

A Case for Sanity: Italy Is Pushing Back on Renewed EU Sanctions Against Russia

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EU officials are hoping to renew its economic sanctions against Russia. This can only mean one thing: More economic pain for Europe.

The current round of EU sanctions is due to expire on January 31, 2016. The trade ban includes cutting Russia off from European funding sources, industrial trade, food, energy and oil, as well as an endless list of other items and caveats.

While this has certainly hurt the Russian economy, it's also damaged the West's bottom line too. A [recent study](#) commissioned by the Austrian Institute of Economic Research (WIFO) revealed that sanctions EU against Russia – and Moscow's reciprocal moves against the EU – are costing Europeans approximately 100 billion euros and is jeopardizing up to 2.5 million jobs, including a loss of 465,000 jobs in Germany, 215,000 jobs in Italy, 160,000 in Spain, 145,000 in France, and 110,000 jobs in Britain.

Luckily, there's someone in Europe who's still holding out a candle for sanity. It seems that **Italy** is offering a remedy to some of Europe's economic pain. It's a revolutionary concept: daring to put its own economic and national interests ahead of Washington and Brussels half-baked, geopolitical machinations.

Here's a report on this story which aired today:

The obvious question for the rest of Europe: is there a good reason for doing it?

To answer that question, you need to understand what is the West's core political justification for keeping up with the sanctions. The official western propaganda line goes as follows:

“We need sanctions against Russia in order to uphold a peace agreement and end the conflict between Ukrainian government forces and Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine that has killed 9,100 people since April, 2014.”

This line might play well in the reality vacuum that exists between Washington DC and Westminster, but not as much elsewhere. It's a political fiction which is becoming harder and harder to sell. The reason is that the primary sales pitch for Russian sanctions was based on the *Downing of Flight MH17* which European and American leaders immediately tried to somehow blame on Moscow. The initial propaganda pushed worked well enough to get sanctions off the ground, but the main problem now for Washington and its reluctant EU surrogate is that no one actually *believes* the old fairy tale.

Hence, anyone with a brain is now starting to ask: with Europe's economy suffering, and no proof that Russia had anything to do with MH17 – then what's the point of sanctions in the first place?

Whether or not you believe that MH17 was a genuine accident, or was a prefabricated event designed to trigger a call for sanctions – makes little difference now. The fact remains that there never was, is, or will be, any real evidence to convict Moscow over the MH17 incident. If there was then it's certain we would have already seen it by now. Conversely, base on motive, intent and means, there is [a very compelling case to suggest that Western interests are behind an MH17 false flag event.](#)



THE MH17 NARRATIVE: One lie led to another.

No matter how you cut it, Europe must have total political unity in order to *maintain* any international sanctions regime against Moscow. The EU's original plan was to simply wave through" the extension of Russian sanctions as a minor agenda note, hoping that no one would notice or demand any debate on what appears to be a Washington-imposed policy of geopolitical containment aimed at Russia.

Brussels technocrats may have expressed some public shock that Italy would dare to attempt to force a democratic debate on the issue, but in private you can be sure that Washington dissenters are everywhere.

Thompson Reuters [reported](#) earlier today:

"Italy unexpectedly demanded that a mooted extension of the European Union's economic sanctions on Russia go for further discussion within the bloc rather than be rubber-stamped by EU envoys who met on Wednesday. The

envoys aimed to approve a six-month extension to the sanctions, imposed on Moscow last year over the Ukraine crisis, without discussion after an agreement by EU leaders – including Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi – in the wings of the Group of 20 summit in Turkey last month.”

Rome breaking ranks on this issue could be risky for Brussels, so expect some push-back or good fashion political blackmail (or another bizarre international incident) waged by sanctions proponents.

If Italy falls, then expect others to follow. Add to this the newly developing situation in Syria and a renewed international imperative for cooperation there, and you’d expect even more reason for European leaders to want to work *with* its neighbor Russia, rather than against it (as Washington would like).

When Europe eventually sees the futility of the Russian sanctions facade, then Washington will be isolated, alone with its dysfunctional basket case of a regime in Kiev as the surviving partner on this flagging initiative. In terms of the United States as a main broker of international peace and prosperity, no real progress can be made in the Middle East, the Ukraine or anywhere else, so long as Washington insists on a policy of diplomatic aggression against Moscow. It will simply block any route to mutually beneficial bilateral negotiations.

High Hopes in Geneva?

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told [Italian newspaper La Repubblica](#) in an interview this week: “As long as Obama’s deputy Joe Biden goes around Europe recommending continued sanctions against us without taking into account how Kiev is behaving under Western pressure, we will not be able to reach any understanding.”

As much as the world would like to see Washington drop its imperialist NATO-driven lunge into the Eurasia heartland, no one is really holding their breathe. Reports of more [NATO-backed paramilitary activity in the Crimea](#) (Nazis and Jihadis, fighting shoulder to shoulder, for OTAN?) should be a cause for worry. That’s a story which has been completely blacked out in the western media, for obvious reasons.

Lavrov will join Russian President Vladimir Putin next week to meet U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, and others – to discuss the conflicts in both Ukraine and in Syria.

That should be interesting.

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