

RUSSIAN ONGOING MILITARY AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE AND EU SECURITY POLICY IN 2024



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One of the key objectives of the European project was to ensure the role of the European continent as an important actor in world affairs through strong economic and diplomatic relations.

Peace was established as a core element of the project, which was built on the aftermaths of the World War II, and its model of freedom and equality was intended to be adopted by other parts of the world.

The values and objectives of the EU that determine its relations with the rest of the world, as stated in Article 3 of the Lisbon Treaty, include the promotion of European values and interests, **the promotion of peace and security**, the protection of human rights, as well as respect for the Charter of United Nations.

Throughout its history, the European Union have adopted foreign policies following those objectives and values. Humanitarian aid, development cooperation and trade have also prevailed as major aspects of EU foreign policy.

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is the core of EU security strategy and policy.

CSDP enables the Union to take a leading role in peace-keeping operations, conflict prevention and in the strengthening of the international security. It is an integral part of the EU's comprehensive approach towards crisis management, drawing on civilian and military assets.

European Security Policy Evolution

The scale and complexity of the inter-linked security threats and challenges that the EU is facing are beyond the capacity of a single Member State. That is why Member States decided to work closer together on EU level to build a strong Common Security and Defence Policy.

The idea of a common defence policy for Europe dates back to 1948 when the UK, France, and the Benelux signed the Treaty of Brussels.

Following the end of the Cold War and the subsequent conflicts in the Balkans, it became clear that the EU needed to assume its responsibilities in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management. The conditions under which military units could be deployed were already agreed by the WEU Council in 1992 but the so-called "Petersberg Tasks" were now integrated in the 1999 Treaty of Amsterdam. In addition, the post of the "High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy" was created to allow the Union to speak with 'one face and one voice' on foreign policy matters.

In 1999 the Treaty of Amsterdam was adopted by EU Member States in June 1997 and entered into force in May 1999. The Treaty codified a number of new structures and tasks for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and, although it did not create a common defence policy, it did increase responsibilities in the realms of peacekeeping and humanitarian work i.a. by creating closer links with the WEU.

At the Cologne European Council in 1999, Member States reaffirmed the Union's willingness to develop capabilities for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces. A key development was the "Berlin Plus agreement" giving the EU, under certain conditions, access to NATO assets and capabilities.

The Lisbon Treaty came into force in December 2009 and was a cornerstone in the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The treaty includes both a mutual assistance and a solidarity clause and allowed for the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) under the authority of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy/ Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP). The two distinct functions of the post give the HR/VP the possibility to bring all the necessary EU assets together and to apply a "comprehensive approach" to EU crisis management.

The "Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy" presented by former HR/VP Mogherini in June 2016 laid the foundation to develop CSDP further. A comprehensive package of measures in the areas of security and defence was defined at the end of 2016. It consists of three major pillars: new political goals and ambitions for Europeans to take more responsibility for their own security and defence; new financial tools to help Member States and the European defence industry to develop defence capabilities ("European Defence Action Plan") and a set of concrete actions as follow up to the EU-NATO Joint Declaration which identified areas of cooperation. Implementation of the three elements is ongoing and will boost security of the Union and its citizens.

Established in 2017, PESCO is a Treaty-based framework and process to deepen defence cooperation amongst EU Member States who are capable and willing to do so. The aim of PESCO is to enhance the EU's capacity as an international security actor, contribute to the protection of EU citizens and maximise the effectiveness of defence spending.

In 2017 the European Defence Fund (EDF) – the European Commission's initiative to support collaborative defence research and development, and to foster an innovative and competitive defence industrial base, was launched.

In 2021 it was followed by The European Peace Facility (EPF) which expanded the EU's ability to provide security for its citizens and its partners. It enabled the EU to provide all types of military equipment and security infrastructure to EU partners, in compliance with the highest human rights standards.

In 2022 EU has formally approved the Strategic Compass which provides a shared assessment of the strategic environment in which the EU is operating and of the threats and challenges the Union faces. The document makes concrete and actionable proposals, with a very precise timetable for implementation, in order to improve the EU's ability to act decisively in crises and to defend its security and its citizens. The Compass covers all the aspects of the security and defence policy and is structured around four pillars: act, invest, partner and secure.

