



European Council

Brussels, 19 March 2026
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NOTE

From: President of the European Council
To: Delegations
Subject: European Council meeting (19 March 2026)
- Ukraine

The European Council discussed the latest developments as regards Ukraine. The text set out in this document was firmly supported by 25 Heads of State or Government.

UKRAINE

1. The European Council held an exchange of views with Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine.
2. As we enter the fifth year of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the European Council reaffirms its continued firm and unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The European Union will continue to provide, in coordination with like-minded partners and allies, comprehensive political, financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people.
3. The European Council commends the fortitude, determination and resilience of the Ukrainian people and their leadership in resisting Russian aggression and defending their land. Ukraine has managed to stand its ground and push back against Russia's enormous pressure, preventing Russia from achieving its military and strategic objectives. It is critical in that context to ensure that Ukraine has the budgetary and military means to continue to exercise its inherent right of self-defence and counter and deter Russia's aggression.
4. The future of Ukraine and its citizens lies within the European Union. The European Council welcomes the significant progress Ukraine has achieved so far under the most challenging circumstances and encourages the further reforms needed. Following the Commission's assessment, and taking good note that the technical work to open all clusters has advanced in the Council, the European Council invites the Council to open the clusters without delay, starting with the fundamentals cluster, in accordance with the enlargement methodology and in line with the merit-based approach.

5. The European Council underlines the Union's strong support for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine based on the principles of the UN Charter and international law and underpinned by robust and credible security guarantees for Ukraine. The European Council welcomes the ongoing diplomatic efforts to bring the war to an end and fully supports Ukraine in the negotiations. The European Council urges Russia to agree to a full, unconditional and immediate ceasefire and engage in meaningful negotiations towards a just and lasting peace. For peace to be just and lasting, respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity is the cornerstone. Borders must not be changed by force, the aggressor cannot be rewarded and Ukraine's long-term security and ability to defend itself must be guaranteed.
6. The European Union and its Member States will continue to actively participate in peace efforts, in accordance with the European Union's aim to promote peace, as enshrined in the Treaties. The path to peace in Ukraine cannot be decided without Ukraine. The European Union will decide on matters of its competence or affecting its security.
7. The European Union and Member States are prepared to contribute to robust and credible security guarantees for Ukraine, notably through the Coalition of the Willing and in cooperation with the United States. This will include supporting Ukraine's ability to deter aggression and defend itself effectively, also in the long term, including through the European Union Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine) and the European Union Advisory Mission in Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine). The contribution of the European Union and Member States will be based on their respective competences and capabilities and in line with international law.

8. The European Council strongly condemns Russia for systematically and deliberately targeting Ukraine's civilian and energy infrastructure, and specifically heating and power installations. It welcomes the energy support and humanitarian and civil protection assistance provided to Ukraine by the EU and its Member States as well as international partners. The European Council calls for further intensified EU efforts, coordinated with international partners' efforts, to support Ukraine in urgently repairing, rebuilding and strengthening the resilience of its energy system.
9. Following its December 2025 decision to provide Ukraine with a support loan of EUR 90 billion for 2026 and 2027, the European Council welcomes the adoption of the loan by the co-legislators and looks forward to the first disbursement to Ukraine by the beginning of April. In this context, it also calls for intensified outreach to third countries to help close the remaining gap of EUR 30 billion in Ukraine's finances.
10. The European Council underlines the importance of further sustained efforts to provide military support to Ukraine and urgently accelerate the production and delivery of priority equipment, in particular air defence systems, ammunition, drones and missiles, including to help Ukraine protect its energy and critical infrastructure. In this context, developing Ukraine's defence industry, including through EU-Ukraine defence industrial cooperation, remains crucial.
11. All military support as well as security guarantees for Ukraine will be provided in full respect of the security and defence policy of certain Member States and taking into account the security and defence interests of all Member States.

12. The European Union remains determined to further increase pressure on Russia and continue weakening Russia's war economy so that it stops its brutal war of aggression and engages in meaningful negotiations towards peace. The European Council looks forward to the swift adoption of the 20th sanctions package. It reiterates the importance of further reducing Russia's energy revenues and further constraining Russia's banking system, and took stock of efforts to curb Russia's shadow fleet operations. Undermining the Russian shadow fleet's business model requires a 'whole of route' approach, including by addressing through a common approach the significant environmental, security and maritime safety risks posed by such vessels. In this respect, the European Council calls for further efforts and coordinated action by Member States. It also stresses the importance of continued coordination with G7 and other like-minded partners on sanctions, of strengthening the enforcement of existing measures and closing loopholes, and of further reinforcing the anti-circumvention measures.
13. The European Council urges all countries to immediately cease any assistance to Russia in its war of aggression against Ukraine, whether direct or indirect, and notably through the provision of dual-use goods and components. In particular, it strongly condemns the deployment of the DPRK's military forces in the war against Ukraine as well as the continued military support provided by Iran, Belarus and the DPRK, among others.
14. The European Council reiterates its urgent call on Russia and Belarus to immediately ensure the safe and unconditional return to Ukraine of all unlawfully deported and transferred Ukrainian children and other civilians. Other humanitarian relief efforts and confidence-building measures, notably the exchange of prisoners of war and the return of civilian detainees, must be part of the pathway to peace.

15. The European Council also reaffirms the EU's commitment to ensuring full accountability for war crimes and the other most serious crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. In this context, the European Council calls for sustained efforts within the framework of the Council of Europe towards the operationalisation of the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine and the establishment of the International Claims Commission for Ukraine.
 16. The European Council highlights the potential threat posed to the EU's internal security by Russian ex-combatants having participated in the aggression against Ukraine and invites the Commission to provide the Council with an assessment on possible ways to address this issue, without prejudice to Member States' competences in this domain.
 17. The European Council will revert to this issue at its next meeting.
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