Zelenskyy says Druzhba pipeline in Ukraine has been repaired & can resume operation. So Hungary won't block the EU's €90 billion loan.

Today, President Zelenskyy said in a post on X that the Druzhba pipeline, which has been shut down in Ukraine since a Russian drone attack in late January that damaged it, has been repaired and can resume operation: "Ukraine has completed repair work on the section of the Druzhba oil pipeline that was damaged by a Russian strike. The pipeline can resume operation."

The announcement means that Hungary, which depends on the pipeline for delivery of the oil it has purchased from Russia, will withdraw its threat to veto the EU's €90 billion loan to Ukraine, which was endorsed by the leaders of the EU member states, meeting as the European Council, in December and more recently in March, but blocked by Hungary's outgoing Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, on the grounds that Hungary was not receiving the Russian oil it had purchased. "We connect this with the unblocking of the European support package for Ukraine, which had already been approved by the European Council," Zelenskyy said.

On Sunday, Orbán had said in a post on X that he will approve the EU's €90 billion loan to Ukraine once oil is flowing westward in the Druzhba pipeline: "Through Brussels, we have received an indication from Ukraine that they are ready to restore oil deliveries via the Friendship [Druzhba] pipeline as early as Monday, provided that Hungary lifts its blockade of the €90 billion EU loan. Hungary's position has not changed: no oil = no money. Once oil deliveries are restored, we will no longer stand in

the way of approving the loan. The disbursement of the loan does not impose a financial burden or obligation on Hungary." It took a bit longer than anticipated, but the pipeline has been repaired and Russian oil is moving westward through it today. As a result, at tomorrow's meeting in Brussels of the ambassadors of the 27 member states of the EU, Hungary won't try to block the EU loan to Ukraine and the ambassadors will formally approve it.

David R. Cameron
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