European Security Policy Implementation Challenges

Since the 1990s, the EU has launched more than 30 military and civilian operations destined to provide humanitarian aid to populations threatened by conflicts and to help resolve wars and tensions. The CSDP missions are far from only serving a humanitarian purpose; they also ensure the EU's security by preventing specific threats from reaching the territory of the Union, such as the newly agreed European Union Monitoring Capacity in Armenia in October 2022.

The new shift towards more realist EU foreign policy can be observed in the last Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations led by the EU. For instance, the two European Union Capacity Building Missions (EUCAP) in the Sahel region, launched in Mali and Niger in 2012, aim to improve local governance and stabilize the region. Such missions also exist to preserve the interests of the EU abroad, as improved security not only secures the trade of raw materials between the EU and countries of the region but also diminishes migration pressures on European countries.

This approach can also be seen in the EU military support of Ukraine in terms of Russia's 24 February 2022 full-scale military aggression.

The EU is directly providing lethal weaponry to another country for the first time in its history. Since March 2022, the EU has sent more than €2.5bn worth of equipment and weapons to Ukraine, using funds from the European Peace Facility. Through this direct military assistance, the EU is involved in helping Ukraine counter the Russian invasion. However, such assistance has another purpose linked with the core objective of the European project: ensuring peace and stability in Europe. The EU's unprecedented military assistance to a non-member state shows that the EU is now ready to be involved in foreign security and defence issues, especially at the military level, to preserve peace within the European continent.

EU military assistance to Ukraine since the start of Russian full-scale military aggression

Two years since Russia began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, EU military assistance under the European Peace Facility (EPF) is lagging. The special European Council meeting of 1 February 2024 invited the Council to agree by early March 2024 to amend the regulation establishing the EPF, in order to increase its financial ceiling.

In October 2023 and again in December, the High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP) Josep Borrell proposed to the Foreign Affairs Council an envelope under the EPF of €5 billion a year for the years 2024 to 2027 for military assistance to Ukraine.

At the Foreign Affairs Council meeting¹ of 22 January 2024, this evolved into a proposal for a single, non-repeatable €5 billion EPF top-up in order to establish a “Ukraine Assistance Fund”² within the EPF, to encourage EU Member States to increase their military support for Ukraine. **This support remains badly needed, as Ukraine is still suffering from “shell hunger”³**, despite EU efforts and those of the international artillery coalition⁴ led by France and the United States (US).

EU military aid to Ukraine is all the more necessary given the potential outcome⁵ of the next US presidential elections and the current congressional funding crisis⁶.

During the 31 January 2024 informal meeting⁷, EU defence ministers had discussed the way ahead for EU military support to Ukraine.

In his press remarks upon arrival at that meeting, the HR/VP said:

“It is obviously necessary to have a clear understanding of where we are with [the provision of] ammunition. Ministers have been asked to present exactly what they have done, what they are doing, what they plan to do, in order to have a clear understanding of what has to go all together to provide Ukraine with what it needs [...]. Ukraine needs more ammunition. There is a big imbalance between the fire capacity from one side and the other, and this gap has to be filled.”

¹ Foreign Affairs Council, 22 January 2024, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2024/01/22/#:~:text=The%20Foreign%20Affairs%20Council%20discussed,latest%20developments%20on%20the%20ground,22.01.2024>.

² A particularly important Foreign Affairs Council, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/particularly-important-foreign-affairs-council_en?channel=eeas_press_alerts&date=2024-01-26&newsid=0&langid=en&source=mail,26.01.2024.

³ Ukraine’s army is suffering artillery ‘shell hunger’, Politico, <https://www.politico.eu/article/ukrainian-army-suffers-from-artillery-shell-hunger/,01.02.2024>.

⁴ US, France to lead artillery coalition for Ukraine, Defense News, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2024/01/18/us-france-to-lead-artillery-coalition-for-ukraine/,18.01.2024>.

⁵ Europe’s Trump challenge: Is it ready to fight Vladimir Putin alone?, Politico, <https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-trump-ukraine-war-russia-nato-vladimir-putin/,24.01.2024>.

⁶ Military assistance to Ukraine since the Russian invasion, Research Briefing. House of Commons Library, <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9477/CBP-9477.pdf,22.02.2024>.

⁷ Informal meeting of EU Ministers of Defence: agenda highlights, <https://belgian-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/en/news/informal-meeting-of-eu-ministers-of-defence/,29.01.2024>.

