Leaders of more than 50 countries and international organizations meet in Gdansk for the annual Ukraine Recovery Conference

Leaders of the EU member states, other countries, and international organizations at this year's Ukraine Recovery Conference in Gdańsk.

On Thursday and Friday, in a conference co-hosted by Poland and Ukraine, the leaders of the 27 member states of the European Union along with the leaders of two dozen other states and a number of international organizations met in Gdańsk for the annual Ukraine Recovery Conference, which has taken place every June or July since 2017 except in 2020 because of the Covid pandemic. The conference seeks to increase support for the reconstruction of the country in the wake of Russia's war and mobilize international investment in Ukrainian companies. It focused this year, as it has over the past eight years, on the sectors of the Ukrainian economy that have been most impacted by the Russian aggression that began with its seizure of Crimea and aggression in eastern Ukraine in 2014.

This year's URC focused on increasing support for the reconstruction of Ukrainian economy, especially those sectors, such as energy, essential infrastructure, and logistics, which have been most adversely impacted by Russia's continuing war. It also placed additional emphasis on increasing Ukraine's security capabilities, including a new Security and Defense dimension proposed by Poland, since strengthening Ukraine's defense will of course be essential for the reconstruction and future development of its economy. Designed to facilitate essential investment, the URC brought together government leaders and private sector leaders to facilitate communication among them about the most important necessities for which Ukraine needs assistance now and in the near future. The hope, of course, is that bringing the leaders of Ukraine and the

EU together with the leaders of other states and international firms will result in decisions that will assist the recovery of the Ukrainian economy from the enormous destruction caused by the war and its development once the war finally ends. Designed as a high-impact investment facilitation platform, the URC brings together the leaders of governments, international organizations, and economic enterprises to discuss both the recovery of the Ukrainian economy from the damage inflicted by the Russian ground and air attacks and its subsequent growth and continued development.

As at the previous annual URC meetings that have taken place since 2017, this year's meeting focused on five thematic dimensions – the business dimension, the human dimension, the local and regional dimension, the EU dimension, and the security and defense dimension. One of the integral parts of this year's URC was a forum to discuss partnerships and solutions for private sector investment in reconstruction as well as presentations on transportation policy, energy policy, the use of technology, and the progressive alignment of Ukraine's transportation, energy, border and customs regulations with EU standards.

The leaders of the governments, international organizations, and businesses who met in Gdansk have now returned home and the war continues with no end in sight. But there was at least some good news yesterday for some Ukrainians. President Zelenskyy announced that another exchange of prisoners-of-war with Russia had taken place and that 160 Ukrainian military personnel who had been held by the Russians since 2022 had been returned to Ukraine. The Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War expressed its "sincere gratitude to the U.S. and the United Arab Emirates for their important mediation and assistance in organizing the exchange."

David R. Cameron
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