

Is the G7 still relevant?

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About the Author

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Is the G7 Still Relevant?

INTRODUCTION

When the French President Valérie Giscard d'Estaing convened the leaders of five other countries—the USA, the UK, Italy, Germany, and Japan—in 1975, he had in mind an informal gathering albeit in the magnificent setting of the Rambouillet Castle. The following year in Puerto Rico, a new meeting was organised by US President Gerald Ford, and the inclusion of Canada heralded the start of what became the G7. The style and format of the talks at Rambouillet and in Puerto Rico set the tone for the way the Summits continued to be held in subsequent years, based on leaders adopting a relaxed approach with one another and discussing issues with candour.

If informality and openness have been a constant feature of the G7 summits, other factors have been introduced over the years. Among them, a number of issues that initially were not within the scope of the G7 as well as the addition of ministerial meetings have had a substantial impact on the effectiveness of its deliberations.

The effectiveness and legitimacy of the G7 have been questioned at various times, and those criticisms should not be dismissed. We were fully aware of them when we launched the 2017 Italian presidency. The slogan we chose—'Building the Foundations of Renewed Trust'—tried to give a sense of the multifaceted challenge we all had, where the word 'trust' was meant to have different interpretations. Do our citizens still trust our ability to respond to their needs? Do we trust each other? And above all, are we still able to be an authoritative and trusted guide for an ever-changing world?

As we will see, the way the G7 has been working throughout the last fifty years has not fundamentally affected its relevance. On the contrary, the current international scenario still requires it to perform a positive role. However, it is worth going through the way the G7 has developed before answering our question: does the G7 still matter?

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HISTORY OF THE G7

The idea of regular consultation among representatives of some leading industrialised countries emerged at the beginning of the 1970s as a response to the economic crises that had shattered the international economic and financial system. A first attempt to coordinate economic and monetary policies was made in 1973 by the US Treasury Secretary, George Shultz, who convened his counterparts from France, Germany and the United Kingdom. The experience was repeated the following year with the addition of Japan, thus establishing the G5.

The world economic and financial situation was such as to call for the direct involvement of the Heads of State and Government of the major world economies. A process started leading to the establishment of the G7 in 1976. The following year the European Economic Community (later the European Union) was included, initially only in the area of its exclusive competence. It was in 1981 at the Ottawa Summit that the EEC became a full member participating in all the activities of the G7, the only exception being as chair of its meetings.

A relevant shift was the attempt to include Russia to transform the forum into a G8. The first effort goes back to 1991, when the Soviet Union was invited to attend debates organised in parallel to the G7 London Summit that year. Three years later the President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, was invited to the Naples Summit of 1994, which formalised the start of the so-called G7+1 format, whereby Russia was only invited to meetings to be held at the end of each summit. Russia formally joined the group at the Denver Summit in 1997—upon invitation by the US and UK. It was hoped, with strong advocacy by US President Bill Clinton, that the participation of Russia would bring the country, led by its first post-Soviet leader, closer to the West at a time when NATO was accepting the membership of some former Soviet allies (and satellites) in Eastern Europe. The first Summit under a Russian presidency was held in St. Petersburg in July 2006, while the second, originally scheduled to take place in 2014 in Sochi, was suspended due to Moscow's annexation of the Crimean region of the Ukraine. The summit was therefore held in Brussels, for the first, and so far, only occasion, without Russian involvement. That was the end of the G8.

Starting from the end of the last century, the growing relevance of transnational issues, coupled with the economic and financial crises affecting economies in Latin America and Asia, led the G7 countries in two directions. First, it inspired a progressive widening of the agenda and of the range of its meetings, on which I will elaborate in the following section. Second, it spurred the need to involve other countries in their discussions by inviting them to the G7 summits, which for some years now has become normal practice. These countries, however, do not participate in the actual meetings but in special outreach sessions dedicated to them. Each presidency has the prerogative to identify the invitees. It usually does so on the basis of its own foreign policy priorities as well as its presidency programme. It is a double-edged practice: on the one hand, it makes it possible to expand the number of countries that are invited to G7 meetings over the years, and on the other, it becomes an impromptu exercise with little continuity.

HOW THE G7 WORKS

Alongside the involvement of other countries, the widening of the G7 agenda also called for an adjustment of its working methods. This took three main directions.

