



Press Release

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Brussels

EEA appeal in support of Ukraine's membership in the European Union.

The Russian Federation has invaded the sovereign state of Ukraine, causing the most extensive military conflict in Europe since the second world war. This war has caused thousands of deaths, and the number of killed is still growing. What is more, the Russian army is ruthlessly bombarding housing estates and critical infrastructure, which leads to injuries and losses of considerable size. This aggression finds no justification and results from the imperial ambitions of the Russian President.

European Enterprise Alliance (EEA) condemns the Russian invasion of Ukraine and calls for an immediate halt to military action.

On Monday, February 28, 2022, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenski has signed the application for Ukraine's membership in the European Union. The ceremony was attended by the chairman of the Supreme Council, Ruslan Stefanchuk, and Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal. Vsevolod Czentsov, the Ukrainian representative, has immediately submitted the application to the current President of the French Presidency of the EU, Philippe Léglise-Costa.

This is the beginning of the process, which usually takes a couple of years to be completed. However, considering the extraordinary circumstances, the Ukrainian President has called the European community to grant Ukraine a special procedure to speed up the accession process. Following this demand, we call the European institutions to immediately allocate Ukraine the candidate country's status and enable accession talks. We need to recognise the belonging of Ukraine to the European community and support maintaining the Ukrainian government elected in a democratic manner.

Many European leaders have already expressed their support for proceeding with Ukraine's accession to the EU in a special procedure. Public support for this EU enlargement was expressed by the Presidents of Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovenia and Slovakia. On top of that, Ukraine's efforts are supported by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola.

European Parliament voted its resolution on March 1, 2022, with a majority of 637, clearly supporting Ukraine's fast-track accession. Parliament intends to grant Ukraine the status of candidate country

for EU membership under Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union. Moreover, MEPs called European institutions and the Member States to tighten the sanctions against Russia and extend their scope over Belarus due to its support in the Russian invasion. It emphasised the need to continue providing humanitarian aid to Ukraine in a quick and effective manner. EP's President, Roberta Metsola, declared her support by saying, 'As our resolution clearly states, we welcome Ukraine's application for candidate status and will work towards this goal. We must face the future together.'¹

Ukraine has developed strong economic ties with the EU Member States. Ukraine's market is shifting from trade relations with Russia for more substantial economic exchange with the European single market. The Union is for Ukraine the largest trading partner with a share in the Ukrainian market, estimating around 40 per cent in 2019.² Additionally, Ukraine has done a lot to harmonise its law and standards with European legislation. These are issues related to competition, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary, customs and trade facilitation, as well as protection of intellectual property rights. The Ukrainian economy has great growth potential, disrupted by the geopolitical situation and dependence on Russian energy supplies.

Ultimately, Ukraine belongs to the European community of values. It shares the same aspirations as the Member States to build a fair society based on democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. In this sense, Ukraine and the EU are establishing a position of the democratic bloc in Europe. Overall, Ukrainian membership in the EU will benefit both Ukraine and the Union, increasing its position as a significant economic and political world player.

Having discussed arguments for the fast-track accession of Ukraine to the European Union, we underline its belonging to the European democratic family and condemn Russian aggression towards the Ukrainian people. We fully support Ukraine's sovereignty and the right of Ukrainians to determine the future of their country.

EEA stands united with its Ukrainian member - European Business Association. Our thoughts and prayers are with our colleagues who have to deal with this barbaric aggression. We believe in bright future of strong and independent Ukraine.

¹ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/pl/press-room/20220301IPR24303/metsola-to-zelenskyy-we-must-face-the-future-together>

² <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/ukraine/>