



**President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen**  
**President of the European Council Charles Michel**  
**High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-**  
**President of the European Commission Josep Borrell**

Brussels, 28 February 2022

Dear President Ursula von der Leyen,  
Dear President Charles Michel,  
Dear HR/VP Josep Borrell,

Despite repeated political and diplomatic efforts, the Putin regime has continued its aggressive policy of annexing territories in eastern Ukraine and has launched a military attack that violates Ukraine's sovereignty and the security of the whole of Europe. We are convinced that the EU must continue to strengthen the deterrent measures against this aggressive policy.

Among the many options that exist, one of the most effective would be to target Putin's personal wealth. While sanctions against Russia as a whole are ultimately necessary, they only affect him indirectly but targeted sanctions against his own wealth would be most impactful. Furthermore, Putin does not keep his wealth in his own name but holds it in the names of nominees, trustees and proxies – and these individuals keep their money in the West. Therefore, one of the most credible ways to deter Putin is to freeze these assets.

Most countries now have Magnitsky Acts, which allows governments to freeze such assets, but there is one significant deficiency at the EU-level. The EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (EU Magnitsky Act) does not allow for sanctions against individuals involved in high-level corruption.

In order to freeze the assets of Putin's trustees, the EU must adopt a provision, which goes after corruption. The United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia all include corruption under their respective Magnitsky legislations. The absence of corruption in the relevant act of the EU's legislation as a sanctioning criteria is not only restrictive but means that it lags behind other global partners.

In an effort to protect Ukraine and the security of Europe, it is essential and a matter of urgency for the EU to add corruption to its Magnitsky Act. Europe must stand arm in arm with its allies and create meaningful consequences for Putin.

Sincerely,

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