First, the more specialised features of some issues required a level of complexity that could not be demanded solely of the leaders. Several ministerial meetings have therefore been included in the overall programme of each presidency. There is not a fixed number or an agreed type of ministerial meeting; this being the choice of each presidency. The number of meetings has inflated in the last few years as a reflection of the variety of issues dealt with by the G7. It is also a way to involve an increasing number of constituencies in the country of the presidency. This should not raise concern or contempt, as it encourages the direct participation of a wider spectrum of local authorities and ordinary people. During the 2023 Japanese presidency, fifteen ministerial meetings were held, and the Italian presidency of this year has announced that it will organise twenty such gatherings.

The so-called engagement groups that each presidency organises have a different purpose. These dialogues with representatives of civil society—including business and labour representatives, women, the younger generation, think tanks, the scientific community—can be challenging. The youth meetings, for instance, are often quite lively; they give an important contribution to the work of the presidency by bringing about instances that otherwise risk being on the side-lines of the G7.

There is no G7 secretariat, which could have been seen as a prelude to a structured international organisation. All the preparatory works are in the hands of the rotating presidency, and, to this purpose, a key role is played by the personal representatives of the Heads of States and Governments: the Sherpas, and just like the Himalayan guides their job is to take their leaders to the summit! As well as coordinating a number of different working groups related to the ministerial meetings, their main task is the negotiation of the final statement of the Summit. Having had the honour to chair those meetings during the 2017 Italian presidency, I can say that it's not an easy job. Each delegation has its legitimate priorities and not always are they within the consensus. Quite often the result is what is known as 'the Christmas tree syndrome' which leads to the inclusion of almost everything in the final statement. It is not a bad thing in itself, since in the absence of a secretariat, the final communiqué is a sort of handover document between presidencies. On the other hand, a long text, sometimes not in a user-friendly style, can be seen as meant only for a limited number of insiders and not for a wider audience.

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WHAT CHALLENGES HAS THE G7 BEEN FACING?

The need for the G7's work and decisions to be widely known and understood is not a secondary issue. After all, the authority of the G7 is first measured by how its collective citizens view it: how they value it; their belief that the various meetings which characterise each presidency can result in proposals; and, better still, that solutions have an impact on the issues which concern them the most. Two considerations are relevant in this respect.

First, the practice of organising ministerial meetings in various cities of the country holding the presidency can have the beneficial effect of bringing citizens closer to the G7, encouraging their understanding of its role not just on major international topics but also on issues that are relevant to their everyday lives. Hence the importance of the broadening of the agenda to include a whole range of issues.

Over the years, the G7 has extended its agenda to include climate change and energy security, migration, food security, gender equality and women's empowerment, work and health, sustainable development—to name but a few.

Climate change has increasingly occupied the G7 agenda, also giving rise to internal divisions, as will be seen in the next section. That said, initiatives have emerged from the G7 meetings that have positively oriented the debate and decisions at the global level. The 2021 G7 summit, held in the United Kingdom ahead of the Glasgow COP26, saw the leaders commit to a 'green revolution' that would limit the rise in global temperatures to 1.5°C. They also promised to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, halve emissions by 2030, and to conserve or protect at least 30% of land and oceans by 2030.

While the G7 statement agreed during 2022 German presidency set out the target to establish a Climate Club to support the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement, at the Hiroshima summit last year, the leaders adopted unprecedented language on the phasing out of fossil fuels.¹ The strong position adopted by the leaders paved the way for the agreement at the Dubai COP28, that although not equally ambitious, introduced for the first time a specific reference to fossil fuels at the UN Climate Change conference.

With the exception of the Trump Administration years, the issue of climate change has seen a shared and ambitious vision among the seven countries. A consensus that so far has not been matched when it comes to cross-border migration. The issue has been a regular feature of the final document for years, but the difficulty of reconciling interests and non-convergent approaches has prevented the Group from promoting a more forward path. It is of the main themes of this Italian presidency, as a reflection of what has been a priority for Italy for some years.

A relatively recent topic on which the G7 will be increasingly focused is that of artificial intelligence, which is at the centre of this year's Italian Presidency following the work done last year by Japan.