The EU is not on track⁸ to hit the one million rounds of ammunition target decided by the Council on 20 March 2023⁹ under a **three-track approach**:

- deliveries,
- joint procurement, and
- ramping-up of ammunition production.

“We ... will try to solve the issues that some Member States want to be considered in the new stage of the EPF”, the HR/VP added, mentioning the need for the EPF to **shift from funding the destocking of the previous existing material** to supporting the production of the European defence industry.

In his press remarks following the January 2024 informal meeting, the HR/VP said that he had reiterated the urgent need to agree on further military support for the short and long term, and that the Member States and the EU had shared the following aggregated data.

Since the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine (24 February 2022), the EU and its Member States have provided and placed €28 billion worth of military equipment.

Many Member States provided their budgeted commitments for bilateral military assistance to Ukraine, amounting to at least €21 billion for 2024. Member States have submitted partial reimbursement requests¹⁰ (reportedly based on a **reimbursement rate of between 25% and 45%**) from the EPF funds for their military deliveries to Ukraine.

The target of 40 000 Ukrainian soldiers trained through the EU military assistance mission for Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine¹¹) had almost been reached on 1 February 2024; Member States agreed to add 20 000 soldiers, which would raise the number of trained soldiers to 60 000 by the end of summer 2024.

The EPF operations pillar funds the common costs of EUMAM, while the EPF assistance pillar finances the assistance measures for the Ukrainian army.

From March 2023 to 1 February 2024, 330 000 ammunition rounds have been delivered, mainly from existing stocks, representing only one third of the objective of one million ammunitions a year agreed¹² by the Council on 20 March 2023.

⁸ Europe Needs a Paradigm Shift in How It Supports Ukraine, CSIS, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/europe-needs-paradigm-shift-how-it-supports-ukraine>, 17.01.2024.

⁹ Foreign Affairs Council, 20 March 2023, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2023/03/20>, 20.03.2023.

¹⁰ European Peace Facility: State of play on 30 November 2023, Think Tank European Parliament, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2023\)757560](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2023)757560), 30.11.2023.

¹¹ EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eumam-ukraine_en?s=410260

¹² Foreign Affairs Council, 20 March 2023, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2023/03/20>, 20.03.2023.

The HR/VP said he expected an additional 200 000 ammunition rounds by March 2024 from destocking and individual and joint procurement, thus **reaching 52 % of the set objective**¹³ (or slightly more, as not all Member States have sent their data).

Deliveries of artillery ammunitions and missiles before 31 May 2023 – the first track of the ammunition plan for Ukraine – or orders placed for these items before 30 September 2023 through joint procurements – the second track of the ammunition plan – may be partially reimbursed from the EPF to the Member States.

The HR/VP expects further deliveries of 600 000 ammunition rounds from orders Member States are placing, so as to reach the initial objective of one million rounds of ammunition deliveries by the end of 2024.

According to the HR/VP, the industry's production capacity will continue to increase as orders are placed; production capacity has already increased by 40 % since February 2022 and will again increase by 40 % in 2024, from a production capacity of 1 million rounds a year on 1 February 2024, to 1.4 million by the end of the year.

¹³ European Peace Facility: State of play as of 31 March 2023, Think Tank European Parliament, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2023\)747089](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2023)747089), 31.03.2023.

The Challenging 2024 and the Prospects of the EU Military Assistance to Ukraine

One of the key EU security assistance milestones for Ukraine in 2024 is securing the €5 billion Ukraine Assistance Fund within the EPF.

Initially, the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF) was the only point on the draft agenda¹⁴ of the special European Council meeting of 1 February 2024.

EU leaders discussed the mid-term review of the 2021-2027 MFF, including support for Ukraine¹⁵. This support consists mainly of the Ukraine Facility¹⁶, a €50 billion fund, split between €17 billion in grants and €33 billion in loans, for 2024 to 2027, to help Ukraine's recovery, reconstruction and modernisation towards EU accession. The European Council came to an agreement on the Ukraine Facility¹⁷.

In the press remarks¹⁸ before the meeting, the HR/VP said he would urge EU leaders to increase military support for Ukraine, through the Ukraine Assistance Fund within the EPF. He also confirmed that 'some Member States, Hungary for example', had expressed their wish to no longer participate in the EPF, albeit without obstructing it.

