

Rule of Law in EU Destroyed, ANYONE Can Be Next

With its sanctions list, the EU HAS quietly revived medieval "outlawry" in the heart of modern Europe. Why can a secretive administrative body bypass every judicial safeguard to financially erase a citizen? Horrible realities are surfacing within the institutions supposedly built to protect our most fundamental liberties. I am joined again by Michael von der Schulenburg, a German parliamentarian in the EU Parliament, who provides a rare, first-hand account of the unchecked power dynamics currently shifting the continent's legal foundations. Michael's links: Michael's HP: <https://michael-von-der-schulenburg.com> The research paper: https://bsw-ep.eu/wp-content/uploads/Rechtsgutachten_Sanktionen_gegen_natuerliche_Personen_BSW_von_der_Schulenburg_Firmenich.pdf Links: Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Goods Store: <https://neutralitystudies-shop.fourthwall.com> Timestamps: 00:00:00 Introduction 00:00:12 The Sanctioning of EU Citizens 00:03:49 EU Decision-Making and Lack of Transparency 00:10:48 Can the European Parliament Intervene? 00:20:00 Legal Challenges for Sanctioned Individuals 00:22:36 Strategies for Public Response 00:30:01 The Political Atmosphere in Brussels 00:38:07 Advice for EU Citizens and Closing Thoughts

#Pascal

Hello, everybody. Pascal here from Neutrality Studies, and today I'm talking again to MEP Michael v. d. Schulenburg, a German parliamentarian in the EU Parliament. Michael, welcome back. Thank you very much. Thank you. Michael, we need to talk about what happened recently with the newest sanctions package against several citizens of the EU and of Switzerland as well. When did you learn about this news—that people like Jacques Baud and others were sanctioned?

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

Only on the day they make the decisions. We didn't know anything before. You know, we don't know anything about it. It's actually all secret. We don't know the protocols. We just see what you see when they issue their statements, and that's all we know. I mean, what has happened now is that 17 people have been put on the sanctions list. I think that brings the total to 59 people—also Europeans, also Germans, also Swiss. We have two Swiss, yes, yes, yes. They say these are people who support Russian propaganda, but there are people on that list who have nothing to do with Russia, who deal with Gaza or with Africa.

I mean, it's general things about things. It's really an attack on social media and on people like you, Arshin, in fact—but indirectly, it's through the people you've interviewed. And so, first of all, on a personal level, someone under sanctions basically becomes an outlaw. I mean, we're going back to

the Middle Ages. Someone is told they have no rights anymore. They don't have bank accounts, they can't work, they can't run any businesses—in other words, they have no income. They can't travel or anything like that. And it's virtually impossible for them to mount a legal challenge.

It's so difficult, and that's probably why they also use the European Union for it—because it's behind the wall of this European Union. You know, we shouldn't forget that what's happening here is a complete denial of the rule of law. The Council is both the lawmaker and the judge at the same time. And when you look at the Lisbon Treaty, any decisions taken by the Council on foreign relations—and that's part of the Foreign Relations Council—cannot be challenged in the European Court of Justice. So, I mean, if you basically have a situation where, like in all kingdoms, Henry VIII decides what happens to his wives and nobody can say anything against it, it's really like that. It's amazing.

#Pascal

Sorry, can you repeat that? I wasn't aware of this. So, decisions taken by the European Council—the council that meets with the different ministers—those decisions cannot be challenged?

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

No, it's only on foreign policy. But with the sanctions, you know, the Council is divided into certain groups according to subject. And one of the most important now is, of course, foreign relations, which is chaired by Mrs. Callas, but it's under Mr. Costa because he's responsible for those matters. So these decisions, according to the treaty, cannot be challenged in the European Court of Justice. How they could challenge them, I really don't know. I mean, probably there are ways to do it, but it would be very, very difficult and very, very expensive. And given that we're talking about people who have no access to their accounts anymore, no access to any work, can't be employed, and things like that, I mean, it's virtually impossible for them to defend themselves.