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Climate change, migration, artificial intelligence, sustainable development, health and pandemic response are all topics where the voice of the G7 needs to be heard. This requires shared vision and a mutual trust which is not always guaranteed. The human factor itself—the chemistry that is created between leaders—carries an important weight. The word ‘trust’ in the slogan of the 2017 Italian presidency also had this meaning. It was a reminder of the spirit of the origins, that of the first Rambouillet summit. In 2017, it had a particular significance as the leaders of four countries—France, Italy, the UK, and the USA—were participating in the summit for the first time. Establishing a good working atmosphere from the outset was necessary for the smooth running of the presidency, and fortunately this happened. However, it was not possible to agree on the language regarding the Paris Agreement on climate change, and the relevant paragraph was approved by only six states—with the exception of the USA. It was an unusual choice, but one that allowed the unanimous approval of the remaining articles of the final declaration. A couple few weeks after the summit, the USA announced they were withdrawing from the Paris Agreement and, after a few minutes, the three EU members of the G7—(France, Germany and Italy—) made a joint statement confirming their full commitment to it. Things got worse the following year at the Canadian Summit in Charlevoix. The differences on the Paris Agreement and generally on the fight against climate change were such that the USA, who in Taormina had refrained from stating their stance, this time asked to lay out their position in a different paragraph from the one agreed by the other six countries.

Internal cohesion is a necessary condition for the G7 to continue playing a pivotal role, more so in an international scenario that presents new challenges and where its relative weight is declining. Nowadays the seven countries represent over 46% of the global gross domestic product based on nominal values, down from nearly 70% three decades ago. Their populations account for less than 10% of the world’s people.

This reality, substantially different from the one which favoured the origin of the G7 must be taken into account. The first and most relevant issue to factor in is China’s rise. Relations with China appear in the final conclusions of a G7 summit for the first time at the 2021 Carbis Bay meeting under the UK presidency, with a language that seeks to reconcile the desire for cooperation on global issues with a call for respect for human rights.² The formula was taken up in the conclusion of the 2022 Elmau Summit, with the addition of a sharper reference to Beijing’s market practices³. The language at last year’s Hiroshima Summit goes even further in pointing out a series of challenges posed by China.⁴

How to counteract those challenges will be the focus of the G7 for the years to come, although with some differences among its members. Unlike US and Japan, which see China as the strategic rival, the EU has a more articulated approach defining Beijing as ‘simultaneously a partner, a competitor and systemic rival’.⁵

Differences could emerge also regarding Russia; in this respect, this year’s elections for the European Parliament and in the US will be a significant test of the G7 resolution towards Moscow. The Italian presidency will have a delicate task in confirming a line that has been adapted to the increasing threat from Russia, after its occupation of Crimea in 2014. Initially the G7 tried to follow an approach that, while firmly condemning the Russian Federation for its violation of the international order, would also leave open the possibility of some sort of engagement. This was made clear at the Taormina summit in 2017⁶ and also at the 2021 Carbis Bay summit, the last one before the aggression.⁷ The invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 forced a radical change of course. The G7 has been at the forefront in imposing an unprecedented series of sanctions against Russia, with measures targeting the main sectors of the Russian economy and industries and substantially limiting its military capabilities. They have been accompanied by an unprecedented series of financial and military support to Ukraine.

The war of aggression was seen from the onset as a threat to the values that have underpinned the G7 and the international order since World War II. It is a concern that transpires in the text of the conclusions of the Elmau summit, the first since the invasion. The Russian threat is assessed from various angles, among which the direct attack on our societies is particularly worrying.⁸

G20 AND BRICS: ALTERNATIVES TO THE G7?

The rise of China, tensions with the Russian Federation, and the emergence of issues that require wider participation have led some to believe that the G7 has had its day, as it is no longer a sufficiently representative group, neither economically nor geographically. Some analysts have gone as far as questioning the membership of the group suggesting that it should change to reflect the new realities of the world economy. A few years ago, a blog posted by the Brugel think tank called for a revised G7 group, in which the membership of Germany, France and Italy would merge into a common Eurozone representative, Brazil would replace Canada, and most importantly China and India would be added—making it more representative economically and in terms of population without adding more seats to the table.

What appears as an appealing analysis does not really consider a fundamental issue. The G7, in addition to bringing together some of the most advanced economies, is also and above all a group of countries that shares values upholding a rule-based international order. Having said so, it would be short-sighted to overlook the profound changes that have taken place in recent decades.