The leaders did not, however, reach an agreement on the Ukraine Assistance Fund. The European Council¹⁹ reviewed the Council's work on military support for Ukraine under the EPF and the proposed rise in the facility's overall financial ceiling and invited the Council to reach an agreement by early March 2024 to amend Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509.

The EPF ceiling, set at €12 billion in current prices, would receive a one-off top-up of €5 billion, based on the 22 January 2024 HR/VP proposal, which no longer includes a €5 billion 'annual' top-up for the four coming years, marking a drastic down-sizing of the HR/VP's initial ambition. Decision 2021/509 establishing the EPF has already been amended twice for the first and second tracks of the ammunition plan²⁰.

The European Council also invited the Council to take into account 'suggestions by the Member States'. This refers, inter alia, to Germany's request for a detailed list of commitments from other Member States for military deliveries in 2024 and to reduce²¹ its own real contribution to the EPF comparatively.

14 Notice of Meeting and Provisional Agenda, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/CM-1-2024-INIT/en/pdf>, 17.01.2024.

15 Special European Council, 1 February 2024, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2024/02/01/>, 01.02.2024.

16 Establishing the Ukraine Facility: Financing Ukraine's recovery and its path to EU accession, Think Tank European Parliament, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2023\)753954](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2023)753954), 21.11.2023.

17 Special European Council, 1 February 2024, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2024/02/01/#:~:text=EU%20leaders%20greenlit%20additional%20funding,away%20on%2027%20December%202023.>, 01.02.2024.

18 Special European Council: Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell upon arrival, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/special-european-council-press-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-upon-arrival-0_en, 01.02.2024.

19 Special meeting of the European Council (1 February 2024) – Conclusions, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/69874/20240201-special-euco-conclusions-en.pdf>, 01.02.2024.

20 European Peace Facility: State of play on 30 November 2023, Think Tank European Parliament, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2023\)757560](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2023)757560), 30.11.2023.

21 German opposition to reform of EU fund risks delaying arms to Ukraine, Financial Times, <https://www.ft.com/content/9b7202e8-efc7-41ec-bbf9-7f44c42ec9e1>.

On 8 January 2024, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz had pointed²² out that Germany was, after the US, the world's second-biggest provider of military aid to Ukraine, committed to deliver weapons and military material worth over €7 billion in 2024 alone. He had called on the other EU Member States to step up their support for Ukraine, asking them to present, by 1 February (the day of the special European Council meeting), a detailed summary²³ of their military deliveries to Ukraine.

Lastly, the European Council reiterated 'the urgent need to accelerate the delivery of ammunition and missiles, notably in view of the commitment to provide Ukraine with one million rounds of artillery ammunition' and called on Member States 'to explore all options to meet Ukraine's needs ..., including continued stock donations, redirection of existing orders and the placing of the necessary new orders, which will contribute to increasing European industry's production capacity'.

²² Scholz: Europe is committed to Ukraine and liberty, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/news/scholz-meets-frieden-2252200>, 08.01.2024.

²³ Scholz wants to discuss Ukraine arms deliveries with EU leaders at February summit, Politico, <https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-olaf-scholz-eu-ukraine-war-arms-deliveries-february-summit/>, 09.01.2024.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Over the past two years, Europeans have supported Ukraine by emptying their warehouses of aging equipment and munitions.

The European Union's European Peace Facility (EPF) has incentivized its member states to give military equipment to Ukraine by reimbursing them for some of the costs. However, there is now little left to give, as most of the old equipment has been divested. As such, European military support to Kyiv is lagging.

The problem is that there is a tension between rebuilding European militaries and supporting Ukraine. Thus, European countries are much more reluctant to give Ukraine newer, more expensive equipment, which is vital for national defense and meeting NATO targets.

A new paradigm is urgently needed for Europe's military support for Ukraine.

The challenge now is less about incentivizing countries to give weapons to Ukraine but about getting European defense industries to ramp up production. This requires significant new funding and requires Europeans to do something they rarely do in defense: work together.

The European Union should create a new emergency EU fund for defense procurement for Ukraine and European readiness. This fund should emulate Germany's Zeitenwende €100 billion fund. The goal would be to procure critical matériel at scale for both Ukraine and for EU militaries.

For NATO and Washington, this EU effort would strengthen NATO's readiness and could also serve as a major deliverable for next summer's Washington NATO summit. Active and vocal support from the Biden administration will be essential to getting the European Union to agree to such a measure.