#Pascal

But how is it possible that you, who are sitting in the European Parliament, are not informed about this? I mean, aren't these—so these branches are not at all co-equal. They're not. These decisions are run through by a handful of people, a small group. So, in this instance, how did it happen? Because there was another council involved, right? The ambassadors to the EU in this case.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

Can you explain? It's a council that meets at different levels. The Foreign Relations Council meets whenever they want, among the ambassadors of these countries. And then, of course, it's the foreign ministers who take the final decision. So the ambassadors' meetings are basically to prepare these things, which they did, but we didn't know the details. Then there was a meeting of the

foreign ministers who decided it. We have no protocol of these meetings. We don't know how they decided it. We don't know who voted for what. We just don't know. You know, when you go into a court case, it has to be transparent—but this is totally not transparent. So it's a really bad thing. And it is, you know, a warning to all of us, including me, in the end.

I mean, we could all be sanctioned for some dubious things—basically, just by being against this war policy of the European Union. That could make it look like we, in fact, support Russia's war or something like that. So, in the case of Jakob, that's very, very clear. But for most of the others, we don't know. I mean, who knows about these 59? And I think that's really very sad. For all these 59, we didn't do much. I mean, we tried to do something by having a legal expertise on this whole thing, done by very senior people—but not a political one. There's now a report out by a former judge of the European Court of Justice, together with a French professor of international law. They made a joint report, and it's very professionally done.

It's not people who necessarily think like us politically. They only reviewed whether the process of putting people on the sanctions list, and the type of sanctions imposed on them, were not contradicting European law—the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, for instance—or international law. And their conclusion was very clear: there is no justification, even by our own law, let alone others, to do this in such a way. So they don't even ask whether we should have sanctions or not. They just say that if we have sanctions, we have to do it according to the rule of law. And the rule of law in the European Union is defined—we have it. It's just not being applied.

And we feel that we can do it over it. And I think that's also why governments decide to take it to the European Union. Because a big question in this whole thing is: why use the Council of the European Union for this? Countries in Europe—Russia also, and China—all have laws that protect them against unfair reporting, false reporting, inciting violence, and all these kinds of things. So there's very sophisticated legislation on this, where things are clearly defined. Why do we go to the European Union and do this? It's exactly because we want to circumvent the rule of law. So, um, there's no need to go to the European Union. I mean, people could be tried in Switzerland, or in Germany, or France—but we don't do that.

#Pascal

We don't do that because we'd probably lose. They didn't do anything illegal. I mean, so far, Jacques Bourg, Nathalie Jamb, the others, Hussein Dogru—they didn't do anything illegal. They were talking about things they think are important.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

We made an inquiry to the Commission, asking how they define disinformation, which is the crime people are being accused of. And the reply we got was that there is no such definition. That means it's not only a question of whether it's a crime—there isn't even a definition of what these people are

accused of. There's no definition at all. So these are completely arbitrary things, and we shouldn't forget that. They serve a purpose, of course: to intimidate people who speak differently. Now, we know that in Europe—in Germany, in the extreme case—the established media are all on the same line. I mean, if you read them... yes, you read them all, right?

It's always the same. They take over the government position on the war and things like this. And where you find parallel news and so on, of course, is on social media. And this is an attack on social media. The double standards, the hypocrisy of the whole thing, are so evident here, because at the same time we had the Sakharov Prize given to two journalists who are incarcerated—which I think is absolutely justified. They're incarcerated in Georgia and Belarus. And I think we should look at these things. But at the same time, exactly at the same time, we intimidated 70 people simply for the opinions they hold.

And when you go to the Parliament, you see these writings on the walls, sort of projected. I sent you a picture of it—it was superimposed: "Freedom of thought." I mean, freedom of thought. And, you know, the thing that troubles me most is that I'm here with 720 deputies in this Parliament, and virtually nobody feels there's anything wrong about this. I mean, this Parliament is so pro-war, even deep into the left, that we could not find more than maybe ten deputies who would agree with us. And although it's such a flagrant breach of the rule of law, such flagrant double standards and hypocrisy, I think it's the duty of deputies to protect the people who voted for us—to maintain our standards of rule-of-law democracy. Because, you know, basically, it's an attack on our own democracy.

#Pascal

Of course it is. But tell me—if there were a parliamentary majority in the European Parliament to actually go against this decision, would the Parliament have the power to influence it? Could they, could they reverse the decision?

