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Sanctions as an instrument of the EU's normative power

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In the context of current conflict between Russia and Ukraine, this article examines sanctions as a tool of normative power for the European Union's foreign policy. The EU calls itself an normative power. It wants to utilize sanctions to propagate democracy, human rights and the rule of law that are its core values. Nevertheless whether these sanctions are effective and whether they are morally justified is a matter for mutual questioning and discussion. This article intends to examine to what extent EU sanctions help change international behavior patterns and still adhere to the Union's bases of its concept. The goals include discussions of the role of sanctions in EU foreign policy, an examination into whether these sanctions work in terms of Russia's aggression, an analysis of legitimacy issues involved and impacts on both targeted nations and EU member states; and appraisal for compliance with the EU's declared values matching principles, such as objectivity fairness extent.

Additionally, this article seeks to identify the broader geopolitical implications of EU sanctions, particularly in shaping the global perception of the Union as a normative power. The interplay between these sanctions and the EU's strategic goals, such as maintaining unity among member states and countering external threats, will also be explored.

In order to accomplish these goals, a combination of qualitative analysis grounded in the concept of Normative Power Europe and case study based on concrete facts will be used. The case under consideration here is the sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation in response to its aggression against Ukraine, examined as an ongoing process. The results are expected to disclose the regulatory potential of sanctions, as well as challenges in practical adequacy that they create. This analysis aims to provide insights into how the EU can better align its strategic purposes with its normative principles.

Key words: Sanctions, European Union, European Identity, Normative Power, International Relations, Diplomacy, Democracy, Russia-Ukraine war, Foreign Policy.

Introduction. The imposition of sanctions as a tool of foreign policy is becoming an increasingly significant mechanism in the global system of international relations. For the European Union as a self-proclaimed normative power [12, p. 236], sanctions are a primary implement to promote democracy, human rights, rule of law and other key values that underpin European identity. However, the use of sanctions as a foreign policy tool has become the subject of debate regarding whether they reach the desired goal, if they are moral, and whether they conform to the declared principles of the EU.

In a globalized world, accompanied by new geopolitical realities, sanctions not only serve as a means of affecting international developments – they also illustrate European commitment to values. In particular, it can be observed in the case of the current war between Russia and Ukraine, where the EU's policy of sanctions serves as a main tool to discourage aggression and ensure the order of the world. The study of sanctions as a tool of normative power is important for understanding the extent to which they are able to serve as a means of influence that meets not only the strategic but also the moral obligations of the EU.

There are a number of reasons that this topic is relevant. First, it enables us to evaluate how the EU reconciles its interests and principles, especially in the midst of a crisis and increasing competition with other global actors. Second, we can benefit from the scholarship on sanctions in order to under-

stand their actual effects on altering the behavior of international actors. Thirdly, the study of the impact of the EU's sanctions policy can reveal how it contributes to reinforcing the regulatory agency of the European Union, which is significant for the long-term stability of the international system.

Aim and tasks. The aim of this article is an in-depth analysis of sanctions as a tool of normative power of the European Union in international relations for implementing its values. With this goal in mind, the article sets the following tasks: 1) Discuss the role of sanctions in EU foreign policy referring to the normative power of the EU i.e. the diffusion of democratic ideals, human rights and the rule of law beyond its borders; 2) Evaluate EU sanctions policy effectiveness by exploring how far sanctions, in the case of Russia in response to aggression towards Ukraine, yielded the results as intended; 3) Identify key challenges in sanctions application by the EU, including issues of legitimacy, impact on the economic and political systems of countries, objects of sanctions, as well as risks of conflicts between the interests of EU member states; 4) To analyze the compliance of the EU sanctions policy with the principles of normative force in particular whether it does not contradict the declared values of the Union such as fair-ness proportionality and respect for international law.

The article thus tries to assume an approach instrumental in evaluating to what extent EU sanctions constitute an effective tool of strategic, let alone moral influence as well as which aspects of the policy require tuning.

Research methods. In order to achieve these objectives, the article employs a mixed-methods approach encompassing theoretical analysis and empirical research. The methodological foundation of the paper is the application of the Normative Power Europe concept, based on the statement that the European Union acts as a «soft power» influencing international politics to the extent necessary, by spreading its values and norms.

