



## CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPEAN COALITION

115<sup>th</sup> Congress Policy Brief  
Summer 2017 (last updated July 6<sup>th</sup>)

The Central and East European Coalition (CEEC), representing more than 20 million Americans whose heritage lies in that region, regularly highlights legislation to share its concerns and ideas with the United States Congress and Administration. The legislation listed below reflects our concerns for the region and we advocate for the support of our Senators and Representatives.

### RUSSIAN HOSTILITIES/SANCTIONS

According to former NATO commander General Philip Breedlove, Russia poses an existential threat to the U.S. and its allies. CEE nations are on the front line of that threat. Our highest priority is the preservation – or in some cases, restoration – and advancement of our homelands' democracies through effective deterrence of Russian interference on all levels, to include maintaining current sanctions to achieve withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine.

- **S.Amdt.232 to S.722** - To impose sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation and to combat terrorism and illicit financing. **Ensure that the House version preserves the same strong language as the Senate bill.** (Crapo)
- **S.430 and H.R.1182** - Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty Preservation Acts of 2017 to provide for compliance enforcement regarding Russian violations of the INF Treaty. (Cotton/Rogers)
- **S.Res.106** - Expressing the sense of the Senate to support the territorial integrity of Georgia. (Wicker)
- **H.R.1059** - Russia Sanctions Review Act of 2017 (Hoyer)
- **H.R.1751** - Counteracting Russian Hostilities Act of 2017 (Mooney)

### UKRAINE

The 2014 invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea were egregious violations of international law. According to UN reports, over 10,000 Ukrainian citizens have been killed and 1.8 million displaced because of this war. CEEC members stand in solidarity with Ukraine's fight to restore its borders, institute reforms and firmly establish democratic values and institutions. We favor appropriations for defensive military support and eventually welcoming the nation into Euro-Atlantic structures.

- **S.Res.100** - Condemning illegal Russian aggression in Ukraine on the three year anniversary of the annexation of Crimea. (Brown)
- **H.R.463** - Crimea Annexation Non-recognition Act (Connolly)
- **H.R.830** - STAND for Ukraine Act (Engel)
- **H.R.1997** - To encourage U.S.-Ukraine cybersecurity cooperation and require a report on such cooperation. (Boyle)
- **H.Res.88** - Calling on the Russian Federation to stop the violence in Ukraine, and for other purposes. (Harris)

### NATO AND SECURITY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

The CEEC strongly supports continued military cooperation with our NATO and non-NATO partners at current or increased levels. While we welcome NATO's enhanced forward presence and the proposed increases to ERI, we are deeply concerned about cuts to FMF for Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia. **We call for preservation of ERI funding in the NDAA and restoration of 2016 funding levels or higher for Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia.**

In keeping with our history of successful advocacy for enlargement of NATO, we continue to urge U.S. support for NATO membership for qualified countries. We also call for NATO's capabilities to evolve to meet a changing security environment, including cyber and hybrid warfare.

- **S.Res.54** - Expressing commitment of the United States to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (Blumenthal)
- **H.R.1301** - Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2017 - **03/08/2017 Passed House** (Frelinghuysen)
- **H.Res.135** - Urging North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member countries to meet or exceed the two percent gross domestic product commitment to spending on defense. (Bishop)
- **H.Res.256** - Expressing support for the countries of Eastern Europe and NATO. (Cohen)
- **Closely monitor the Zapad 2017 exercise** in September, simulating Russia's response to a NATO attack on Belarus.

### **DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, THE RULE OF LAW, AND THE INFORMATION WAR**

The CEEC supports democracy and its indispensable elements: the rule of law, human rights, minority rights, freedom of the press and historical accuracy. Denial of crimes against humanity – including the Armenian and Ukrainian Genocides of 1915 and 1932-33, respectively – undermines the pillars of democracy, as does Turkey's denial of the former.

Russia's propaganda distorts and falsifies both current events and history. It is a powerful tool that exploits democratic institutions and values. The CEEC supports substantive reforms to address the management structure and clarify the mission of our international broadcasters; empower our journalists; and educate consumers of media messages.

- **S.133** - Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Burr)
- **S.459 and H.R.1863** - To designate the section of Wisconsin Avenue in front of the Russia Embassy as "Boris Nemtsov Plaza" (Rubio/Ros-Lehtinen)
- **S.Con.Res.13** - Calling upon the President to issue a proclamation recognizing the abiding importance of the Helsinki Final Act and its relevance to the national security of the U.S. (Wicker)
- **S.Res.136** - Expressing the sense of the Senate on the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. (Menendez)
- **H.R.2388** - To provide that Poland may be designated under the Visa Waiver Program. (Quigley)
- **H.Res.191** - Opposing fake news and alternative facts. (Espaillat)
- **H.Res.220** - Expressing the sense of the House regarding past genocides. (Trott)
- **Ensure funding for the State Department and Global Engagement Center** remains sufficient for effective diplomacy.
- **Enforce the provisions of the Magnitsky and Global Magnitsky Acts** on human rights, sanctioned persons, and corruption issues.
- **Enact legislation to designate August 23<sup>rd</sup> as Black Ribbon Day** to honor those who suffered under the crimes of the Soviet and Nazi regimes.

### **CORRUPTION**

Corruption continues to undermine democratic progress and economic and political cooperation in many CEE countries, and is often used as a tool to bypass sanctions. We call on the U.S. government to address this post-communist legacy.

- **S.853** - Combating Global Corruption Act of 2017 (Cardin)
- **H.R.2820** -To direct the Secretary of State to establish within the Department of State the Office of Anti-Corruption relating to Illicit Russian Financial Activities in Europe, and for other purposes. (Suozzi)

### **ENERGY SECURITY**

Energy security, safety and clean technology are vital to the CEE region. Two significant mishaps already this year demonstrate Russia's disregard for nuclear safety. The U.S. can help with policies that support:

- Enforcement of sanctions that bar Russian firms from bypassing financing, technology and funds transfer, and asset transaction directives.
- Enabling CEE access to Western energy resources and reducing dependence on energy supplies from Russia.
- Encouraging investment in and utilization of efficient and environmentally sustainable technology in the region.
- Blocking the construction of the Astravyets nuclear power in Belarus, which is criticized as an unsafe threat to national security, the environment and public health.