The representativeness of the G7 has been addressed by the seven countries with mixed results. In 2021, at the beginning of the UK Presidency, the suggestion of an enlargement to Australia, India and South Korea to form a D10 democracy group circulated. The idea, the result of the elaborations of several think tanks, was never endorsed by the British authorities. If implemented, it risked becoming a divisive rather than inclusive factor, configuring the selection as a mark of democracy that was attributed only to a limited number of countries.

Previous initiatives had been more in line with the criteria of inclusion and representativeness. Gatherings with a wider participation were initially confined to the finance ministers. However, it soon became clear that a similar scope was felt in a broader range of issues. In 2005 under the UK Presidency, five emerging countries with particular political and economic importance (Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa) were invited to the G8 summit. In 2007 at the Summit in Germany, the so-called 'Heiligendamm process' was established with participation of the G8 plus the five countries mentioned above. It focused on four areas of dialogue—development cooperation, investments, energy and climate change, innovation—which will all have increasing relevance in both G7 and G20 meetings.

The 2008 economic and financial crisis gave the final push to this process. In November 2008, US President G.W. Bush invited the Heads of State and Government of twenty countries (the G8 plus Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, South Korea, India, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, and Turkey) plus the European Union and some other international organisations. This was the first G20 summit.

Since the first meeting, the weight and prestige of the G20 has grown in parallel with the assertiveness of emerging powers such as China, India, South Africa, Brazil, and Russia; the latter's membership has been questioned, however, after the invasion of Ukraine. In terms of world's population, the Group is obviously more representative than the G7, and economically so if the parameter is the percentage of global GDP. The admission of the African Union at last year's summit in India is a further positive step for a group that has the ambition to stand in for the Global South.

It has been argued that one of the features of the G20 is its flexibility compared to other multilateral fora. It's true that the broad membership favours bilateral meetings on the margins of the summit, overcoming the logistical and political difficulties of official visits. For instance, the first meeting between US President Joe Biden and the Chinese leader, Xi Jinping, took place in Bali on the side-lines of the G20 summit. The downside is that the heterogeneous nature of the member countries limits the possibilities of agreement or at least lowers the common denominator. Issues such as climate change or even international trade have seen more divisions than agreements due to the presence of divergent interests. Even the COVID-19 emergency failed to bring the G20 to a coordinated position. Russia's presence has been a further divisive factor within the group, which at the last year's summit in New Delhi failed to agree on a common language on the war in Ukraine.

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While there is no question about the increasing importance of the G20, it wouldn’t be right to see it as an alternative to the G7. The two groups have different scope and, ideally, they could complement one another. In fact, that was the original purpose of the G20 when President Bush convened its first summit.

A different case is that of BRICS. Formed in 2006 as BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China), the group took on its current acronym in 2010 with the addition of South Africa. Its birth responded to the declared intention to represent those emerging powers considered to be underrepresented in the main international arena. In recent years, the group’s aspiration to become a point of reference for the Global South has grown, almost as a counterpart to the G7. This year’s enlargement to include five more countries (Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) has increased its geographical and economic weight. The group now has a total population of about 3.5 billion, equal to 45% of the world’s population and an economy that overall corresponds to 28% of the world’s economy; the entry of oil-producing countries also means that BRICS overall contribute to 44% of world production.

Increasing its political weight in the same proportions will be more difficult. It is plausible that among the new members, Iran will push with anti-Western rhetoric that this year could find useful support from the Russian presidency. However, it is unlikely that many other members will want to go along with such an approach. The enlargement of the group is also likely to add more divisions to those already existing. The rivalry between China and India is already a drag on the group’s ambitions. What common ground will be possible between Iran on the one hand and Saudi Arabia and the Emirates on the other? On issues such as climate change or international trade, will the group be able to find a common position that is sufficiently credible? In other words, what common ambitions can the group have? These questions do not, however, undermine the growing relevance of the group and its attractiveness in some areas, all the more so if the group’s expansion to include other countries will continue in a quest to increasingly be the voice of the Global South.