Theoretical approach. The approach of Normative Power Europe allows us to consider EU sanctions as a tool for promoting such values as democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Particular attention will be paid to how sanctions reflect the EU's commitment to act in accordance with its declared principles.

Empirical analysis. Case study of application of EU sanctions in a specific context – sanctions on the Russian Federation for Crimea annexation and the war in Ukraine. **Case study method.** Such approach allows to evaluate the actual outcome of sanctions on the changing behavior of the subjects-objects of the sanctions policy and its implication to achieve the goals declared by the EU.

Analysis of documents and data. The analysis will include both official EU decisions, reports of international organizations, analytical reports and scientific works. In particular, EU strategic documents, EU Council resolutions, and also the economic and political ramifications of sanctions.

Combining theory and practice. The article will take an overview of the EU sanctions policy approach by means of combining theoretical as well as empirical analysis of concrete case. Identifying these gaps will not only enable the unveiling of the regulatory potential of sanctions but also provide insight into their practical drawbacks and challenges.

Findings. The concept of Normative Power Europe (NPE) was introduced by Ian Manners in 2002 as an approach to analyzing the role of the European Union in international affairs. This theory goes beyond traditional concepts of «soft power» and «hard power», focusing instead on the unique potential of norms, values, and ideas to flow out of EU into world.

The essence of the Normative force is defined as a subject that creates statements about «normality» in international affairs, emphasizing its values as the basis of modern politics. Manners claims that there is a special power which is not based mainly on the military and economic fields, but deriving from norm-establishment impacts on others' behavior in international affairs [12, p. 237].

The core of Normative Power Europe, as defined by Manners, includes five key elements that characterize the EU as a normative actor:

- **Historical Evidence:** Europe, as a continent that has experienced significant conflicts, promotes peace through the process of integration.

- **Hybrid Political Nature:** The EU is, on the other hand, a new type of entity, an international organization and supra-national power.

- **Legal Basis:** Its values and principles are enshrined in the EU's founding treaties. Politics: EU has a wide range of policies that enhance democratic standards and human rights practices.

- **Cultural Identity:** European identity in terms of universal values as a common cultural foundation.

The EU's essence as a normative power is tied to a set of shared values that anchor its power to act and its strategic objectives. Those values include democracy, adherence to human rights, the rule of law, social justice and sustainable development. The «values» enshrined in key EU policy documents, including the Treaty of Lisbon, provide a general framework for the Union's policy goals abroad [14, p. 405]. They also emphasize the EU's commitment to defend a rules-based international order, tackle global challenges and promote its value-based foreign policy.

To, therefore, operationalize its normative power, Manners presents the instruments which the EU uses. In the context of this discussion, contextual mechanisms reflect structural involvement, as participation in international institutions provides the EU with the opportunity to insert its norms into even broad global frameworks. On the instrument we can also talk about the use of economic, political, and diplomatic tools, such as sanctions, association agreements, development assistance programs, etc., to induce compliance allegedly to EU standards [11]. Reconstruction mechanisms target perspectives of international actors and normative alignment through diplomacy, dialogue, and soft power.

Though theoretically attractive, the concept of Normative Power Europe has been the subject of intense criticism. One of the main problems is the ambiguity that stands between declaration of EU actions and practical realization of its principles. Thus, although the normative approach has been one of the central components of the EU's foreign policy, critics have pointed out how much less effective it has become when pragmatic interests trump stated values and how inconsistent the way the EU applies this policy is in practice. Moreover, the increasing power of alternative global players has created alternative discourses and reduced the EU's capability to unilaterally mould the international normative architecture.

Nevertheless, the EU's identity as a normative power, characterized by the promotion of shared values and norms in the world, continues to be a defining aspect of its international relations; however, the application and effectiveness of this power are influenced by the complex interplay of interests and realities present in today's global landscape [10, p. 1605].

The conceptual framework of Normative Power Europe (NPE) can also be useful in the context of the European Union's sanctions policy, by helping to explain how the Union pushes its values through sanctions. As a tool, sanctions will both reinforce the commitment of the EU to democratic and human rights principles while providing a response to the challenges of political and economic realities.

The idea of NPE, conceived by Ian Manners, offers an independent lens to observe sanctions as a tool of the EU foreign policy. In this perspective, sanctions have further evolved from a tool to achieve strategic objectives, to an expression of the EU's commitment to maintaining its values and norms in the international arena. Sanctions are viewed in this context as an expression of the EU's normative power, focusing on the dissemination of universal values instead of economic or military enforcement [9].

