

European Union urges intensification of Ukraine war

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The entire European Union (EU) leadership traveled Thursday to Kiev, where it met with the Ukrainian government for two days. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who was visiting the country for the fourth time, was accompanied by Council President Charles Michel, High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell and 15 commissioners, whose function is comparable to that of ministers.

The journey of such a high-ranking delegation to a war zone is very unusual and raises serious security questions. The fact that it nevertheless took place shows the determination with which the EU is pursuing the continuation of the war in Ukraine. Almost a year after the war began, the EU has tied its prestige to the military defeat of Russia, even if it costs the lives of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian and Russian soldiers and threatens to lead to nuclear war.

The main purpose of the trip was to shore up the Zelensky regime, which is under massive military and domestic pressure. “We are here together to show that the EU stands as firmly as ever with Ukraine,” von der Leyen wrote on Twitter.

The number of Ukrainian soldiers killed at the front now amounts to between 100,000 and 160,000, depending on the source, and will continue to rise in view of the imminent Russian offensive. The willingness to die in a war that primarily serves the interests of NATO is apparently declining. This is shown by a law signed by Zelensky against considerable public resistance punishing desertion and criticism of superiors with long prison sentences.

The unexplained death of Interior Minister Denys Monastyrsky on January 18 and the dismissal of several high-ranking government members for corruption indicate that fierce power struggles are raging within the regime. Meanwhile, authorities have searched the home of Monastyrsky's predecessor Arsen Avakov. He is accused of corruption in the purchase of the helicopter type involved in the crash that killed Monastyrsky, which is considered unsafe.

Since the Ukrainian press is subject to strict censorship and opposition media and parties are banned, it is difficult to obtain more precise information.

Zelensky's government has long depended on the EU. This year alone, €18 billion of direct aid will be provided to keep the state institutions going. This corresponds to about one-tenth of the total EU budget. Military support, which is mainly provided by the individual member states and the US, is not included in this sum.

The visit of the entire EU Commission is aimed at strengthening fighting morale. As the country sinks into ruin and poverty, the assembled commissioners gush over the utopia of a thriving Ukraine within the European Union.

“We are now preparing the future of Ukraine,” said von der Leyen. Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Schmyhal said Ukraine would meet the EU's accession conditions “in two years.”

“The ministers of the Ukrainian government heard about the benefits of good macroeconomic planning, the opportunities of the switch to renewable energies, and focusing on hydrogen,” Germany's flagship television news show *Tagesschau* said, reporting on the meeting of the Ukrainian government and the Commission. The delivery of 35 million LED lights to facilitate everyday life under wartime conditions was also promised.

“We reaffirm that the future of Ukraine and its citizens lies in the European Union,” the summit said in a joint statement. “The EU will support Ukraine as long as is necessary.”

Everyone involved knows that these are pipedreams. The admission process to the EU, which requires all 27 member states to agree, takes years, if not decades. Candidates must commit to strict budgetary discipline and cut social spending accordingly. And even if they meet the admission requirements, this does not mean an improvement for the broad mass of the population. Even after 15 years of EU membership, workers in Romania and Bulgaria earn only a fraction of what their Western European colleagues receive. Many work under slave-like conditions in European

slaughterhouses as truck drivers and in similar professions.

The EU has no interest in a prosperous Ukraine. Nor is it interested in fighting corruption or securing democracy. It wants access to the cheap labour, fertile soil and raw materials of the country, which, in addition to coal and gas, include such critical items as lithium, cobalt, titanium, beryllium and rare earth elements, with an estimated value of €6.7 trillion.

Above all, Ukraine serves as a battering ram against Russia, with its vast land mass and raw material reserves. In order to militarily defeat and divide Russia and install a puppet government, the EU has rejected any negotiated solution to the war, even if it means turning Ukraine into a wasteland.

This is also Zelensky's view. "Now it is obvious that the dream of a peaceful Europe can only be realized together with Ukraine and only by defeating Russia," he said during a joint press conference with von der Leyen.

While the EU is boosting the Zelensky regime morally and keeping it alive with billions of dollars, NATO, which includes most EU members, is escalating the war with ever-increasing arms deliveries, effectively making itself a party to the conflict.

Since Germany and the US gave the green light for the delivery of state-of-the-art battle tanks, the pledges are increasing. More and more countries are declaring their willingness to give up battle tanks, so that in the end several hundred are likely to be delivered. The German government has also approved the export of 29 older Leopard I models.

At the same time, preparations are underway for the delivery of F-16 fighter jets that can penetrate deep into Russian territory and carry nuclear bombs. While US President Joe Biden still officially rejects this move, Ukrainian pilots are already being trained on these fighter jets.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the F-16s would be delivered soon. The supply of tanks was initially also highly controversial, he said before the summit in Kiev. But they agreed to cross that "red line." There have been warnings of escalation risks with each round of arms deliveries so far, he noted.

In Kiev, Borrell promised to increase the number of Ukrainian soldiers trained by the European Training Mission (EUMAM) from 15,000 to 30,000. The EU mission will also provide training for the crews of Leopard 2 tanks deployed by Germany, Poland and other countries.

Commission President von der Leyen, who was formerly Germany's defence minister, promised that the EU would complete a "tenth sanctions package" against Russia by 24 February, the anniversary of the Russian invasion. The sanctions imposed so far have already caused considerable

damage to the Russian economy. On Sunday, a price cap for Russian petroleum products will come into effect.

Von der Leyen announced three months ago that she wanted to confiscate frozen Russian assets and make them available to Ukraine, a plan supported by several EU representatives. In the EU alone, around €300 billion of the Russian Central Bank's foreign exchange reserves have been frozen.

However, the operation is encountering difficulties under international law. If the principle of state immunity is violated and property protection is called into question, according to international law expert Marc Bungenberg, the US could also be prosecuted for the Iraq war. "Then other countries might be encouraged to seize the assets of Western companies—and, if available, central banks as well," he said.

The Russian regime of Vladimir Putin has done nothing to oppose the offensive of NATO and the EU except escalating its military intervention and promoting Great Russian chauvinism. The representatives of the Russian oligarchs, who plundered the social property of the Soviet Union, are organically incapable of appealing to the opposition to war in the international working class.

But this is the only way to stop the war and the threat of a nuclear inferno. The Socialist Equality Party (SGP) and its sister parties in the International Committee of the Fourth International are building an international movement against war based on the growing opposition of the working class to exploitation and capitalism, and fighting for a socialist transformation of society.

This goal is the focus of the antiwar rally being held by the SGP today at 11:00 a.m. at Potsdamer Platz, as part of its Berlin election campaign.



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