

12 May 2023 -17:18

New support package for Ukraine

Today, the inner cabinet approved a new aid package for Ukraine and its people in preparation of a counteroffensive against Russia.

A total of 92 million EUR in new funds will be released, which will come from additional tax revenue generated on frozen Russian assets located in Belgium. Half of this amount, i.e. 46 million EUR, will go to providing new military support, including armored vehicles, weapons and ammunition with the first deliveries taking place shortly, in coordination with the Ukrainian military.

A further 46 million EUR will be made available to support the Ukrainian people and consolidate Belgium's diplomatic presence in Ukraine.

The lion's share, 24 million EUR, will be spent on additional humanitarian support, in coordination with the UN, to cover basic needs such as education, health and food security in major cities and war zones.

An amount of 8 million EUR will be earmarked for the reconstruction of Ukraine through European Investment Bank (EIB) and World Bank funds, on top of the amounts already invested. Lastly, investments are planned to reform and strengthen Belgium's diplomatic network in Ukraine and the entire region, to secure Ukraine's strategic infrastructure (including its nuclear power plants) and to support the International Criminal Court in its investigation of war crimes in Ukraine.

Prime Minister Alexander De Croo: *"From the start of the war, Belgium has been on Ukraine's side. I confirmed this to Mr. Volodymyr Zelensky again last week when we met in The Hague to discuss the country's needs. The success of the Ukrainian counteroffensive is crucial to ending the war. The additional support Belgium is pledging today will help in this effort."*

Minister of Defense Ludivine Dedonder: *"From the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Belgian Ministry of Defense has done everything it can to support the Ukrainian Army in protecting its people and territory. We have considered the real needs of the Ukrainian Army and the available stocks of the Ministry of Defense and consulted the Belgian defense and security industry to consider our options. The speed with which the new equipment can be delivered to Ukraine will be they key to success. This new package of arms and ammunition will help fill the needs in the field at very short notice. The Belgian Ministry of Defense will continue to examine how it can support Ukrainian forces without compromising its own capabilities and readiness."*

Minister of Foreign Affairs Hadja Lahbib: *"Belgium remains committed to Ukraine and Ukrainians, also via the International Criminal Court. We will seek justice for the war victims, for the women and girls who were sexually abused and the thousands of children who were deported to Russia. An investigation must be launched as soon as possible to shed light on these war crimes and ensure justice is metered out to the perpetrators. Displaced groups in neighboring countries, including Moldova, also need our support and protection. The safety of nuclear power plants also merits special attention. Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the direct and indirect consequences of this conflict also require more attention for the region. The Belgian diplomatic network will be adapted to the current geopolitical situation: our country will open diplomatic posts in Chişinău (Moldova) and Yerevan (Armenia)."*

Minister of Development Cooperation Caroline Gennez: *"Much of Ukraine's essential infrastructure has been damaged beyond repair and this impacts the lives of Ukrainian families enormously. The Russian military is targeting energy infrastructure, railway lines, and even schools and hospitals, making daily life almost impossible for many people. This deliberate tactic is supposed to break the resistance of Ukrainian citizens. It is therefore essential that we continue to support the civilian population and ensure that people have access to basic services: food, clean drinking water, a roof over their heads, access to medical care, and schools their children can safely attend. Belgium's new expression of international solidarity will help Ukrainians persevere. Because Europe will not be safe until Ukraine is safe."*

Minister of Finance Vincent Van Peteghem: *"As the Belgian Governor at development banks like the EIB and World Bank, I think it is important for our government to make a contribution to these banks' funds and help in rebuilding Ukraine. These banks make sure that the private sector can also play a major role in rebuilding the country."*

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