BRICS’ ability to become the mouthpiece of the Global South remains to be seen. Its wide range, that include almost all continents, makes it quite difficult for the Global South to have a single voice. It finds some common ground on major issues, including the fight against poverty, sustainable development and above all a broader and more democratic representation in international institutions. It remains that in a geopolitical context that cannot be reduced only to the dynamic between great powers, the Global South is an important reality, which the G7 countries, individually or collectively, will have to factor in.

IS THE G7 STILL RELEVANT?

This year's summit will be the fiftieth in the G7's long history. New dynamics in international relations and the inclusion of new issues on the agenda have required adjustments over the years. This, however, has not prevented the seven countries from maintaining a substantial cohesion, albeit with different approaches and priorities. Any assessment of the continuing relevance of the G7 must be based on this assumption. In the same way, the prevailing criticism of a G7 that is in fact incapable of providing answers and solutions to the most pressing challenges is subject to some clarifications. Due to its informal nature, the Group does not lend itself to real decision-making. Its authority is measured by its ability to exercise a role of guidance and influence. From this point of view, there is no shortage of recent positive examples. The weight that the position taken by the G7 at the Hiroshima summit on the phasing out of hard coal had in the deliberations of COP28 in Dubai has already been mentioned. One can also recall the agreement reached by the seven countries in 2021 to overhaul the global rules for corporate taxation or the impetus given in the last two years to impose a growing set of sanctions against Russia. Moreover, there was no lack of ability to react to exceptional circumstances. A few days before the 2017 Taormina summit, a terrorist attack in Manchester caused the death of twenty-two people, ten of whom were aged under-20 years old. Within hours, the leaders signed a joint declaration which, in addition to condemning the attack, entrusted a series of actions to their respective interior ministers. They later met in Ischia and agreed on some specific actions to combat terrorism. Among these, the most significant concerned the fight against the misuse of the Internet by terrorist organisations. The participation of representatives of the main platforms (Google, Microsoft, Facebook, and Twitter) ensured a partnership in the fight against terrorism that for the first time brought together governments, industry, and civil society.

Russia's war of aggression and the threat it poses to the world order gives one more reason to believe in the unique role played by the G7. Russia and China—the latter in fact in ways that do not exclude forms of cooperation—are questioning the current international system and consequently a multilateral infrastructure, which has aimed to settle differences. The rejection of multilateralism, at least with the features that have characterised it since the Second World War, is accompanied by the decline in the attractiveness of the democratic form of government in some parts of the world. Trust in rule-based international order and the defence of democratic values were at the origin of the G7 and constitute its *raison d'être*. Therefore, what place can the G7 have in an international competition that denies its relevance, precisely because it is based on these values? The commitment of the seven countries will have to be focused in at least three directions.

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Firstly, internal cohesion must be safeguarded and strengthened. When it is lacking, as in the above-mentioned case of failure to reach agreement on climate change, not only did the Group's credibility suffer, but the impasse represented a setback in negotiations in which the G7 was expected to play a leading role. This year there are important elections in the G7 membership: the European Parliament, the presidential elections in the US and probably a general election in the UK. Calling our citizens to choose their representatives is the essence of democracy and the change that every electoral process generates is always a positive factor. There is, therefore, no need to fear, but only to hope that the G7 as a whole will be strengthened.

Secondly, it is in the G7's interest to strengthen interaction with other groups. First, the G20, of which the seven countries and the EU are members. The issues dealt with by the two institutions overlap substantially, and coordination can only have beneficial effects. This was the case in 2017 with the concurrent presidencies of Italy in the G7 and Germany in 2020. There were frequent occasions for alignment not only at the level of Sherpa but also between the two leaders, who at their respective summits in Taormina and Hamburg played almost in tandem to pass some controversial points of the final communiqués. The synergy was facilitated by the fact that they were two G7 countries, but we should not exclude the possibility that it could also occur in different circumstances. This year, for example, the conditions are in place for Italy and Brazil to coordinate in the implementation of their respective G7 and G20 presidency programmes. Not only because they are countries with a longstanding friendship, but also because there are many issues in common: at the top of the list of Brazilian priorities appear climate change, the bioeconomy, and the fight against hunger in the world; all subjects on which it will not be difficult to connect. An agreement will be all the more productive if we consider the prominence that Brazil will have in 2025, with the presidency of BRICS and COP30.

