

WTO Ministerial Conference: Joint Statement in Solidarity with Ukraine

Statement from Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Germany, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, The Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu, United Kingdom, Ukraine, United States and Uruguay.

“We, the trade ministers/heads of delegation of the undersigned WTO Members, have met in Geneva today on the occasion of the 12th Ministerial Conference of the WTO, to reiterate our full support for, and solidarity with, the people of Ukraine. We express our deep sadness at the devastating human losses and profound suffering caused by the aggression against Ukraine. In so doing, we reiterate our support for the UN General Assembly Resolutions of 2 March 2022 (A/RES/ES-11/1) and 24 March 2022 (A/RES/ES-11/2).

The war is also having a devastating impact, including on Ukraine’s economy and ability to trade. The destruction of a significant part of Ukraine’s transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, ports and railroads, is substantially impeding Ukraine’s ability to produce, export, and import. We are gravely concerned about the consequences of this destruction for Ukraine and for global trade, in particular as regards the supply to international markets of a number of key commodities produced by Ukraine, including agricultural and food products, fertilisers, sunflower oil, and critical minerals. We are also deeply concerned by numerous reports of grain being plundered from Ukraine. These actions are at odds with the principles and values of the WTO.

We underline the importance of maintaining open and predictable markets, and Ukraine’s ability to trade. Given this, we strongly condemn any actions targeting the means of supply, production, and transportation necessary for Ukraine to produce and export to the world, including agri-food products. We stress the need to ensure that the trade routes, especially sea routes and ports, are not blocked by the threat of the use of force.

The food security impacts are dramatic for those directly affected in Ukraine but are not just restricted to Ukraine and its citizens. Ukraine is one of the world’s top exporters of key agricultural products like wheat, maize, barley, and sunflower oil. It is a major supplier to the World Food Programme. The impact of the war, including of the blockage of Ukraine’s access to the Black Sea, is seriously jeopardizing food supply to some of the most vulnerable parts of the world, in developing countries. This risks pushing millions of people into food insecurity, adding to the already severe situation caused by COVID-19.

In this context, we will seek to support Ukraine and to facilitate its exports. We encourage WTO Members to do likewise in a manner commensurate with their capacity, including by facilitating the use of infrastructure or facilitating and simplifying customs procedures.

Within our capacity, we will look for ways to help Ukrainian farmers to continue planting and growing cereals and oilseeds, much needed for themselves and for the world. Within the capacity of each WTO Member, we will continue to provide humanitarian aid to alleviate the suffering of Ukrainian civilians, including to help secure their access to basic goods and services, including food. We will also look for ways to help Ukraine in its reconstruction as soon as circumstances permit.”