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

I'm not so sure about this, because the statute of this Parliament is very, very strange. The Parliament, like all other parliaments, has no right of initiative. You know, we get things from the Commission, and on those we decide whether we're for or against them. But we really don't have—it's in the statutes—that we cannot take initiatives. We could not, for instance, propose any kind of laws or recommendations or whatever it might be. If we could do it nonetheless—if we took that step because, in the end, we are elected—it would be very interesting, because I think the very fact that we are the only democratically legitimized body in this whole massive thing called the European Union would give us, I think, more right to do this. But it doesn't give us those rights under the statute of the Parliament.

That's how I see it. Okay, but the whole construction of the European Union shows its limitations. Another limitation is the separation of powers. In all democracies, one of the basic pillars is the separation of powers: one makes the law, one decides whether you're against this law—in a court case you have the judiciary—and then you have the executive, which implements whatever the court decides. Here, it's all in the Commission, all in the Council. There is no separation. And that means that we, I think, act like in the Middle Ages. I tell you, these people are outlaws. You know, already when you see these very severe, drastic penalties they get—there's no time limit. You know, when you go to court, they say, oh, three months, half labor, whatever. Or maybe you get life, but you get a term.

But here, even when you go to prison, you get a time limit. But here, there is no time limit. I mean, it's a strange thing—you're basically outlawed for life. There's no way to say, "After three months, it's lifted." Three months, my parents will finance me, and then afterwards I can buy bread again, because right now you can't even buy bread. And it is so absurd, the whole thing, that there's no outcry about it. This is probably what worries me most—Europe, with all this war rhetoric, all this hate, and all this self-righteousness. This choice itself... I can't say it any other way. And, you know, I'm not anti-European at all, but I see here that there's an enemy in this Parliament—an enemy who doesn't want the EU. That's not true at all. Or, you know, a Russian spy or whatever.

I'm not defending anything Russian. I'm just saying that the policies we have are self-destructive. I think the European Union is slowly committing suicide on many other fronts too. You know, today and tomorrow they'll decide about the money, and that's an enormously important decision—whether Europe can actually do something. But whatever the decision is, the European Union has already set itself up for failure. And it hurts me because, I mean, here we have my children and my grandchildren. I've just got my fifth grandchild, by the way. —Congratulations. Here in Strasbourg. Yeah, a lovely girl. And, you know, they must have a future. I think we have a political elite that doesn't care about us anymore.

#Pascal

The tragedy is, there was hope that a structure would be built that is pro-peace, pro-reconciliation—Franco-German reconciliation—and then have a common structure, a common home, right, under which we can prosper. Because something is needed, right? You need something. But it turns out now that this structure is becoming the very thing it promised it would help protect us against. We now have a registry—the sanctions list has become a registry of people without rights, indefinitely. No rights, no access to money. "Outlaws" is the word. It's severe, right?

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

"Outlaw" is the word. It's a Middle Ages word, and it applies here—outlaws. You know, in German we say *Vogelfrei*. *Vogelfrei* was decided, and that's what these people are. And, you know,

most of these people are of small income—not very important people, not important in the sense that they could do something. I hope with Jack Ball we have some other case.

#Pascal

But you know, the Swiss media doesn't even report on it.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

Yeah, it's amazing.

#Pascal

Jacques Baud was on Swiss national TV many, many times because he's a great expert on all things intelligence and so on. You can find plenty of recordings from when he was on national TV, and to this day, I haven't seen a single mention of his name on that station. So this intimidation strategy—this "oh no, he's a bad guy now"—it works.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

It works. Yeah, it works. But it also has repercussions on all of us—on the situation in Europe. It does. When we have somebody like Trump, I mean, you can imagine Trump criticizing us for a lack of democracy. It's dumb, right? Yeah—and he's right about it. To have to listen to somebody like Mr. Trump, I find it funny that we have to listen to him. It's not quite my cup of tea, but still, it's amazing. I mean, how much can we dissent? How much can Europe consent? Go further—it's not the end of the whole thing, no?