Sanctions under the NPE framework serve multiple functions. The first reason is that sanctions are perceived to work as a tool of foreign policy to compel international actors to change behavior through inducing economic or political pressure. In this way, the EU attempts to promote adherence to principles it considers essential, including respect for human rights and territorial integrity. Second, sanctions show that the EU stands behind its values. A message of clear prevention vis a vis any fraudulent or aggressive actions that challenge core principles, a corrective to those who would threaten their predication, asserting the EU not only as an economic and political player, but also as a steward of certain principles. Finally, sanctions enable the EU to show moral leadership on the international stage. And by utilizing sanctions, the EU presents itself as a defender of international justice, enforcing compliance with international norms through non-violent means, as opposed to coercion or violence.

The significance of sanctions as a normative power becomes apparent in a further examination of the ways that they are unique in their ability to align with such an idea. Instrumentally, sanctions serve as a very practical foreign policy tool that can result in very concrete outcomes of state or organization behavior. They deliberately help internalize norms that promote European standards of behavior among international actors. Moreover, sanctions are symbolic – they signal that EU values are universal even when their immediate practical effect is limited.

In explaining what sanctions are meant to do, this concept makes a persuasive case for thinking of sanctions as a normative tool, but in doing so it highlights the inherent tensions between EU's value-based aspirations and the political and economic constraints it faces. These tensions inform how, and by whom, sanctions are to be implemented and their repercussions, something that complicates the balancing of value-based and pragmatic policies in the EU's

external relations. So, in the light of NPE sanctions can be understood as a pluralistic tool and are impossible to be pinned down on one specific aspiration of the EU or the other, while it speaks to the challenges opening up in the EU's practice of its ability as a normative power.

Applying sanctions can be seen as a statement of expressive action from the European Union in the sense that sanctions apply under the wider umbrellas of both Normative Power Europe (NPE) and the continued reinforcement of normative incorporation in the global sphere. However, it can also face unique challenges, especially concerning effectiveness, competing interests, and unintended consequences [14, p. 421]. Sanctions used to be a common point of attack as a foreign policy tool. Sanctions seek to change the behavior of target states but do so with no guarantee of success. This is especially true when sanctioned states have alternative sources of support available to them, including political or economic support from global heavyweights like China or Russia [2]. When matters reach that threshold, the EU sanctions tool loses its proper function, and the ability for pressure to be created becomes greatly diminished.

Furthermore, the application of sanctions often reveals rifts between the EU's normative goals and its member states' economic interests. Collective values, such as democracy and human rights, often clash with the immediate economic interests of individual states, particularly when they have trading ties with the sanctioned. Such internal contradictions can threaten the unity and coherence of the EU's response and thus pose a serious challenge to the EU's status as a normative power. While intended to burden the target state with costs, they can also trigger negative lateral economic effects on the EU member states themselves, especially those with important economic interdependence with the targeted actors. This dual impact makes sanctions difficult to apply and often requires careful balancing between normative commitments and domestic economic stability.

Notwithstanding these challenges, sanctions continue to serve as a major tool of the EU's foreign action, representing a means for the Union to react to breaches of international law, respond to crises and conflicts, or promote its strategic and normative objectives. In the NPE framework, sanctions serve not merely as an instrument for furthering external goals but also as a signifier of the EU's commitment to promoting its values and exerting its normative power. There is also a tool for building coalitions with allies. European Union sanctions regimes are frequently mirrored in those of the United Nations, G7, and United States, exemplifying a multilateralist approach to international challenges. Such cooperation improves the legitimacy of sanctions and addresses their impact, showing that the EU does and can act as a leader in the promotion of a rules-based interna-

tional order. In sum, sanctions constitute a complex political measure that embodies the EU's idealizing appeal to be a normative power while also reflecting the practical challenges of reconciling values' promises with the realities of international relations. As such, they offer a platform for the projection of EU values and responses to global obstacles; however, the application of sanctions reveals the tensions and limitations of the NPE theory. Nonetheless, these sanctions are an essential part of the EU's external actions, reflecting its willingness to act according to its principles in a complicated context [11].

Thereby, sanctions demonstrate that the EU is willing to defend its values, even amid high economic and political risk. In the case of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the EU took the lead of the anti-aggression international coalition by coming up with the widest sanction package in its history.

