

EU leaders confirm its “unwavering commitment” to supporting Ukraine and its people “for as long as it takes”



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy Josep Borrell at the Memory Wall of Fallen Defenders on Defenders Day in Kyiv, October 1, 2023.

In addition to deciding to open accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova, the leaders of the 27 member states of the EU, meeting yesterday and today as the European Council, also reiterated their “resolute condemnation of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a manifest violation of the UN Charter” and reaffirmed the EU’s “unwavering support for Ukraine’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and its inherent right of self-defense against the Russian aggression.” Importantly, they also confirmed the EU’s “unwavering commitment to provide strong political, financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes.”

In their Conclusions from the two-day meeting, the leaders said the EU and its member states “will continue to address Ukraine’s pressing military and defense needs. In particular, the European Council insists on the importance of timely, predictable and sustainable military support for Ukraine, notably through the European Peace Facility and the EU Military Assistance Mission, as well as through direct bilateral assistance by Member States. The European Council stresses the urgent need to accelerate the delivery of missiles and ammunition, notably under the one million rounds of artillery ammunition initiative, and to provide Ukraine with more air defence systems. The European Council invites the Council [of ministers] to intensify work on the reform of

the European Peace Facility and the further increase of its financing, building on the proposal of the High Representative.”

The European Peace Facility is a seven-year €5.5 billion off-budget instrument that was created in March 2021 to support actions related to foreign and security policy. It was subsequently replenished with €2 billion in March of this year and another €3.5 billion in July. In July, Josep Borrell, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, proposed creation of a new four-year €20 billion fund within the European Peace Facility that would provide Ukraine up to €5 billion a year for four years for weapons, ammunition, and military assistance. In addition, in June the EU proposed creation of a new four-year Ukraine Facility within the existing 2021-27 Multiannual Fiscal Framework (the seven-year budget) that would provide up to €50 billion over four years from 2024 through 2027 to support the reconstruction, recovery, and modernization of Ukraine.

In their conclusions, the EU leaders also said the EU and its member states “remain committed to contributing, for the long-term and together with partners, to security commitments to Ukraine, which will help Ukraine to defend itself, resist destabilisation efforts and deter acts of aggression in the future. Following the report by the High Representative, the European Council discussed the EU’s future security commitments to Ukraine. It invites the High Representative and Member States to take work forward in the Council. The European Council will remain seized of the matter. Military support and security commitments 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.”

Continuing, the EU leaders said that “In the face of continued Russian attacks against Ukraine’s civil and critical infrastructure, the EU and its Member States will intensify the provision of further humanitarian and civil protection assistance to Ukraine, as well as assistance to ensure the resilience of its energy sector through the winter. Moreover, the EU remains committed to supporting Ukraine’s repair, recovery and reconstruction, in coordination with international partners, including the demining process and psychosocial rehabilitation.”

Concluding, the leaders said the EU and its Member States “will continue their intensive global outreach efforts and cooperation with Ukraine and partners from all regions of the world to ensure the widest possible international support for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace and the key principles and objectives of Ukraine’s Peace Formula, with a view to a future Global Peace Summit.”

David R. Cameron
December 15, 2023