

## INFOCUS

### Rethinking veto power in international organizations

C4EP analysis on the subject – *Veto power – not the tool we love, but the tool we need?*

“The issue of the veto power has recently come to the forefront of attention and debate both on global and European level. This usually happens when current political events draw attention to something. Today this is related to the Russian aggression against Ukraine (reviving the debate earlier related to other issues): among the debates within the European Union, its operation and future, the question of the right of veto belonging to individual member states had already featured prominently in the decision-making process of the EU, but the need for unanimity with regard to sanctions against Russia gives it a special relevance. As well as in the United Nations, the need to circumvent Russia’s veto power in the Security Council has led to new ideas, while reviving some older solutions.”

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## C4EPOSITION

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International law always tries hard to strike a balance between justice and grim realities of international politics. In fact, veto is a political tool dressed as a legal procedure. From the moral standpoint, it could be bad, or good, or both, but seems to be inevitable in international decision making.

All the talks about United Nations Security Council reforms are plausible from theoretical point of view, however, it needs member states' consensus, and to reach such consensus in today' world seems to be impossible. Some parallels could be drawn with international justice: it works only when all the players come together, or the strongest one takes matter in its own hands. Expansion of European Union's majority decision making is always on the table as well as a tool to avoid veto, but it also needs a substantial reform of founding treaties. EU has expanded into so many states and now includes many states that has different interests and in fact are happy with status quo. It is highly unlikely that these states will relinquish their sovereign rights thus becoming more dependent on collective decision.

Therefore, veto right is here to stay, whether we like it or not.