



CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPEAN COALITION

**116th Congress Policy Brief
Spring 2019 (effective as of March 25th)**

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 seen limited challenge from 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 welcome programs like the Three Seas Initiative that bolster integration, increase U.S. influence, and deflect the Kremlin's influence in the region.

We call upon the 116th Congress to further amend and strengthen the bipartisan Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) by **passing and implementing the Defending American Security from Kremlin Aggression Act of 2019 (DASKAA)**. The CEEC believes further measures 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 Ukrainian 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, including NATO.**

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 Foreign Military Financing (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 1915 Armenian and 1932-33 Ukrainian Genocides – undermines the pillars of democracy. Russia's and Turkey's denials of these genocides distort and falsify both current events and history. The Kremlin's propaganda and disinformation attacks are powerful tools that exploit 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. Significant mishaps in recent years 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 future LNG projects and the Baltic Pipe Project. The CEEC is strongly convinced that investment in, and utilization of, efficient and environmentally sustainable technology in the CEE region should be encouraged.

LEGISLATION

[H.R.596](#) – Crimea Annexation Non-recognition Act – Passed House 3/12

[H.R.598](#) – Georgia Support Act

[H.R.739](#) – Cyber Diplomacy Act of 2019

[H.R.1081](#) – Protect European Energy Security Act

[H.R.1617](#) – Kremlin Act – Passed House 3/12

[S.J.Res.4](#) – A joint resolution requiring the advice and consent of the Senate or an Act of Congress to suspend, terminate, or withdraw the United States from the North Atlantic Treaty and authorizing related litigation, and for other purposes.

[S.482](#) – Defending American Security from Kremlin Aggression Act of 2019 (DASKAA)

[H.Res.93](#) – Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are a part of the sovereign state of Georgia and condemning the decision by the Syrian Arab Republic to recognize these territories as independent of Georgia.

[H.Res.116](#) – Calling for a prompt multinational freedom of navigation operation in the Black Sea and urging the cancellation of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. Companion to [S.Res.27](#).

[S.Res.27](#) – Companion to [H.Res.116](#).

[S.Res.74](#) – A resolution marking the fifth anniversary of Ukraine's Revolution of Dignity.

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