#Pascal

No, that's the problem. It's only an intermediate step.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

But I want to say a few things about what we're doing here, because maybe you can help us tell the world that something is being done, that people know about it and support it. First of all, we've published a very professionally prepared legal opinion about the sanctions regime. It's the first time something like this has been done. It concludes that these measures are illegal—that you can't do that. They even say the European Union has crossed the Rubicon, in the sense of Caesar crossing the Rubicon River, taking his legions into Rome and declaring that there's no turning back. That's the whole idea behind it. So I think it's a very severe criticism from them.

And I think we should take it seriously. People around the world should really know about these things. The second thing is that on Monday, hopefully, we'll issue an open letter to Costa and Calas,

in which we ask them—based on the study and the latest decisions—to review the situation and make sure that the European Union returns to the rule of law and acts accordingly. I think we have a lot of information for this. It's not that we're saying it for political reasons. The question is how many deputies we can get to support it. It will be very few, actually. But I think we should at least make this letter, make it an open letter. You'll get a copy of it. It's not only for Jacques Beau—it's very important for us, especially for me.

We shouldn't forget—I mean, yes, there are nine people. All people have the same rights. I come from the UN, and these are principles I find absolutely non-negotiable. Everybody—also Mrs. Lamp, and others like her, the Swiss one who isn't reported on in these matters—we all have the same rights, and we have to defend them all. For us, it's about the principles. Of course, we mentioned his case specifically, but I think we have to fight so that the European Union doesn't go down this road of illegality. In our statement, we accused Europe of being at the precipice of illegality, and I think that's what you see. We've seen a lot of other decisions now. This Ukraine war has made the European leadership lose their heads, and that's very dangerous.

#Pascal

But we are seeing an incredible power grab, right, by the European Union, taking power away from the member states. My question regarding the sanctions is: would there be ways for the individuals who were sanctioned—especially those who live inside the European Union, like Jacques Beau, or Hussein Dogru, another one—could they appeal to their state, to France, to Germany, to Belgium, and say, "This is an infringement of my human rights. I have human rights; you must not implement this"? Isn't there a way, maybe also through the UN or the human rights bodies?

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

I have no clue. I don't know. I really don't know. I think the trick of the whole thing is that the decisions are taken by the European Council, but the implementation is done by the German authorities. They tell the bank to close the accounts and all the rest of it, and then they say, "But we are not responsible for the decision. You have to appeal the decision. We are only the executive branch in this sense." So I don't know. I've asked them—also our legal people—how can you object to these things? It's not clear. It's not clear. It's because they're hiding behind the European Union, where member states' foreign ministers take these drastic decisions in secrecy. We must not forget that. Yeah, it's very troubling. It's very, very troubling. I mean, it's really troubling.

#Pascal

It's difficult to escape this. Nathalie Yamb, with whom I was in contact, told me that African airlines in Africa refuse to board her because they check who's on the list, and they don't board people on

that list. Inside African countries—that's how far this goes. It's not just about state implementation; it's about the willingness of companies that have business relations with the EU to just exclude these people from all aspects of life.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

Yeah, yeah. Of course, you know, the thing is, when you look at all these sanctions, states like India and so on are against them, and they can do that. But in India, it's very difficult because airlines are afraid—since they also fly to Europe—that they'll be penalized for having an outlawed person on board. Yeah, and things like that. So I think that's... yeah, we can—yeah. But what can I say? I mean, that's all we can do. Here in the Parliament, I see very little feedback from outside. And, you know, there really should be an outcry.

#Pascal

How do we fix that? I mean, is there another way besides a massive public outcry and, you know, people in the streets? I guess that's the only thing. I mean, telling them, you know, "Stop this. You must stop this." Or is there, like, you know, appealing to Donald Trump? What kind of method is possible? We'll ask them to come here—like, please, America, help us put pressure on these.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

But maybe you know better. I mean, I think for us, by making an immediate decision— You just switched to German. Can you repeat in English? Oh, sorry, sorry. Did I? I see. From then on—okay. Now, I just want to say that we try to do what we can. We've issued a press release with a lot of detail in it. We've drawn attention to the legal opinion we prepared. I mean, if you want a lawyer who defends anyone, this might be a very interesting, very good thing, because they don't have the means to investigate all these issues. And we're now going to do an open letter. So it will be public. How much response we'll get, I don't know. I really don't know. I had hoped for much more, and I had hoped it would be picked up in Switzerland, but it hasn't. Maybe one day it will.

