

EU-Ukraine Summit: Remarks by HR/VP Josep Borrell at the press c



Check against delivery!

President Zelenskyy, I am very glad to meet you in Brussels [after my visit to Ukraine some weeks ago](#). In the name of the President of the Commission [Ursula Von der Leyen], which I have the honour to represent, I can only reiterate what President [of the European Council, Charles] Michel has said: We fully support the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine. We will not recognise the illegal annexation of Crimea and we call on the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. On that, President [of the European Council, Charles] Michel has been very clear, I do not need to repeat it.

Allow me to insist on how important our partnership is. And, as a proof of it, today the European Commission and [Ukraine](#) have signed three programs. One to increase Ukraine's resilience to conflicts and hybrid threats, including disinformation. The second one, to further empower civil society and the third one, to [support a green economic recovery](#). This is part of EU-Ukraine's agenda. Reforms play a very important role in this agenda. Reforms are difficult, often a long and complex process. I know it very well.

I think it is the moment to recognise that President [of Ukraine, Volodymyr] Zelenskyy has demonstrated leadership in pushing ahead crucial reforms since the beginning of his presidency, particularly on the land reform, the banking sector, and taxation.

In fighting against corruption, you [President Zelenskyy] have also delivered some important achievements, for example, the [start of operation of the] High Anti-Corruption Court. Certainly, more needs to be done, but what you did since the start of your mandate is impressive.

We consider that an independent and effective justice system is crucial and we continue to expect the maximum from the Ukrainian authorities, because this is what the Ukrainian people are asking for.

We are very proud of our Association Agreement. It is the most ambitious and far-reaching agreement that the European Union has ever signed with a partner country.

The results speak for themselves. For instance, bilateral trade has increased by 65% in the last four years.

There are many possibilities still to be exploited in our Association Agreement. We have discussed such possibilities today, on digital economy, trade facilitation, green economy and energy sector reform.

As President [of the European Council, Charles] Michel already explained, we have mobilised over €15 billion in grants and loans [for Ukraine]. We will continue supporting you because your progress is our progress and your security will be our security.

The macro-financial assistance is part of this partnership. The mobilization of resources to address the coronavirus crisis is also part of this partnership. We share borders. We share history, culture, interests and values.

Ukraine's people have sacrificed a great deal for a brighter, more prosperous future.

This future is part of the European future. Ukraine can count on the European Union.

Thank you.

Link to the video: <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-196172>

Q&A

Q. What did you mean when you said 'the EU is not a cash machine' in your article after your recent visit to Ukraine?

Well you should not take the words out of context. This is an expression that we use quite often, here in Brussels, to refer to financial transfers, but I immediately erased this sentence, these words, because they can be considered inadequate. I said that the help that the European Union has provided to Ukraine is not unconditional. We are not an NGO, we are not acting just [out of] charity. We are acting because it is in our own interest to help Ukraine develop and be a free, prosperous and secure country.

This is the purpose of our help. It is conditional to reforms. It is conditional to meeting some objectives that we share. Everything is conditional when the European Union is doing [financial] transfers; it is also conditional for the Member States. The recovery plan that we are implementing will also be conditional. Ukraine will have to fulfil objectives and commitments. This is what I wanted to say and I think that everybody agrees that this help is in our own interest and is part of a process of reform, which is the condition for this help.

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