

EU-Russia relations: we stand ready for further sanctions

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During a debate in the European Parliament on the situation in Ukraine and the state of play in EU-Russia relations, and before the ratification by the European Parliament of the Association Agreement, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, Elmar Brok MEP warned about Russia's intentions for further expansion.

"We have the impression that Russia wishes to annex more regions. As long as the troops and tanks remain in Ukraine, we will maintain sanctions and will impose further sanctions if necessary. We should never forget the Peace Plan - this is an important measure as well", stressed Elmar Brok.

The Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee underlined that Russian respect of the rule of law is crucial in restoring good relations with the European Union: "Russia must be clear that the rule of law stands and that the territorial integrity of the Ukraine must be safeguarded. This doesn't mean that we have no interest in having good relations with Russia and vice-versa. But it only works if the rule of law is respected. Europe is built on the foundations of law and the rules that one country can simply not pressure or attack another country in this way, like Russia is doing at the moment. This is not just the case for Ukraine; it also goes for Moldova and for Georgia - and for our own countries as well."

"Today is an historical day. We are ratifying a Treaty in the European Parliament and in Ukraine at the same time. But I think it is also very important that the Ukrainian President and the Government starts reforms that deal with corruption and other problems so that it is possible to put in place a process inside Ukraine. We should also bear in mind the Energy Package that is being negotiated. Russia can't use energy as a political weapon and to set prices", said Elmar Brok.

"The notification means that the Association Agreement/DFCTA comes without any change. The EU will start the de-facto implementation of the DCFTA in an asymmetrical way in favour of Ukraine immediately. The political part of the agreement is in force from today. The Association Agreement is not directed against anybody and is based on the free will of Ukraine," concluded Brok.