



By: TA | AP Insight

Ukraine-Germany defense deal - announcement of increased European support for Kyiv



Ukraine and Germany are starting work on plans for the joint production of advanced drones and other battle-tested defense systems, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday, as Kyiv looks to scale up its more than four-year fight against Russia's all-out invasion.

"We have proposed to Germany a bilateral drone deal covering various types of drones, missiles, software and modern defense systems. Our teams are starting concrete work," Zelenskyy said at a joint news conference with Chancellor Friedrich Merz during a visit to Berlin.

Merz said that Germany's commitment to supporting Kyiv's war effort is "a very clear signal" to Russia. "We will not waver in our efforts to defend Ukraine," he said.

U.S.-led diplomatic efforts to end Russia's war on its neighbor have recently petered out as the Iran war grips the Trump administration's attention, although Tammy Bruce, the deputy U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, told the U.N. Security Council on Monday that Washington "will continue to push for a negotiated and durable end" to the war.

Russia has occupied about 20% of Ukraine so far. That includes the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia seized in 2014.

Weapon production funding

Ukraine has the capacity to produce twice as much military equipment as it's currently deploying, but lacks funding to step up production, according to Zelenskyy. "We simply don't have enough money," he said.

A key to unlocking that potential lies in obtaining a promised loan of **90 billion euros** (\$106 billion) from the European Union, which had been held up by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, but his impending departure from office after a weekend election could now free up the money.

Ukraine needs those funds "urgently," Merz

said.

Germany and Ukraine agreed a defense package valued at 4 billion euros

Ukrainian Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov, who accompanied Zelenskyy to Berlin, said Germany and Ukraine agreed a defense package valued at 4 billion euros (\$4.7 billion).

The agreement is "a massive boost" for Ukraine's air defense against Russian barrages, Fedorov said on X, allowing Kyiv to buy "several hundred" American-made Patriot missiles.

After Berlin, Zelenskyy was due to visit Norway, another important financial and military ally, while defense leaders from the 50-plus partner nations who regularly gather to coordinate weapons aid for Kyiv will hold an online meeting Wednesday, Ukraine's Defense Ministry said.

Ukrainian troop shortfall

Kyiv is heavily reliant on U.S. intelligence for targeting inside Russia and needs more sophisticated American-made air defense systems to stop Russian missile attacks on its power grid. If the **Iran war** drags on, it could erode vital U.S. support for Kyiv, Zelenskyy fears.

Furthermore, the Ukrainian army is short-handed, facing around 200,000 troop desertions and draft-dodging by around 2 million people, Fedorov said in January.

Germany will help Kyiv facilitate the return home of Ukrainian men of military age, Merz said. "We need rapid, tangible progress here," he said.

Ukraine makes air and sea drones, missiles that have reached around 1,750 kilometers (1,000 miles) into Russia

Domestically developed unmanned platforms are playing a vital role in holding back Russia's invasion. Ukraine makes air and sea drones, missiles that have reached around 1,750 kilometers (1,000 miles) into Russia, as well as battlefield robots that help make up for its troop shortage.

Ukraine has been approached about security cooperation, especially battle-tested drone production, by eight Middle East and Gulf countries, as well as Turkey, Iraq and countries in Southeast Asia and Africa, Zelenskyy said on Monday.

Ukraine reportedly posts battlefield successes

Despite its handicaps, Western analysts and officials say Ukraine has in recent months recorded battlefield successes against Russia's bigger army, disrupting a **spring offensive** started by Russia amid improving weather, as fields dry out and new foliage on tree lines offers more cover.

Meanwhile, the long-range drones and missiles that Kyiv designs and produces are repeatedly striking oil facilities and manufacturing plants deep inside Russia.



Ukraine is in a much better place than it has been at any stage in this horrific war - Alexander Stubb

Ukraine "is in a much better place than it has been at any stage in this horrific war," Finnish President Alexander Stubb said at the Brookings Institution in Washington on Monday.

Ukraine "is on top from a military perspective," Stubb said, noting that last month Ukraine fired more drones and missiles at Russia than vice versa.

Moscow has also claimed progress on the battlefield. Independent verification of each side's claims wasn't possible.

Russian attacks on Ukraine kill 5 civilians

Meanwhile, a Russian missile attack on the eastern Ukraine city of Dnipro killed four people and left 21 hospitalized with injuries, 10 of them in serious condition, regional authorities said Tuesday.

The city's attorney general's office said the victims, all civilians, were driving or walking past the scene of the strike in the city, 485 kilometers (300 miles) southeast of Kyiv.

Elsewhere, a 52-year-old woman was killed in a Russian drone strike in the southern city of Kherson that also left one man seriously wounded, authorities said.