It should be noted, that the EU has been using sanctions since the 1980s. It now uses them extremely widely. Their application falls within the scope of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Council plays a key role, even if the implementation of the relevant decision requires the direct involvement of the Commission, when the implementation of the sanctions affects the functioning of the Single Internal Market. The Lisbon Treaty further emphasized the role of the Council in this regard. However, it is clear that the initial political decision always comes from the European Council.

Since the mid-1990s, the EU has gradually moved from the use of comprehensive embargoes to targeted or «smart» sanctions, when used, the object of influence is considered to be the country's elite, responsible for the steps and decisions that caused disapproval in the EU, and not its population as a whole [7].

Targeted sanctions are applied in such a way that, if possible, they affect only certain individuals, elite groups and economic sectors, and not the entire economy of the country as a whole.

The implementation of trade and financial sanctions of the European Union requires a Council regulation. The European Parliament, from a formal point of view, only needs to be notified of the introduction of appropriate measures. In fact, MEPs are demanding a more important role for themselves. In some cases, the EP actively expresses its opinion on the advantages and disadvantages of the EU sanctions policy, calling for sanctions against certain countries or accusing the EU executive of double standards [6].

Travel bans on individuals, like arms embargoes, usually do not require additional (supranational) decisions (with the exception of lists of dual-use goods – these can be, for example, certain types of explosives or communication equipment).

In principle, sanctions can be aimed at changing the behavior of the object they are directed at (i.e.,

acting as a tool of coercion), at restricting its freedom of action (restraining influence), or with their help, international players send a signal to the world community, other countries, non-state organizations, or individuals. In this way, the sanctioning party can try to improve its own image in the international arena, increase its significance, strengthen some global norm, or demonstrate that the crisis, in its opinion, has moved to a higher and more dangerous level of diplomatic confrontation. After all, this is a kind of form (among a number of other existing forms) for demonstrating economic and political influence in the world.

If talk about signaling sanctions in particular, then inflicting material damage on the opposing side is not their primary goal, although they can have an indirect negative economic impact – for example, expressed in the loss of foreign direct investment in the country subject to sanctions. Thus, the sanctions instrument is very important for the EU: it is one of the key expressions of the ability of its participants to collectively exert economic and political influence on the global arena, demonstrating to allies their reliability and world power. Sanctions applied by the EU largely look like a political alternative to the use of military force, material incentives and diplomacy in a situation where some kind of reaction to the actions of the object in the international environment is required, and other actions are difficult or completely unattainable for the European Union (including due to disagreement within the ranks of the member states). Without having its own serious military power potential, the EU is at the same time considered an economic superpower [3]. Therefore, the application or threat of application of economic and financial sanctions by it is very significant. Economic sanctions can include not only trade embargoes, but also asset freezes. But in international relations in general, sanctions that do not have an economic content are also possible – for example, diplomatic ones.

EU sanctions can also be defined as a form of negative conditionality, they are used to induce a state to abandon some economic, political or military steps by means of the threat of increased punishment. From this point of view, it is always important for the sanctioning party to accurately describe the requirements (criteria) that must be met by this state in order to terminate the sanctions. Changes in its behavior are expected as a result of the material damage caused by the sanctions, which the opposing party would like to avoid. In other words, the country targeted by the sanctions must understand what needs to be done to avoid increasing its losses.

In 2004, the Council of the EU outlined a common framework for the adoption of sanctions in the European Union in a document developed by the Political and Security Committee [3], which clearly expressed its readiness to use them as a key tool in the EU's

foreign policy. The next important document was the «Guidelines for the implementation and evaluation of restrictive measures (sanctions) taken under the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU». Its latest version was adopted by the Council in June 2012 [4]. On its basis, the monitoring and evaluation of the action of EU restrictive measures were entrusted to the Working Group of Foreign Affairs Counsellors.

The EU Council imposes deterrent measures either in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions (the EU joins all sanctions imposed by the United Nations), or in specific situations it can also strengthen UN sanctions with its own additions, or it imposes sanctions entirely on its own initiative (autonomous measures are particularly vulnerable to criticism) [17, p. 868].

The EU sanctions imposed against Russia and Belarus, China are examples of the category of fully autonomous EU sanctions. They are usually imposed in unison with unilateral sanctions by the US or other countries and regional organizations. These are the sanctions that have been consistently criticized by the UN Human Rights Council.