Finally, the relationship with Africa must be reviewed. Countries of the continent are now regularly invited to the outreach sessions of the G7 summits. A positive fact in itself, but which now seems more the affirmation of a general principle—we cannot ignore Africa because it is engulfed by some of the great issues of our time, from climate change to migration—than any disposition to their effective involvement. It is certainly not a question of adding new structures, but we could start with a more active participation in preparation of the outreach work; for example, with Sherpa missions to African countries, or with ministerial sessions exclusively dedicated to specific topics defined by common agreement with the African countries and their regional organisations.

Relations with Africa, the ongoing war in Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East as well as relations with China are the highlights of this year's Italian presidency. Artificial Intelligence will also feature, an issue where the G7, in the wake of what the European Union is doing, will have to be able to make its voice heard to reconcile ethical considerations with the enormous potential that the technology offers in industrial and economic processes. These are all challenges that are marking the passage of an era. The continuing relevance of the G7 will be determined by its ability to offer the rest of the world a convincing vision in the hope that we are not already, as in Stefan Zweig's book, in the world of yesterday. ■

Endnotes

- 1 'We underline our commitment, in the context of a global effort to accelerate the phase-out of unabated fossil fuels so as to achieve net zero in energy systems by 2050 at the latest, in line with the trajectories required to limit global average temperatures to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels and call on others to join us in taking the same action.' G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communiqué, 20 May 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/05/20/g7-hiroshima-leaders-communicue/> [accessed 26 February 2024].
- 2 'In the context of our respective responsibilities in the multilateral system, we will cooperate where it is in our mutual interest on shared global challenges, in particular addressing climate change and biodiversity loss in the context of COP26 and other multilateral discussions. At the same time and in so doing, we will promote our values, including by calling on China to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms'. Carbis Bay G7 Summit Communiqué, 13 June 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/13/carbis-bay-g7-summit-communicue/> [accessed 26 February 2024].
- 3 'We remain committed to upholding fair and transparent competition in the global economy and strengthening international rules in this regard. Regarding China's role in the global economy, we are continuing to consult on collective approaches, also beyond the G7, to challenges posed by non-market policies and practices which distort the global economy. We will build a shared understanding of China's non-transparent and market distorting interventions and other forms of economic and industrial directives. We will then work together to develop coordinated action to ensure a level playing field for our businesses and workers, to foster diversification and resilience to economic coercion, and to reduce strategic dependencies'. G7 Leaders' Communiqué, Elmau, 28 June 2022, <https://www.g7germany.de/resource/blob/974430/2062292/fbdb2c7e996205aee402386aae057c5e/2022-07-14-leaders-communicue-data.pdf> [accessed 26 February 2024].
- 4 "With a view to enabling sustainable economic relations with China, and strengthening the international trading system, we will push for a level playing field for our workers and companies. We will seek to address the challenges posed by China's non-market policies and practices, which distort the global economy. We will counter malign practices, such as illegitimate technology transfer or data disclosure. We will foster resilience to economic coercion. We also recognize the necessity of protecting certain advanced technologies that could be used to threaten our national security without unduly limiting trade and investment'. G7, Hiroshima Communiqué, 2023.
- 5 European Council Conclusions on China, 30 June, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/06/30/european-council-conclusions-on-china-30-june-2023/?utm_source=dsms-auto&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=European%20Council%20conclusions%20on%20China%2C%2030%20June%202023 [accessed 26 February 2024].
- 6 '...the condemnation of the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula' and the threat 'to take further restrictive measures in order to increase costs on Russia should its actions so require' was paired by a willingness 'to engage with Russia to address regional crises and common challenges when it is in our interest.', G7 Taormina Leaders' Communiqué, 27 May, 2017, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23559/g7-taormina-leaders-communicue.pdf> [accessed 26 February 2024].
- 7 "We call on Russia to stop its destabilising behaviour and malign activities" "we reiterate our interest in stable and predictable relations with Russia" and "continue to engage where there are areas of mutual interest".
- 8 "To halt democratic backsliding and undermining of our fundamental values, we will coordinate closely across the G7 and with our partners to strengthen democracies and our institutions against disinformation, including foreign information manipulation. In light of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, we remain committed and enhance our cooperation through the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) in order to protect our democratic systems and open societies from foreign threats". G7, Carbis Bay, 2021.



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