#Pascal

One thing we probably need to do is create a repository—an online knowledge repository—to put things like yours on there, and similar information, so that sanctioned lawyers can go back and use that kind of material. But we need to start getting organized to make it easier for all the people who will end up on their list to actually start working on their proceedings. Absolutely. It's quite organized.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

You can see that on my website, on the BSV website. You'll find all these things there under this section, and they fit together—the press release, the study, the legal opinion, and what we're doing

now. It all connects. It's not difficult for people to understand. Maybe the legal opinion is a bit hard, but we've also made a one-page explanation of the whole thing in more normal language. It's all meant to build public support for this. I think it's also for people like you to help with that. I can give you everything we have; it's in both English and German. And one of the reasons I'm doing this with you at nine in the morning is because, honestly, I don't know how else to draw attention to it.

#Pascal

Yeah, no, I'm very glad you're doing that. I'm really glad that we can at least try to understand what can be done, because it is—I mean, it's difficult to overstate just how scary it is that we now have a small body of a couple dozen people in Brussels who can completely, utterly ruin other people's lives. And they have no recourse to any judicial measures, because all of that apparatus that's been built and implemented in all member states is being circumvented.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

I mean, the right to be heard by anybody—those people who are sanctioned don't even know that a decision is being taken. They don't know what it is. They have no right to respond. They're not invited to justify themselves or anything like that. Nothing. And they just get this statement afterwards, which has a... I mean, when you look at Jean-Paul, the statement about him—these are unsubstantiated allegations that would never stand in a rule of law. But apparently, it's enough to ruin a person's life. And that, I want to say something about—you know, I've been in a lot of wars in my life, and one thing is, of course, that countries at war want to have not only a war on the battlefield, but also a war of public opinion. And since the Civil War in the United States in 1860, 1864, whatever, that has become standard.

And there are billions being invested in this—billions. Especially in this whole information exchange. You have artificially created interviews with people we know, and things like that suddenly appear. There's a lot of money going into it. The reason why it's so important is because a state that's at war must make sure—or tries to make sure—that its population, who suffers from it, and indirectly maybe also through having family members killed or by asking people to kill somebody else, has a very clear picture of what is good and bad. So you have to tell people, "We are the good ones; they are the bad ones." And you don't allow—well, it would be the same thing in Russia. You wouldn't allow it. But we behave just like Russia in this case. You shouldn't allow any other opinions, because it undermines our ability to wage war.

Now, you can say the European Union officially is not at war, but de facto we are at war with Russia. And what are we losing in addition? Mentally, there's... the nervousness is enormous. I mean, if I look at the one and a half years I've been in Parliament, the whole issue dealing with the Israeli wars and the Ukraine war has become far, far more aggressive. You can hardly say something in Parliament without people shouting you down and things like that. And there is no discourse on these things. You can maybe have discourse on our girlish policies here, but you can't have a

discourse on Gaza, and you can't have a discourse on Ukraine. It's because we feel we are at war, and the people who govern us—this bubble here in Parliament—realize they're losing the war, and they've become even tougher on people like us. That's what it is.

#Pascal

Yeah, because if you lose a war, and you're absolutely certain you're better than the other side, then it must be because of the enemy within. So this is the cracking down on the saboteurs—on those who were responsible.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

Yeah, in German we call it the **Dolchstoß**—the “dagger in the back.” It means there are these people who betrayed you, who stabbed you in the back. And of course, that's a very easy explanation. You have to justify why you spent these billions of dollars, why so many people were killed, and why so much destruction happened. And if the outcome now is that Ukraine is not going to be a member of NATO, or possibly not even a member of the European Union, then I think these politicians will have a great problem justifying what they've done over the last three years.

#Pascal

They would, but a question: what is the air like in Brussels when you meet or see these people—von der Leyen and Kallas and so on? Are they depressed, are they scared, or are they euphoric?

