

The Financial Times  
February 17, 2015

## Letters

### Annexation of Crimea is forgotten already

Sir, Niall Ferguson, in “[Fairy tales that conceal the meaning of Minsk](#)” (February 14), begins by asking whether the Minsk agreement is “Camp David” or “Munich”.

I am struck by how quickly Russia’s annexation of Crimea a year ago — an unprecedented unilateral move to redraw the map of Europe — is almost forgotten, accepted as a *fait accompli*. Indeed, the Minsk accord fails to flag Crimea as an issue, focusing exclusively on the ongoing battles in eastern Ukraine as if they were unrelated to Crimea. Apparently, this stance has been imposed on Ukraine by the EU leaders who — unlike Kiev — seem to have already acquiesced to the loss of Crimea once and for all.

It has taken only a year for the EU to arrive at this position. Initially, EU leaders talked tough, warning Russia not to tighten its grip on Crimea, urging Vladimir Putin to pull all his troops out of the Ukrainian peninsula. Then they attacked the Crimea vote, calling it “illegal and illegitimate” and warning that Crimea joining Russia would be unacceptable. Then the anti-Russia sanctions have come, with no measurable impact on President Putin. And now Crimea is not even on the table. Having gone full circle, this is appeasement at its best, a lack of western resolve that Mr Putin reads very well.

Against this backdrop, one should not be surprised at what Nicolas Sarkozy, the French former president, said earlier this month: “Crimea cannot be blamed for seceding from Ukraine — a country in turmoil — and choosing to join Russia.” Small wonder that Mr Putin is winning.

Istvan Dobozi

*Gaithersburg, MD, US*

Copyright The Financial Times Limited 2015.