



CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPEAN COALITION

116th Congress Policy Brief Winter 2019 (effective as of January 9th)

The Central and East European Coalition (CEEC), representing more than 20 million American voters whose heritage lies in this region, regularly shares its concerns and ideas with the United States Congress and Administration. With the support of our Senators and Representatives, we routinely advocate for the introduction of specific legislation that addresses our issues. Our continuing priorities for the region are reflected below.

CONTINUED RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

New Russian military actions against Ukraine, belligerence against the U.S. and its allies, and Russian government disinformation campaigns leading to electoral tampering have been virtually unchallenged by the U.S. The CEEC believes it is prudent to adopt a tougher stance that targets the multiple aggressive approaches taken by Russia particularly with regards to Ukraine and Georgia, whose territories continue to be occupied by regular Russian and irregular troops.

We call upon the 116th Congress to **amend further the bipartisan Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)**. The CEEC appreciates the additional series of sanctions outlined in Executive Order 13694, but believe further sanctions are warranted **to include sanctioning additional individuals, banks and institutions** in order to maximize the economic impact of the sanctions. We also urge the Administration and Congress to consider the deselection of Russian banks from the SWIFT network.

UKRAINE

The U.S. and the West have missed clear opportunities to stem the Kremlin's violations of Ukraine's sovereignty. The 2014 invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea were egregious violations of international law. The building of the Kerch Strait bridge and the Russian Navy's November 2018 attack on the Ukraine Navy are more recent examples of the Kremlin's outright disregard for the rights of its neighbors. CEEC members stand in solidarity with Ukraine's fight to restore its borders, institute reforms, and firmly establish democratic values and institutions. We favor **continued appropriations for defensive military support and eventually welcoming the nation into Euro-Atlantic structures**.

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 mission and the 2019 increases to European Deterrence Initiative authorizations, we are deeply concerned about cuts to FMF for nations in the CEE region and specifically **call for restoration of maximum funding levels 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, information, and other forms of hybrid warfare.

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 and disinformation attacks distort and falsify 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 fair and unbiased journalists, and educate consumers of media messages.**

ENERGY SECURITY

Energy security, safety and clean technology are vital to the CEE region. Two significant mishaps in 2018 demonstrate Russia’s disregard for nuclear safety. The CEEC urges the Administration to **support enforcement of sanctions** that bar Russian firms from bypassing financing, technology and funds transfer, and asset transaction directives. We call for U.S. policies that support **pushing back on Nord Stream 2**, a pipeline that would give Russia greater political leverage over Germany and other countries dependent on Russian gas. We stand for **enabling CEE access to Western energy resources and reducing dependence on energy supplies from Russia** through current and further LNG projects and the Baltic Pipeline. The CEEC is strongly convinced that investment in, and utilization of, efficient and environmentally sustainable technology in the CEE region should be encouraged.

American Hungarian Federation • American Latvian Association in the U.S. • Armenian Assembly of American • Belarusian-American Association • Bulgarian Institute for Research and Analysis • Congress of Romanian Americans • Washington Chapter Czechoslovak National Council of America • Estonian American National Council • Georgian Association in the USA • Hungarian American Coalition • Joint Baltic American National Committee • Lithuanian American Council • Lithuanian American Community • National Federation of American Hungarians • Polish American Congress • Slovak League of America • Ukrainian Congress Committee of America • Ukrainian National Association