Personal sanctions prohibit individuals on the «blacklist» from entering the EU (issuing visas) and freeze their financial assets or prohibit them from having bank accounts in EU countries. Selective sanctions may include partial embargoes, bans on the export or import of certain goods – such as timber, oil, precious stones, cocoa, weapons or luxury goods. Financial sanctions (bans on investments and payments or freezing of funds of state-owned companies), flight bans are also part of the repertoire of selective sanctions used. They can have a wider impact on the economy than personal sanctions. For reasons of principle, targeted sanctions do not include food and medical products (medicines) in order to protect vulnerable social groups in countries subject to EU sanctions from being hit in advance [7].

Economic and financial sanctions of the European Union can be functionally divided into three categories.

– *Asset freezing* is the most commonly used restrictive measure. It is applied to individuals and companies identified by the EU in accordance with established criteria. Such measures have two practical consequences:

(1) it is prohibited to transfer funds and economic resources belonging to the individuals or companies concerned;

(2) it is prohibited to provide them, directly or indirectly, with other funds or economic resources.

– *Sectoral sanctions* – targeted at entire economic sectors, which may have the following objectives:

(1) to prevent a country from purchasing goods and services that are necessary to continue its actions that the EU considers illegal;

(2) to exert indirect pressure on such a country by cutting off access for players in its key sectors

to financial resources and investments from the European Union.

– *Bans on the transfer of funds* [9].

European measures are a minimum standard from which national measures for their implementation may differ, but only in the direction of greater strengthening.

The basis for the imposition of autonomous restrictive measures by the EU is a decision of the Foreign Affairs Council, which is adopted unanimously on a proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs or from any Member State.

Some exceptions to the unanimity rule that apply in this case are provided for in Article 31(2) Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (the Council may also decide by qualified majority if there is a prior decision of the European Council on this matter or a specific proposal by the High Representative has been made at the specific request of the European Council). In principle, the constructive moderation mechanism described above can also operate here. The Treaty allows for flexibility, allowing one of the Member States not to participate in the decision taken without blocking it, which in principle makes it possible to introduce more stringent sanctions [2].

In the preliminary order, the proposed measures are considered and discussed in the subsidiary bodies of the Council: in the Council working party responsible for the region to which the country subject to sanctions belongs; in the Working Party of Foreign Affairs Counsellors; in the Political and Security Committee and in the Committee of Permanent Representatives at the level of the Heads of Permanent Representations of the EU Member States in Brussels (COREPER II) [4].

Such a Council decision is political (legal acts are not adopted directly in the field of CFSP). However, it allows for the adoption of a corresponding legal regulation of the Council, binding on all natural and legal persons within the EU. A regulation is required in the case of the introduction of economic measures falling within the competence of the Union. It is already adopted by a qualified majority on the basis of a joint proposal of the High Representative and the EU and enters into force the day after its publication in the Official Journal of the EU. The regulation sets out the exact limits of the measures to be introduced, as well as the details for their implementation. However, most often both documents (both the decision and the Council regulation) are adopted simultaneously [7].

EU sanctions must be implemented by the Member States (including arms embargoes or travel bans) and by the Commission – on the basis of Article 215 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (freezing of assets or export bans). The formal role of the European Parliament in the adoption of sanctions is small.

The two-stage procedure, in which the Council first adopts a political decision and then a legal regulation, can create coordination difficulties. But the maintenance of this duality is dictated by the Member States' continuing concern to preserve their sovereignty over foreign policy.

EU regulations adopted on the basis of Article 215 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) are subject to review by the Court of Justice and the General Court of the EU. In particular, an action may be brought for their annulment (Article 263 TFEU). CFSP decisions imposing sanctions on natural or legal persons are also subject to judicial review (Article 275(2)), which is a significant test for the EU sanctions regime due to the large number of actions brought [11].

Regular meetings of the Working Party of Foreign Affairs Counsellors in the so-called "sanctions format" (RELEX/Sanctions) are held to monitor the implementation of sanctions.

The increasing use of sanctions and sectoral sanctions is placing an increasingly heavy regulatory burden on European companies in particular. The EU authorities have so far not taken a particularly aggressive stance in enforcing companies to comply with its sanctions rules – unlike the US, which imposes billions of dollars in fines on companies (including some of Europe's largest banks and companies) caught flouting US sanctions. However, in Germany, the penalties for violating the European sanctions regime can in principle also include administrative fines and even imprisonment.

