit from the programme, thus building and strengthening bridges between the EU and Ukrainian civil society. Such traineeship and exchange opportunities within the EESC and other EU institutions would raise awareness about social and economic benefits of EU integration among Ukrainian youth.

Brussels, 23 February 2023.

The President
of the European Economic and Social Committee
Christa SCHWENG