

ATHENA

FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH

MSc Course

"The EU and the Post-Soviet Space"

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AS

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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

In this imaginary foreign policy speech, Raphaël Glucksmann, a French European deputy, is speaking to the European Parliament. When this speech is given in early 2024, it has been exactly one week since Vladimir Putin has been declared dead. This speech is intended for the European Parliament to finally give Ukraine all the support it deserves to win against the Russian aggression, which is not abating after President Putin's death.

Raphaël Glucksmann, since the very start of his career as a journalist and essayist, has been very interested in events and uprisings taking place in the South Caucasus and Eastern Europe. His career as a European deputy has been marked by its motivation to fight against foreign interference in Europe and his support towards Ukraine. This speech was written after having read Raphaël Glucksmann's book *La grand confrontation, comment Poutine fait la guerre à nos démocraties* [The great showdown - how Putin wages war against our democracies].

Speech

Madam President,

Honorable members of the European Parliament,

It has been a week since Vladimir Putin has died.

It has been a week since the tyrant who started war against Ukraine has died.

It has been a week since the demon who waged war against our principles and interests has died.

It has been a week and the common shared reaction to that historical event was that of relief. Relief thinking that now everything is over. Relief thinking that now, without Putin, Russia is not at war on the EU's doorstep anymore.

The truth is, we cannot be certain of how long symptoms of the Putin virus will survive after his death.

We could wait and see. We could pray. We could hope. We could remain passive.

Passive and naive is something we have been in the past but which we cannot be any longer.

For years we have ignored the signs, we have been blind to Russia's desire to endanger our sovereignty, our democracies, and our European unity.

The invasion of Crimea, Germany becoming excessively dependent on Russian gas, the manipulation of information and spread of fake news, Russian interference during the French Presidential elections of 2017, cyberattacks against our own European institution.

We ignored what was happening before our eyes and decided to not believe what was obvious.

We failed to understand that Putin was not only making war against Ukraine, but he was also making war against us, Europe, and what we represent. We failed to understand that the war didn't start in February 2022 but well before that.

The problem was not the lack of information and knowledge, but our decision not to take it into account.

For two years now we have spoken with big words, and made decision with limited impact, as if supporting Ukraine was not in our biggest interest.

Hesitations in taking decisions was the result of us not understanding that this war is also our war. And that we need Ukraine just as much as it needs us.

Putin being dead might be the first step towards what should be our shared goal. But that event should not stop us from acting the way we should've since the very first day of the war. Act without reservation and without doubt, put the common good before our own interests, and help Ukraine and Ukrainians who are defending everything that our European Union flag represents, win this war, at last.

Thank you.