Case Study Analysis: The Effectiveness of EU Sanctions Against Russia

The European Union has become a leading global player when it comes to the use of sanctions as a foreign policy instrument. In response to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its subsequent military aggression in Ukraine, the EU adopted a series of sanctions intended to reinforce international law and prevent any new violations of Ukrainian sovereignty [9]. This part assesses the efficacy of these sanctions by taking a case study approach to examine their effects on Russia's economy, political behavior, and wider international relations. The study asks the following question: To what extent were the goals of EU sanctions achieved? The Goals of EU Sanctions on Russia.

First, the sanctions originally adopted by the EU are a complex combination of economic, financial, and individual restrictive measures.

These measures aim to:

- Encourage Russia to stop its aggression against Ukraine and abide by international law.
- Mark the EU's line in the sand over the defense of democratic principles and territorial integrity. Impose costs on Russia, both economic and reputational, to deter future violations.

- Support diplomatic solutions to the conflict.

This analysis applies an evaluative case study method, assessing sanctions effectiveness across three categories: economic, political, and relationship to EU strategic aims. Data based on economic reports, political analyses and comments of Russian and EU officials.

Economic Impact

These economic sanctions have targeted sectors like finance, energy and defense and they have hit Russia's economy hard. As of February 2024, approximately 45 countries have joined the sanctions against Russia. Currently, Russia holds the record for the number of sanctions imposed against it due to its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, amounting to 17,000 individual and sectoral restrictions.

Key findings include:

GDP contraction: After the sanctions were imposed in 2014, GDP in Russia noticeably shrank as oil prices have collapsed. From 2014 to 2016, Russia's G.D.P. fell by roughly 3.5 percent per year. Approximately more than \$400 billion – the total losses of the enemy as a result of their actions. Such data were provided by representatives of the President's Office during the Forum «Ukraine 2024».

Sectoral Damage: Sectoral Losses: As many of the energy sector's key oil and gas companies came under sanctions, Russia faced reduced levels of investment and technology transfer that will hamper its long-term development. Limits on access to EU financial markets put additional pressure on Russian businesses.

Currency Devaluation and Inflation: The ruble underwent severe devaluation which exerted inflationary pressures that eroded household purchasing power. The Russian ruble lost 45%.

Layoff Measures: Over the years, Russia has tried to soften these impacts with import substitution measures and trade pivots to non-Western partners (China, India). These actions, while somewhat effective, have not replaced the losses resulting from sanctions [8].

The sanctions have had mixed results politically:

Limited Domestic Disruption: The economic pressure applied through sanctions should, in principle, lead Russia to recalibrate its behavior towards Ukraine (withdrawing from Crimea, ceasing military operations) as its material supports erode. Instead, Russia as which is deepened its foreign and domestic narratives through the sanctions against Western interference.

Domestic Legitimization: The Russian government has used sanctions as a tool to bolster nationalist expression and solidify political power, casting the EU as part of a larger Western campaign to undermine Russia.

Progress and Challenges: Sanctions have helped to bolster EU unity against Russian aggression; how-

ever, they have also created divisions and diplomatic deadlock, further complicating efforts to negotiate a resolution to the conflict. Yet they have highlighted the EU's unity and determination in responding to violations of international law [13].

The 15th and latest of these packages – a set of EU sanctions against Russia – has been a move towards a more sweeping approach compared to earlier packages which primarily targeted the direct economic elements of Russia based on the projections before the conflict. Notable additions include: Additional Sanctions on Energy: Previous sanctions had targeted tech transfers and investments in oil exploration, but the latest impose a near total ban on oil imports from Russia by sea and expand restrictions to natural gas exports [15].

Technological and Industrial Restrictions: New restrictions on high-tech goods, such as semiconductors and advanced computing technologies, target Russia's access to key products for its military and technology sectors.

Additional banks cut off from SWIFT: More banks, including some with links to the energy or transportation sectors, were cut off from the SWIFT payment system, limiting Russia's access to international financial markets. This follows previous steps but expands their reach to include smaller financial institutions [6].

Targeted Sanctions on Individuals and Entities: The new package sanctions hundreds of individuals and entities involved in supporting the war effort, from oligarchs to military officials to companies in the defense industry.

