

# EU Foreign Policy towards Russia



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# EU-RUSSIA RELATIONS

- Strategic partners
- Energy security
- Eastern Neighborhood
- EU's presence
  - Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa
- Council of Europe membership
- NATO enlargement

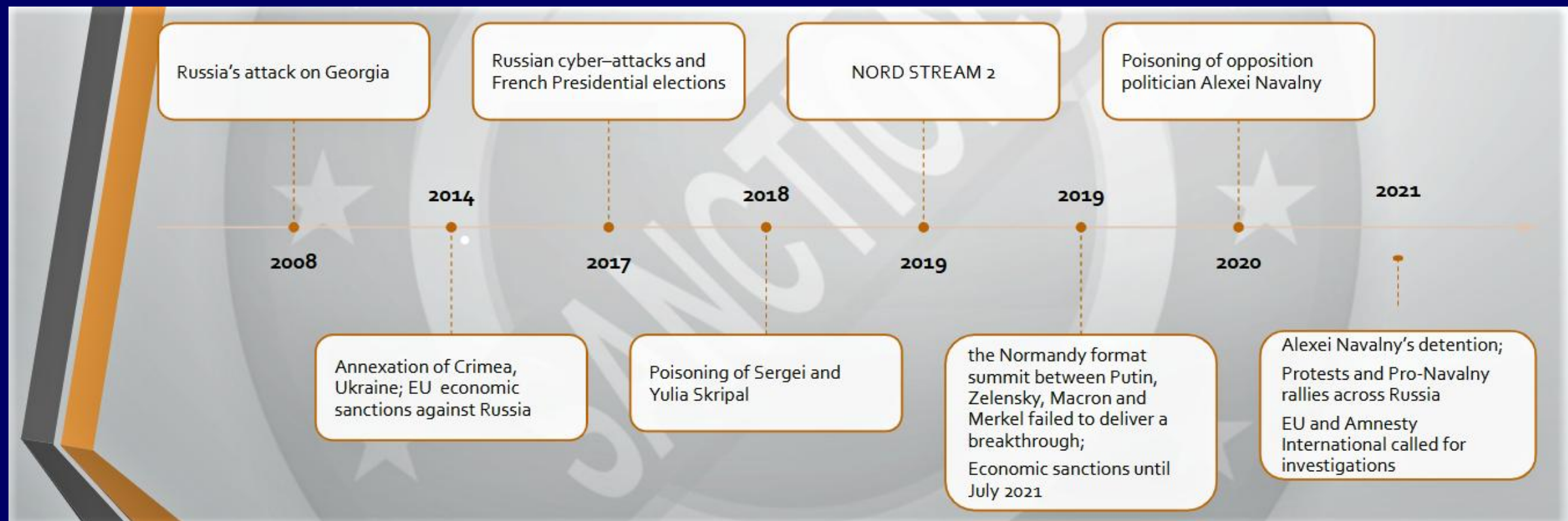


- Ukraine war & annexation of Crimea
- EU Parliament vs MSs' interests
- Transatlantic Dialogue
- Pressure of EU on Russia
- Democracy and HRs

# Five guiding principles

- On 14 March 2016, EU foreign ministers and HR/VP Federica Mogherini agreed on guidelines for the EU's policy towards Russia.
- These were confirmed in March 2020 by Mogherini's successor Josep Borrell
  - 1) Insisting on full implementation of the Minsk Agreements as an essential condition for any substantial change in EU-Russia relations; non-recognition of Russia's annexation of Crimea;
  - 2) Strengthening relations with the former Soviet republics in the EU's eastern neighborhood (including Ukraine) and central Asia;
  - 3) Becoming more resilient to Russian threats such as energy security, hybrid threats, and disinformation;
  - 4) Despite tensions, engaging selectively with Russia on a range of foreign-policy issues, among them cooperation on the Middle East, counter-terrorism and climate change;
  - 5) Supporting Russian civil society and promoting people-to-people contacts

# Main turning points on EU-Russia relations



# The poisoning of Alexei Navalny: a new turning point?

EU's responses to Navalny case:

## 1. Propaganda

- According to the EU, the poisoning of Navalny became possible "only with the consent of the Presidential Executive Office".
- EU leaders have publicly condemned Russia for the 'deliberate' poisoning of Alexei Navalny after three European labs concluded that Navalny was poisoned by a chemical nerve agent, as well as condemning his arrest as 'politically motivated'.

## 2. Diplomatic measures

- The Kremlin has accused multiple EU diplomats of taking part in pro-Navalny protests and had them expelled. The EU, in turn, has expelled the same number of diplomats back to Russia.
- Several officials and political figures from the United States and European Union expressed concern and called on the Russian authorities to release Navalny.

3. Military measures → None directly relevant to this case study - The EU's lack of a military capability is its most conspicuous instrument 'deficit.'

4. Economic measures → Russian officials relevant to the detention and prosecution of Alexei Navalny have been sanctioned, including travel bans and asset freezes.



# OUTPUTS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS

- First time making use of the European Union Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (Council of the EU: Council Regulations: 2020/1998 & 2021/371)
- The verdict against Navalny cast a huge shadow over the relationship with Russia. The Foreign Ministers (Foreign Affairs Council) reached a political agreement.
- Economic sanctions are targeting specific sectors of the Russian economy  
→ extended until 31.07.2021.
- European Parliament Resolution 2021/2513(RSP)  
→ Parliament called for significantly tighter EU sanctions against Russia.
- European Commission: Guidance Note for the Implementation
- The Council of the EU formally imposed penalties on: Alexander Bastrykin, the head of Russia's investigative committee; Igor Krasnov, the prosecutor-general; Viktor Zolotov, the head of the national guard; Alexander Kalashnikov, the head of the federal prison service → for "their roles in the arbitrary arrest, prosecution and sentencing of" Navalny, according to a statement, "as well as the repression of peaceful protests in connection with his unlawful treatment."

## FACTORS CONSTRAINING FOREIGN POLICY

- MSs opposing to sanctions → No need for sanctions but for support civil society and NGO's
- Disagreement and contrasting positions of Member States (national interests)
- EU seen as unreliable partner
- Reciprocal disagreement in international affairs → United Nations; vaccine diplomacy; nuclear deals, etc.
- National choices: bilateral or multilateral relations with Russia?
  - Russia: preference for bilateral interactions

## DERIVED CRITICAL OUTPUTS

- Lack of consensus
- Lack of cooperation
- Inefficiency of sanctions

# Questions

- Are the EU and its foreign action losing credibility due to the lack of cooperation between Member States?
- What about the next future of EU-Russia relations? Will the actual Russian interests' direction (for example, towards China) be confirmed?



THANK YOU FOR THE ATTENTION!

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