

ATHENA

FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH

MSc Course

"The EU and the Post-Soviet Space"

Jeroen

DE JONG

AS

IVAN "NOIZE MC"

ALEKSEYEV

Russian Opposition
musician/rapper



Co-funded by
the European Union

ATHENA

- Jean Monnet Chair -



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the ATHENA Jean Monnet Chair, the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

This “foreign policy speech” was originally written for the ATHENA Jean Monnet Chair MSc Course “The EU and the Post-Soviet Space” taught by Dr. Olga Burlyuk. It is published as part of our mission to showcase peer-leading papers written by students during their studies. This work can be used for background reading and research, but should not be cited as an expert source or used in place of scholarly articles/books.

Context

This speech enacts Ivan Aleksandrovich Alekseyev more commonly known as the Russian musician/rapper Noize MC. Noize MC has released various study albums in Russia and is seen as an opposition musician. After the 2022 war he fled Russia and is now living in Lithuania with his wife and children. He has held various benefit concerts raising over 300.000 euros. He continues to oppose the stances of his government. This speech is given by invitation of the European Parliament to talk about his experiences on the war and is held in the here and now.

Speech

Dear President Metsola,
Honourable Members of Parliament,

Thank you for granting me this opportunity to speak in front of you today.

As a kid I grew up in Belgorod, a Russian border city close to Kharkiv. I know both cities inside out and spend uncountable hours in both. Living, working, and relaxing. Many of my friends are defending their cities right now. My soul is being torn apart. I am as much Ukrainian as I am Russian.

As a musician from Russia, I feel it is important to speak up. I hope my music inspires people to imagine a different Russia. A freer Russia. Since 2014 however, Russians have become increasingly scared to speak out. Whenever I released an anti-war song people warned me “Think about the future of your children”. However, they did not understand, that I make music because I **am** thinking about the future of my children.

When the invasion started, I was completely torn.

- On the one hand, I told myself: I am not responsible!
- But what have I done to prevent this war?

- I am not the one firing the missiles! I told myself
- But what have I done to prevent this war?

- I have never had a say in this!
- But what have I done to prevent this war?

I realized that I could have done more. We could have done more.

After fleeing to Lithuania, I wanted to do something. Acknowledge that although the missiles are coming from *my* side, I don't agree with any of it. Together with another Russian musician we organised anti-war concerts throughout Europe, raising over 300.000 euro for a Ukrainian refugee charity.

This tour showed the beauty that is Europe. It showed me that Ukrainians, Russians, and Belarusians can still be together. We are not as different as Putin wants to make us believe. I am grateful that I can live here. For this I would like to thank you.

Thank you for providing my wife and children with a new home. Thank you for providing both Ukrainians and Russians with the opportunity to rebuild their lives here.

Because indeed..., this war affects us all.

- It affects Ukrainian citizens, with every missile, bullet and shell that is launched.
- It affects you, politicians, working day and night developing new policies.
- It affects your constituencies. Your fellow citizens, with fears over safety and anxiety over the energy bills this winter.
- It affects the whole world, with grain shortages, and issues over food security.
- But it also affects us, good-minded Russian citizens, both in Europe and further afield.

We as a group are humble. We understand that you may attribute the actions of our government on us. But we implore you to

- (1) Please do not forget about us, citizens with a Russian passport living, working or studying in Europe. We are not like the videos you see. We are not the dangerous *other*. We come in good faith, trying to rebuild our life after running away.
- (2) Please also do not forget about us, the Russians not able to move here. The ones that have been silenced and are fearful to speak out about the war. The ones wanting to run away but can't.

We are all victims of the Russian regime. We can do more. We must do more.

Слава Україні | Жыве Беларусь | Россия будет свободной

Thank you