

DECISIONS

COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2022/351

of 1 March 2022

amending Decision 2014/512/CFSP concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union and in particular Article 29 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

- (1) On 31 July 2014, the Council adopted Decision 2014/512/CFSP ⁽¹⁾.
- (2) The Union remains unwavering in its support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- (3) On 24 February 2022, the President of the Russian Federation announced a military operation in Ukraine and Russian armed forces began an attack on Ukraine. That attack is a blatant violation of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine.
- (4) In its conclusions of 24 February 2022, the European Council condemned in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine. By its illegal military actions, Russia is grossly violating international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter, and undermining European and global security and stability. The European Council called for the urgent preparation and adoption of a further individual and economic sanctions package. The European Council called on Russia and Russia-backed armed formations to stop their disinformation campaign.
- (5) In its conclusions of 10 May 2021, the Council underlined the need to further strengthen the Union's and Member States' resilience as well as their ability to counter hybrid threats, including disinformation, ensuring the coordinated and integrated use of existing and possible new tools for countering hybrid threats at Union and Member States' level, and possible responses in the field of hybrid threats including, inter alia, to foreign interference and influence operations, which may cover preventive measures as well as the imposition of costs on hostile state and non-state actors.
- (6) The Russian Federation has engaged in a systematic, international campaign of media manipulation and distortion of facts in order to enhance its strategy of destabilisation of its neighbouring countries and of the Union and its Member States. In particular, the propaganda has repeatedly and consistently targeted European political parties, especially during election periods, as well as targeting civil society, asylum seekers, Russian ethnic minorities, gender minorities, and the functioning of democratic institutions in the Union and its Member States.
- (7) In order to justify and support its aggression against Ukraine, the Russian Federation has engaged in continuous and concerted propaganda actions targeted at civil society in the Union and neighbouring countries, gravely distorting and manipulating facts.
- (8) Those propaganda actions have been channelled through a number of media outlets under the permanent direct or indirect control of the leadership of the Russian Federation. Such actions constitute a significant and direct threat to the Union's public order and security.

⁽¹⁾ Council Decision 2014/512/CFSP of 31 July 2014 concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine (OJ L 229, 31.7.2014, p. 13).

- (9) Those media outlets are essential and instrumental in bringing forward and supporting the aggression against Ukraine, and for the destabilisation of its neighbouring countries.
- (10) In view of the gravity of the situation, and in response to Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine, it is necessary, consistent with the fundamental rights and freedoms recognised in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, in particular with the right to freedom of expression and information as recognised in Article 11 thereof, to introduce further restrictive measures to urgently suspend the broadcasting activities of such media outlets in the Union, or directed at the Union. These measures should be maintained until the aggression against Ukraine is put to an end, and until the Russian Federation, and its associated media outlets, cease to conduct propaganda actions against the Union and its Member States.
- (11) Consistent with the fundamental rights and freedoms recognised in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, in particular with the right to freedom of expression and information, the freedom to conduct a business and the right to property as recognised in Articles 11, 16 and 17 thereof, these measures do not prevent those media outlets and their staff from carrying out other activities in the Union than broadcasting, such as research and interviews. In particular, these measures do not modify the obligation to respect the rights, freedoms and principles referred to in Article 6 of the Treaty on European Union, including in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and in Member States' constitutions, within their respective fields of application.
- (12) Further action by the Union is needed in order to implement certain measures.
- (13) Decision 2014/512/CFSP should therefore be amended accordingly,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Decision 2014/512/CFSP is amended as follows:

- (1) the following Article is inserted after Article 4f:

'Article 4g

1. It shall be prohibited for operators to broadcast, or to enable, facilitate or otherwise contribute to broadcast, any content by the legal persons, entities or bodies listed in Annex IX, including through transmission or distribution by any means such as cable, satellite, IP-TV, internet service providers, internet video-sharing platforms or applications, whether new or pre-installed.
2. Any broadcasting licence or authorisation, transmission and distribution arrangement with the legal persons, entities or bodies listed in Annex IX shall be suspended.';

- (2) the text appearing in the Annex to this Decision is added as Annex IX to Decision 2014/512/CFSP.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels, 1 March 2022.

For the Council
The President
J.-Y. LE DRIAN

ANNEX

‘ANNEX IX

LIST OF LEGAL PERSONS, ENTITIES OR BODIES REFERRED TO IN ARTICLE 4g

RT – Russia Today English

RT – Russia Today UK

RT – Russia Today Germany

RT – Russia Today France

RT – Russia Today Spanish

Sputnik’.