Media and Cultural Bans: The European Union has targeted media outlets that are controlled by the Russian state for the first time, preventing them from operating in the region in a bid to combat disinformation tract in the block.

Comparative Analysis

The 15th package reflects a number of key advances over earlier sanctions. Firstly, broader economic scope – previous sanctions were more limited and focused on narrow markets, whereas the new steps cover a far broader list of sectors and resources, including sweeping energy bans. Secondly, tighter grip on technology – choking off high-tech supplies signals a strategic shift toward longer-term economic and military depletion. Thirdly, enhancing financial dimensions of response – SWIFT disconnections were extended; more assets were frozen which indicate deeper financial isolation. Finally, growing symbolism – with its mentions of cultural and media restrictions, the ban shows the degree to which the bloc is not trying just to respond to military attacks but also to promotions of war through information [6].

The new sanctions package reaffirms the EU's commitment to defend international law and support Ukraine. But these measures come with new chal-

lenges as well – potential economic consequences for EU member states, and a possible backlash from Russia. But the wide range of the new package suggests a hardening determination to respond to the changing realities of the conflict.

Conclusions. Sanctions are an important policy tool through which the EU combines pragmatic and normative goals. They demonstrate the EU's ability to influence international relations through a collective approach, cooperation with other global actors and a firm commitment to the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The effectiveness of sanctions largely depends on their coherence, broad international support and the ability to adapt to changing conditions.

In the face of growing geopolitical challenges, the EU should rethink its sanctions policy, making it more effective, flexible and coordinated with other diplomatic instruments. Only in combination with international support, innovative mechanisms and attention to humanitarian aspects, sanctions can fully realize the potential of the EU as a regulatory force.

EU sanctions on Russia have had some success in achieving certain objectives, most notably in imposing economic costs on Russia and cementing the EU's normative position. But their ability to alter Russia's political behavior is limited. The latest 15th sanctions package marks a big evolution, filling previous gaps and showing the EU's adaptability to an evolving crisis. The next phase will require the EU to juggle the need to keep pressure on Russia with the necessity to bolster diplomatic action and address rifts within the Union itself. The information war highlights the need for coordinated and strategic sanctions in the context of a wider foreign policy approach that needs to adapt to the changing geopolitical context.

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Санкції як інструмент нормативної сили ЄС

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У контексті поточного конфлікту між Росією та Україною, ця стаття досліджує санкції як інструмент нормативної сили у зовнішній політиці Європейського Союзу. ЄС позиціонує себе як нормативну силу та прагне використовувати санкції для поширення демократії, прав людини та верховенства права — своїх базових цінностей. Проте ефективність цих санкцій та їх моральна обґрунтованість залишаються предметом дискусій та взаємних сумнівів. У цій статті розглядається, наскільки санкції ЄС сприяють зміні міжнародних моделей поведінки, залишаючись при цьому вірними базовим принципам Союзу. Основними цілями є обговорення ролі санкцій у зовнішній політиці ЄС, оцінка їх дієвості в контексті агресії Росії, аналіз питань легітимності та впливу як на цільові країни, так і на держави-члени ЄС, а також перевірка відповідності санкцій заявленим цінностям Союзу, таким як об'єктивність, справедливість і пропорційність.

Крім того, ця стаття намагається визначити ширші геополітичні наслідки санкцій ЄС, зокрема у формуванні глобального сприйняття Союзу як нормативної сили. Також буде досліджено взаємодію між цими санкціями та стратегічними цілями ЄС, такими як підтримка єдності між державами-членами та протидія зовнішнім загрозам.

Для досягнення цих цілей буде використано комбінацію якісного аналізу, що базується на концепції «Нормативної сили Європи», та кейс-стаді, ґрунтованого на конкретних фактах. У фокусі дослідження — санкції, запроваджені проти Російської Федерації у відповідь на її агресію проти України, що розглядаються як процес, який триває. Результати мають розкрити регуляторний потенціал санкцій, а також виклики, які вони створюють у плані практичної ефективності. Аналіз спрямований на те, щоб надати рекомендації, як ЄС може краще узгодити свої стратегічні цілі з нормативними принципами.

Ключові слова: санкції, Європейський Союз, європейська ідентичність, нормативна сила, міжнародні відносини, дипломатія, демократія, війна Росії проти України, зовнішня політика.