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

I mean, recently I was in Parliament when von der Leyen spoke. There were maybe thirty people in the chamber. People don't come when she speaks; they don't come when Kallas speaks. It doesn't play any role anymore. The dice are falling—that's how we think about these things. So there isn't much rallying around it. But at the same time, people still vote like this, and, you know, they vote for war here. That's clear—anything that has to do with war. We recently had a resolution on Ukraine that got less support than before, and it basically said we couldn't negotiate anything. It stated that Russia has to leave all territories, there has to be a special court, there have to be reparations, and that Ukraine should, in the long term, become a NATO member. It's all in that resolution.

So I think that with this resolution, of course, Europeans can't negotiate anymore. I mean, that's basically fixed. I've never experienced anything like this before in my life. I've been in many wars, but I've never seen a parliament set such a framework, because it removes any flexibility. So the idea that Europeans will sit at the real table with Russia just can't happen, because we've set standards that make it impossible. We shouldn't forget we're in a war—a war that, like in Clausewitz,

happened because we couldn't politically solve the issue of Russia's security concerns, and maybe Ukraine's security concerns, which we should have addressed through diplomacy. We couldn't, so we went to war.

It's the war that's going to decide it. Had Russia lost this war, Ukraine would now be in NATO, and they would have lost access to the Black Sea. There would probably be many refugees from the eastern parts moving into Russia. If the war had ended in a stalemate, then you'd likely have a ceasefire. But now that Russia is winning, of course, a ceasefire isn't the issue anymore—it will be on Russia's terms. And that's very difficult to accept. When you look at the meeting of Merz, for instance, in Berlin, what he's really trying to do is win the war. I mean, look at the declaration they gave afterwards—talking to the Americans, not even to the Russians, and completely ignoring what's happening on the battlefield.

I mean, they're setting conditions that basically still demand Russia's capitulation in a war that Russia is winning. I'm not saying it's a good thing that Russia is winning or anything like that. I don't think it's good at all that this war exists. But as an analyst, when we were at the UN, we also had to be very realistic—where is the war, what are the chances, who has what interests? Because in the end, peace agreements are about balancing interests: what's realistic now, what's not, and how that relates to the war. So, if I look at this one, the thing is basically decided.

And we have a man there who says he does diplomacy by talking to two Americans who aren't even official members of the government. I mean, then they gave a declaration saying the Americans had agreed on everything. But if you look closely, the declaration isn't signed by the Americans, nor by Zelensky. They made a declaration about their agreement with the Americans—without the Americans signing it—at a joint meeting. I've never seen anything like that. It's mind-boggling. But in this whole atmosphere, you have, of course, the fight against the internal enemy. And that's basically what it is. I think we're all, in a way, internal enemies.

Although I also say to the Ukrainians, I'm probably a better friend than anybody else, because I tell them, you have to negotiate. If not, you'll end up as a failed state. And I've seen that so often in my life. You know, I'm talking from experience. Your previous experience as a UN negotiator—yeah. Yeah. And, you know, you have to understand, now they're careful with me. I've, of course, contacted them because of all these developments, and they think, of course, they want to have a good relationship with the European Union, and I criticize them. But on the other hand, they haven't put me on the blacklist. I mean, that's very interesting.

And so I still think—I've asked if we could go to Kyiv, because there will come a time when they have to see how to deal with things. I told them yesterday, I did an interview with the East-West TV channel, which is actually, well, you know, completely on the other side. But it went quite well. And I said to them, you know, for the Ukrainians, it would now be better to go with Trump and Putin than

with the Europeans, because Europe promised you one thing after another, but none of what they promised they could implement. None. Not a single decision they made. You know, they bullshit you. I mean, they bullshit you because they fear that the end of the war is also the end of their career.

And you bleed for it. So try to negotiate with Russia. It's a much better bet, because Russia also needs a stable country next to it. It doesn't want a country with NATO and all that kind of thing, but it does want a stable country, not a failed state with all the problems it has. So I think you have a chance. And you have good diplomats. We shouldn't forget—the Istanbul ten points were done by the Ukrainian diplomats, not by the Russians. And, you know, that was a brilliant, a stellar achievement. I'd say, normally, a stellar achievement of diplomacy. We've never seen in the UN, since it was created, that within one month the attacking party could set conditions so perfectly.