European defense spending is up across the board with production increasing as well. But this is not happening at the speed and scale required.

European companies are reluctant to significantly expand production. European defense companies are expanding production somewhat but are hesitant to make major new investments to build new factories and open new production lines. Companies are nervous that demand could collapse should the war abruptly end or fighting subsides since they only sell to governments. Instead, they are waiting for long-term contracts from governments to expand substantially arrive, but those contracts are not yet arriving at scale.

European states are not necessarily prioritizing Ukraine with the new funding. National ministries of defense are trying to rebuild defense capacity, meet NATO targets, and modernize their forces with a limited pool of funding. They are thus loath to use precious defense resources to provide a decade-long contracts to offset corporate risk. Hence, ministries of defense in Europe view Ukraine as a priority, but it is not their only priority. Germany for instance is using its Zeitenwende fund to procure F-35s and air defense, which, while important, does nothing for Ukraine.

European states are still not coordinating their procurement efforts. Since European militaries all essentially need to restock their warehouses with much of the same equipment, they could be working together to combine orders, create economies of scale, and provide a clear demand signal to industry. But they are largely not.

National ministries of defense think and operate nationally and there remains little cross-European coordination when it comes to defense procurement.

European ministries of defense tend to cooperate less when they have funding. With more resources, defense ministries are less focused on lowering costs and can avoid the time and bureaucratic hassle of coordinating with others. Hence, European ministries of defense are all acting rationally. They are balancing the need to restock, invest in future high-end systems (F-35s), and support their own national defense industrial base.

From a wider European perspective, this is leading to suboptimal outcomes.

Existing EU initiatives to encourage joint procurement are not sufficiently ambitious. The funding for EDIRPA, the European Union's attempt to provide financial incentives for joint procurement, was approved at just €300 million, a paltry sum given the scale of the challenge. Additionally, EDIRPA only allows the European Union to contribute a maximum of 20 percent to a given procurement and is more focused on longer-term projects.

European companies often do not prioritize European security. With little demand in Europe, many private European defense companies focus more on the export market and thus are less tied to the demands of the state. As such, European states have often been told to get in line by European companies as they fulfill foreign orders first, something that would be hard to fathom in the United States.

EU Defense and Readiness Fund

The European Union should create a new €100 billion special fund to buy urgently needed equipment for Ukraine from European suppliers. The fund should focus on identifying Ukrainian needs—whether ammunition, tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, small drones, demining equipment, air defense or munitions. Whatever Ukraine needs to fight Russia, is also the type of equipment that Europe should have on hand as well. This would build off the European Union's ASAP initiative and would address its limitation—the lack of funding—enabling the European Union to put in the orders and dramatically scale up production, as well as expand it to other areas of need for Ukraine.

The European Union would therefore act as a buyer, with the resources to achieve economies of scale over longer time horizons, while giving industry a degree of certainty and the longer-term contracts it needs. This would absorb some of the potential risk from the private sector of overcapacity to get production moving. Should orders outstrip Ukrainian demand, with hopefully

a successful end to the war, the rest of the equipment could be either provided to European states or stockpiled for European militaries by the European Union, with the European Union serving as a Europe-wide warehouse.

The implementation of the fund will stretch the capacities of the European Union, which has never been a defense procurer. The European Defense Agency (EDA) is a relatively small entity and lacks the capacity to make major procurements. However, part of the problem with defense procurement in Europe is the intense bureaucracy.

Prioritizing the needs of the Ukrainians should avoid getting entangled in the weeds of differing European states procurement requirements.

The European Union should also work closely with NATO and ensure its procurements are advancing NATO objectives and helping to meet NATO goals.

Additionally, this fund should take Ukrainian battlefield innovations and seek to pair that with defense industrial production capacity. Many Eastern European defense companies have tremendous latent capacity and now find themselves at a crossroads. Eastern European defense industries are about to undergo a major transformation, as providing support to old Soviet-era equipment in use by former Warsaw Pact NATO members is no longer viable, since this equipment has largely been sent to Ukraine.

One purpose of the fund could be to help repurpose these factories to produce Ukrainian innovations at scale. This could be financed by the European Union and lead to joint ventures between Eastern European and Ukrainian industry, for example in first-person view (FPV)-prone production desperately needed by European ground forces.