# As the war continues, EU Foreign Ministers meet in Ireland

Helen McEntee, Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade and Minister of Defence, and Kaja Kallas, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs & Security and Vice President of the European Commission, at today's informal meeting of EU Foreign Ministers.

Yesterday and today the defence and foreign ministers of the member states of the EU met informally in Wicklow, Ireland in meetings chaired by Helen McEntee, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Minister of Defence for Ireland, and Kaja Kallas, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Following yesterday's meeting of the defence ministers, today's meeting involved the foreign ministers, who were joined by the foreign ministers of Canada, Iceland, Norway, the UK, and Ukraine and the State Secretary of Switzerland.

Following the meeting, Kaja Kallas said, "We had very open and substantive discussions. First, on Ukraine. We had friends from Ukraine, Canada, Iceland, Norway, the United Kingdom and Switzerland joining us. What this presence shows is that it is important that the EU and close partners tackle the security challenges together. Moscow has not changed its war aims. Russian strikes on Kyiv again killed dozens in recent days. This makes it abundantly clear that Moscow does not want peace. Our immediate focus continues to be giving Ukraine what it needs to defend itself. Through the Ukraine Support Loan, we have disbursed the first €8.47 billion. Another €6.1 billion has been approved, including for air defence. But this is not enough. Bilateral support is also needed, and we were pleased to hear today announcements by Member States to provide air defence that we have been so long asking for."

"Stopping Russian missiles is about providing interceptors, but it is also about cutting off the supply chains and funding that allow Russia to build those missiles in the first place. We have our largest package of listings, up to 1,600 in the pipeline targeting Russia's military-industrial complex. In parallel, we must forcefully crack down on sanctions circumvention. Ukraine has

identified more than 5,500 Western and Asian components in Russian weapons. After four years of war, this is inexcusable. Those components should not be there. Together with the Commission, we are working on the new proposals to tighten sanctions enforcement."

"Some Ministers also raised again the use of immobilized Russian assets. The discussion will continue. Russia must pay for destruction it has caused."

"In the Black Sea, Russian strikes on grain ships could cause another worldwide food security shock. We support Ukraine's grain exports through alternative transit routes. We are also looking to support storage inside Ukraine to protect global food security. But there is no substitute for the volumes that can [be] moved by sea. I support the initiatives for a moratorium on Black Sea attacks."

"Ministers further discussed Ukraine's winter resilience. Four years in a row, Russia has tried to freeze Ukrainians into submission, but it has failed. Ukraine has kept its cities running by defending, repairing, and replacing its energy infrastructure. We need to prepare Kyiv for another hard winter. I thank those who have already pledged new support for Ukraine Energy Support Fund as we work to replenish Ukraine's reserve of spare parts and generators."

"And finally, there was broad support to move with an EU visa entry ban for Russian ex-combatants and tougher visa restrictions for Russian tourists."

"We also see an escalation of attacks near our borders, violations of our airspace, and clear threats on our territory. Leipzig attacks had hallmarks of state-sponsored terrorism. What happened in Leipzig was not an isolated incident. Since 2022, we have seen systematic attacks across Europe. Sabotage, cyber-attacks, espionage are becoming more frequent and more brazen. The EU stands in full solidarity with Germany. We have summoned the Russian representative to the EU, and we are moving ahead with more sanctions. Attempts to intimidate Europe will fail."

"Our second session was about Europe itself and whether our foreign policy machinery is fit for the world we now live in. Ministers had a good discussion about where EU foreign policy works, what is too slow, and where our structures, our working methods, prevent us from exercising the influence that Europe should have."

"Europe has influence. Trade, development aid, visas, enlargement, energy, and sanctions, all give us leverage, which we are not always able to use. We have many instruments of power. We need to start using them in a more coherent way. There was a broad support for current institutional setup, but all agreed that it has to be better implemented. It was clear that Member States want to keep steering European foreign policy."

"As for how we work, we should look more seriously at constructive abstention and other tools that the treaties provide. We need to respect the principles of sincere cooperation and mutual solidarity, and we also need a stronger link between Foreign Ministers' work and the discussions of European leaders. My new External Action Service Secretary-General, Kajsa Ollongren, has already begun tour of capitals to move the conversation forward."

Given the fact that Ukraine will need additional financial support over the winter and into 2027, Kaja Kallas was asked where will the money come from. She said, "The ideal answer to your question, where should the money come from, is that it should come from Russia, because they are causing the damage. That is why some of the Member States were proposing to go back to

the discussion of the frozen assets. And we will continue that discussion." Which, interestingly, suggests that, notwithstanding the continuing objection from Belgium to any proposal to use the Russian financial assets in Euroclear and other European banks to support Ukraine, that option is still on the table.

David R. Cameron
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