Facts and figures about
EU-RUSSIA RELATIONS

Russia is the EU's largest neighbour. The EU and Russia share longstanding historical, cultural, scientific and economic ties and face key global issues together. However, the deliberate policy choices of the Russian leadership over the last years, in particular its illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and its ongoing destabilising actions in Ukraine, against EU Member States and against EU neighbours have created **a negative spiral in EU-Russia relations**. The EU has imposed **restrictive measures**, including sectoral sanctions, **as a result of Russia's actions in Ukraine**, while formats such as regular high-level dialogues and cooperation remain suspended in the absence of the full implementation of the Minsk agreements by Russia. A number of additional issues impact bilateral relations, including Russia's actions in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood, Syria, Libya and beyond, and repeated malign activities against EU Member States such as the use of chemical weapons, disinformation campaigns, hybrid actions and cyber-attacks. The EU engages Russia in selected areas of clear EU interest that include regional and cross-border cooperation, climate change, the environment and health. The EU also fosters people-to-people contacts between EU and Russian citizens and supports Russian civil society, human rights defenders and independent media amid a growing and systematic crackdown by Russian authorities. The EU's approach to Russia **is guided by five** principles agreed in 2016 and reaffirmed, most recently, by the European Council in June 2021.

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE EU'S POLICY TOWARDS RUSSIA

Full implementation of the **Minsk agreements** as the key condition for any substantial change in the EU's relations towards Russia.

The EU is **strengthening relations with its six Eastern Partners** (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) and countries in Central Asia.

The EU is **strengthening its resilience** in areas such as energy security, hybrid threats and strategic communication.

Selective engagement with Russia on issues of clear EU interest.

The EU is fostering **people-to-people** contacts and supporting **Russian civil society**.

EU-RUSSIA RELATIONS IN FIGURES

1st The EU is **Russia's 1st trading partner**

4 million In 2019, more than **4 million Schengen visas** were issued in Russia

1st Russia ranks **1st among Erasmus+** university exchanges

€13 million A **€13-million EU programme** supports vulnerable groups and people most affected by COVID-19 in Russia

500 The EU has supported more than **500 human rights and civil society projects** in Russia since 1997

EU SANCTIONS

- **Restrictive measures** were introduced in 2014 in response to Russia's destabilising actions against Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and have been extended ever since.

- **Economic sanctions** target the financial, energy and defence sectors as well as the areas of dual use goods and sensitive technologies. They limit access to EU capital markets for certain Russian banks and companies. They also include a ban on arms trade. They were last rolled over in December 2020 until 31 July 2021 and are reviewed every six months.

- A **travel ban and asset freeze** target 177 people and 48 entities. These measures are in force until 15 September 2021, with the possibility of extension.

- EU **restrictions on economic relations with the Crimean Peninsula** are in force until 23 June 2022, with the possibility of extension.

- The EU also imposes **horizontal, non-country-specific sanctions regimes**. One regime is related to the use of **chemical weapons** and targets, among others, ten individuals and one entity for their role in the poisoning of former Russian agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter and the poisoning of Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny. Another regime is related to **cyber-attacks** and targets, among others, six individuals and two entities. Four Russian individuals have been listed under the EU's global **human rights** sanctions regime linked to the arbitrary arrest, prosecution and sentencing of Navalny as well as two individuals responsible for torture and repression against LGBTIQ persons and political opponents in Chechnya.

ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATIONS

- The EU is by far Russia's **first trading partner**, whereas Russia is the EU's fifth trading partner. In 2020, EU imports from Russia amounted to €95.3 billion while EU exports to Russia totalled €79 billion.

- **Energy dominates trade relations** between the EU and Russia. The EU is Russia's first energy export destination and Russia is the EU's first energy provider, accounting for 66% of EU oil and gas imports. However, this interdependence is set to diminish as the EU moves decisively toward decarbonisation.

- There is an **EU interest to address specific economic issues**, including Russia's protectionist policies and its partial ban on EU agricultural food products.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- With common borders and interconnected biosystems, there is reason to **commonly address environmental and climate-related issues**. The EU and Russia implement a number of joint projects, both bilaterally and in a regional context, in the areas of environmental protection, climate action and energy efficiency.

- The EU supports a number of **cooperation projects** to improve environmental standards and raise awareness of climate change in Russia, also as part of EU-Russia cross-border cooperation, for example the modernisation of heating systems in schools and hospitals or the promotion of sustainable transport.

- Under the **Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership**, the EU, Russia and other countries work together to **protect the Baltic Sea region and the Arctic** from pollution and contamination.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA

- The EU is strongly committed to **promoting human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law** in Russia and supports work to promote universal values.

- A **free and pluralistic media environment** is a key pillar of democracy. The EU supports a variety of media projects as well as initiatives aimed at supporting freedom of expression in Russia and strengthening media literacy and critical thinking.

- The EU **supports civil society organisations** in the implementation of social projects for the benefit of vulnerable groups such as people living with disabilities, children without parental care and women in difficult situations.

EDUCATION AND PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE CONTACTS

- The EU promotes **good relations between EU and Russian citizens** in a number of areas including education, research, science, culture, the environment and cross-border cooperation.

- Among the 130 countries participating in the Erasmus+ programme, **Russia ranks first for short-term university exchanges**. Many EU citizens also benefit from Erasmus+ grants to study, work or volunteer in Russia.

- The EU funds programmes that facilitate the **mobility of researchers between the EU and Russia** and promote close EU-Russia cooperation in research and innovation. More than 200 Russian organisations are taking part in Horizon 2020 projects and approximately 520 Russian researchers are involved in Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

- More Schengen visas are issued in Russia than in any other country. In 2019, more **than 4 million Schengen visas were issued to Russian citizens**, 83% of which were multiple-entry visas. This represents 27% of total Schengen visas issued worldwide. The EU seeks to facilitate the issuing of Schengen visas to Russian citizens, with streamlined procedures and easier access to multiple-entry visas.

COVID-19 SUPPORT

- The EU shows **international solidarity in the fight against the pandemic** and its socio-economic impact. The EU has earmarked over €13 million to support vulnerable groups in Russia most affected by the pandemic. These include the elderly, women and children affected by domestic violence, people living with disabilities and migrants.

- As well as short-term assistance, the EU's funding will go towards **long-term support to help Russian society recover** from the COVID-19 crisis, generate income in disadvantaged communities and increase employment opportunities in the regions.