

This document is the result of the collaborative work of a group of experts. It is not yet part of a political programme, but a proposed solution developed by the forum's participants.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION AND COOPERATION

Brief overview

Russian democratic forces face a lack of international recognition and support, largely due to the widespread conflation of all Russians with the Putin regime. Moreover, in several countries there is a dangerous trend towards the normalisation of the regime and the gradual restoration of relations with it.

The following steps are proposed to strengthen cooperation between Russian democratic forces and the international community, making the struggle against Putin's regime and the work aimed at bringing about peace and democratic transition in Russia more effective:

1. Shaping Russia's Image Internationally

Problem: Political support for Russian democratic forces from the international community remains insufficient.

Our proposals:

1.1. The need for clearer positioning

The Russia of the future will adhere to democratic values:

- Respect for human rights;
- Rejection of discrimination of any kind;
- Commitment to international law;
- Russia is a part of the global democratic world and a country committed to European values.

1.2. Overcoming Russia's imperialist policies

These policies manifest on two levels:

Domestic policy: the dismantling of federalism and the suppression of indigenous and minority peoples. **The answer** — the restoration of federalism and local self-government.

Foreign policy: aggressive foreign policy and interference in other states' affairs.

The answer — renouncing territorial claims and spheres of influence.

1.3. Position on relations with Ukraine

- Reinstatement of 1991 borders, recognition of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- Reparations for damage to Ukraine caused by aggression; participation in the Council of Europe's reparation mechanism;
- Recognition of the war against Ukraine as a crime; initiating the prosecution of those who organised and aided it;
- Cooperation with Ukrainian and international justice in investigating and prosecuting international crimes.

1.4. Reintegration of a democratic Russia into international institutions

- Return to the Council of Europe and, as a consequence, to the jurisdiction of the ECHR;
- Renewal of partnership with the European Union;

This document is the result of the collaborative work of a group of experts. It is not yet part of a political programme, but a proposed solution developed by the forum's participants.

- The UN: Russia's voluntary limitation of the use of veto in the Security Council (following France's example), recognition of the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ;
- Ratification of the Rome Statute of the ICC, participation in the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine.

1.5. Sharing and promoting the expertise of the Russian democratic community

- How we resisted authoritarianism, including the mistakes that were made;
- Countering Kremlin influence by exposing corruption schemes, sanction evasion, and hybrid aggression;
- Debunking and opposing Kremlin narratives;
- Monitoring and reporting on developments inside Russia;
- Providing economic and sanctions expertise;
- Promoting the important role of Russian investigative journalism.

2. Building Transitional Institutions on the International Level

Goal: Representing and protecting the interests of Russian citizens — both those living inside and outside Russia.

Our proposals: Develop international cooperation on three levels:

2.1. National level: engagement of Russian democratic representatives with national parliaments and local councils.

2.2. International level: integration of the Russian democratic community into European and international bodies (PACE, OSCE, European Parliament, European Political Community, etc.).

2.3. State level: the creation of a political centre representing Russian democratic forces. Developing post-Putin reform programs. Establishing relations with foreign governments.

2.4. Influencing International Policy and Sanctions

Problem: Russian democratic forces currently lack sufficient leverage to influence international policy toward Russia and its citizens.

Our proposals:

3.1. Countering the normalisation of the Putin regime

Oppose the creeping reintegration of Putin's Russia into international institutions by initiating investigations and criminal proceedings in multiple jurisdictions against those involved in the regime's crimes and information campaigns.

3.2. Increasing the effectiveness of sanctions

- Support "useful" sanctions and oppose "harmful" ones that target Russia and Russians indiscriminately. Back those sanctions that hinder the Kremlin's war machine, propaganda, and regime. Promote the introduction of secondary sanctions.
- Advocate for the expansion of personal sanctions on Putin's elites and war beneficiaries;
- Support investigative journalists reporting on the sanction evasion schemes;

This document is the result of the collaborative work of a group of experts. It is not yet part of a political programme, but a proposed solution developed by the forum's participants.

- Outreach and advocacy with the legislative and executive branches of foreign governments, as well as with the media — especially regarding counterproductive sanctions against Russians (for example, restrictions based solely on citizenship or issues related to BigTech).

3.3. Countering transnational repression

Countering the Putin regime's persecution of opponents abroad, including cyber and physical attacks, extradition to Russia, bank account freezes and pressure on relatives.

3.4. Building international democratic coalitions

Create a “club of democratic leaders” to counter the “club of dictators.” Strengthen cooperation with international NGOs, especially Ukrainian partners.

3.5. Soft power

Support Russian academics, cultural figures, and initiatives opposing the Kremlin's propaganda.

3.6. Supporting Russian civil society and victims of the regime

- Work on issues related to the issuance of various types of visas, the granting of asylum, financial assistance, and the recognition of Russian democratic forces as an alternative to the Putin regime;
- Advocate for the release of political prisoners and support other victims of war and repression.

Special Opinion

Politician **Ilya Yashin** believes that one possible development of the political centre could be its transformation into an alternative official body of state power — a shadow government. The lack of formal legitimacy of such a body would be compensated by its political will.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Valeria Ratnikova | Journalist, TV Rain

Natalia Arno | Founder and President, Free Russia Foundation

Ilya Yashin | Politician

Gleb Bogush | PhD in Law

Olga Prokopeva | Director, Russie-Libertés

Alexandra Filippenko | Political Scientist, American Studies expert