Ten points the other side would accept—give up all their army in exchange for neutrality and without losing any territory. That is a stellar achievement. And I think the Ukrainians have the intellectual capacity; they have the diplomats to negotiate. In these negotiations, they need to make sure they have a future—that they will have a state, a functioning state, a sovereign state, and so on. They might lose territory, but I think if the army collapses in Ukraine, the political system will collapse too. It's almost unavoidable. I've seen it so often, and it's unavoidable. And if that starts, the political system will also disintegrate, and Ukraine wouldn't have a future for a long time to come.

#Pascal

Yeah, because there are no more structures.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

Because our concern should really be for Ukraine. People think, oh, I'm taking the Russian side. But I tell you, the real issue is that we have to make sure Ukraine survives as a sovereign and functioning state. There are 30 million people living there. They have a right to live now, and they've gone through a traumatic experience—they need a future. And I think the Europeans, with all their policies, are now destroying this country.

#Pascal

I couldn't agree more. I mean, the greatest crime to me in the last five years was making Ukrainian neutrality impossible. The destruction of that neutrality is what now destroys the entire framework that kept us, more or less, in a reasonable working relationship. It started in 2014, and it's still ongoing. It's an absolute tragedy. And now the same people are working to make any kind of counter-speech against what they did also impossible. So maybe just to tie it up—what's your recommendation for people in the EU? What should they do now?

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

What should people in the EU do?

#Pascal

Should they write—like, you know, can you write to your representative? Is that even an option in the EU? I mean, you could, just to show dissent.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

Yeah, we don't have constituencies in that sense because of the type of election system we have. We have party lists and things like that. So you could write to your political party and say, you know, we have to defend the rule of law. I mean, couldn't you look at this whole thing? We're very concerned about the way the European Union develops and the direction it's going. Of course, you could do this, but whether it has any impact, I don't know. I think it has something to do with the media. As long as the main media don't see a threat in all this, and rather support it or stay quiet about it, I think we'll have great difficulty generating public awareness of what's really happening. And it's terrible, what's happening—it's really terrible. And you'll see the same thing in the two decisions today: they basically ignore the law.

#Pascal

It's an absolute tragedy, because the whole idea was the opposite—the idea was to do the opposite.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

Especially, you know, we are such an old continent. We've had so many wars, so many peace agreements, so much diplomacy, so much experience with all of this. And how could we end up like this? How could we end up—I mean, it should have been Europe that said no first. You know, what Merkel and Sarkozy did in 2008, to just continue this way and not say, "No, be careful with NATO. We have to find another path—we have the Charter of Paris, we have this alternative, let's go this way." But we didn't. We didn't. We gave it up. And now we wake up and realize that it won't be the European Union that becomes a superpower in the future, but Russia.

And that's really what they're worried about. You know, we always thought the European Union would maybe be on par with the United States and China—the third pillar in a multipolar world. That's what we hoped to achieve. And now we realize that probably Russia, and even India, might overtake us in international importance. I mean, they're geopolitically completely isolated. Mrs. Kallas can't even go to the United States—not to speak of India, not to speak of China, not to speak of Russia. I mean, that's what a diplomat should do, shouldn't they? I mean, maybe... maybe not Russia the first time, but, you know, yeah.

#Pascal

Okay, thank you very much for this information, and also for your insight into how things work in Brussels. Is there anything we haven't mentioned that you think should still be discussed?

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

Well,

#Pascal

No, I think that's okay. So I'll direct people to your homepage to find more information. And what was the other place you mentioned? The BSW homepage.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

I can send the post to you from the Parliament as well.

#Pascal

The BSW homepage, okay.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

Yeah, it's the BSW—EP something—but I'll send it to you, yeah.

#Pascal

Okay, please. I'll put all of these links into the information box below. MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg—uh, I don't know, I'll send it to you. You have to put it in the box. Sorry, I'll put it in the box, I'll put it into the description. Anything technical. MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg, thank you very much for your time today.

#MEP Michael v.d. Schulenburg

Okay, take care. Bye-bye. Thank you. Bye.