

## **Supplying the Ukrainian military with fighter jets, longer range artillery, and increased ammunition**

*Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting in Paris, France (22/04/2023)*

### **Recognising that:**

- On the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2022, the Russian military, under direct orders from President Vladimir Putin, launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.
- In just over a year of intense warfare, Russia has inflicted incredible suffering on the Ukrainian people, committed war crimes on a massive scale, violated Ukraine's territorial sovereignty, and shown complete disregard for international norms, law, and basic humanity.
- The Ukrainian people and their military have demonstrated incredible bravery and determination. With strong Western support, they have repelled the invaders from Ukraine's capital Kyiv and a substantial majority of Ukrainian territory.
- Despite Ukraine's battlefield successes, the Russian military continues to occupy large swathes of Ukrainian territory in eastern and southern Ukraine.
- As of February 2023, the EU and the United States together have provided just over €128bn in military aid to Ukraine, with the U.S. providing €73.1bn and the EU providing €54.9bn.<sup>1</sup>
- While Western support has been critical, it has been piecemeal. Western countries have continuously resisted supplying Ukraine with the next level of military capabilities before eventually agreeing to Ukraine's requests. The debate over the supply of heavy battle tanks to Ukraine is perhaps the most notable and most public example of this approach.
- In September 2022, Ukraine launched a highly successful counter-offensive outside the city of Kharkiv, successfully liberating large swathes of territory from Russia.
- On the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2022, the Ukrainian military liberated the city of Kherson in southern Ukraine and surrounding territory following another highly successful counter-offensive.
- The current military situation is relatively static, with heavy fighting around the city of Bakhmut in the Donbas. Supplies of Western main battle tanks and infantry fighting vehicles are continuing to arrive in Ukraine as training for Ukrainian tank crews continues.
- Ukrainian leaders have repeatedly made direct appeals for the West to supply the country's military with fighter jets (specifically NATO standard aircraft such as F16s), longer range artillery, and increased ammunition supplies.

### **Acknowledging:**

- Each time the West has supplied a new military capability to Ukraine, Russia has threatened retaliation only to fail to carry out that threat.
- As long as the current Russian position of claiming sovereignty over four regions of Ukraine remains, the only way to end the war is through a Ukrainian military victory as long as no purposeful negotiations can be conducted with the Russian Government.
- By failing to supply Ukraine with full spectrum conventional military capabilities, the West is only prolonging the war.
- The Ukrainian military has shown itself more than capable of successfully executing major offensive operations to liberate its territory, such as the counter-offensives in September and November 2022.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/ukraine-military-aid-how-much-has-the-west-provided/a-64778105>

- In order to execute successful combined arms warfare using NATO-standard tactics and strategy, Ukraine's military must be able integrate land, air and naval components. Western main battle tanks, artillery, and other equipment is only fully effective in offensive operations if it is supported by the necessary air capabilities, logistics, full range of artillery, and sufficient ammunition.
- The U.S.-supplied HIMARS artillery missile system has been one of the most effective and important pieces of equipment for Ukraine. However, to date the U.S. and its European allies have only supplied HIMARS munitions with a maximum range of 150 km through the GLSDB munition. The longest range HIMARS munitions have a range of up to 499km.
- The Russian military has now moved many of its logistics hubs, command positions, and other key installations out of the range of Ukraine's HIMARS rockets. Providing longer range munitions for HIMARS would bring these positions within range of the Ukrainian military, a vital step if Ukraine's counter-offensive is to be successful.
- The Ukrainian Air Force, while still operating, lacks sufficient jets and training for its pilots to provide meaningful air support to its troops. Effective air support is vital in modern warfare to protect tanks in particular, and enable them to be successful.
- Western-made fighter jets, such as F16s, Eurofighters, or Typhoons, have proven themselves superior to most fighter aircraft operated by the Russian military and so would help give Ukraine an edge in the aerial battle.
- The last number of months have seen the Ukrainian military suffer from insufficient ammunition supply. In March 2023, Ukraine's defence minister Oleksiy Reznikov made a direct appeal to the EU to supply Ukraine with 250,000 artillery shells a month. Reznikov stated, "If we were not limited by the amount of available artillery shells, we could use the full ammunition set, which is 594,000 shells per month. According to our estimates, for the successful execution of battlefield tasks, the minimum need is at least 60 per cent of the full ammunition set, or 356,400 shells per month."<sup>2</sup>
- According to NATO estimates, Russian forces are firing approximately 20,000 – 50,000 artillery rounds a day in recent fighting while Ukraine, due to insufficient supply, has only been able to fire approximately 4,000 – 7,000.
- In March 2023, the EU agreed to an Estonian-led proposal to jointly procure €1bn in additional ammunition for Ukraine, and to use €1bn from the European Peace Facility (EPF) to reimburse member states for the ammunition they have donated to Ukraine from their own national stockpiles.
- The theme of this YEPP Council meeting in Paris is, 'Facing current threats: The modernization and digitalization of Europe's armed forces.' In this time of war in Europe, our democratic way of life is under direct attack. Thousands of young Ukrainian men and women are daily giving their lives in the defence of our common European home. In such times, the best way of facing current threats is to modernize and strengthen the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

#### **YEPP calls on:**

- EU member states without delay to supply the Ukrainian military with modern fighter jet aircraft, including Western-manufactured aircraft, and the appropriate training for pilots to operate such aircraft.
- EU member states and the United States as fast as possible to supply Ukraine with longer-range artillery munitions, including the longest-range munitions for the HIMARS artillery missile system, while also making an effort to ensure some level of consistency in the military

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/75ee9701-aa93-4c5d-a1bc-7a51422280fd>

support provided to Ukraine in order to avoid the inefficiency of having to supply logistical support to too many different systems.

- EU member states and the European Commission to urgently increase the ambition of the recently announced scheme for joint procurement of ammunition for Ukraine, by doubling both the joint procurement fund and the EPF element for reimbursement.
- The EU and its members to have a target, and an ambition, for being able to supply Ukraine with necessary military support, even if the US shift its strategic and military focus.