

MEPs call for more support for Ukraine and further sanctions against Russia



MEPs discussed with Michel, von der Leyen and Borrell the European Council and measures against Russia © European Union, 2022 -

Source: EP

Debating last week's EU Summit with Presidents Michel and von der Leyen and EU Foreign Policy Chief Borrell, MEPs united in showing solidarity and giving more help to Ukraine.

On Wednesday morning, MEPs discussed the conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022, including the latest developments in the war against Ukraine. They called for further sanctions against Russia, additional support for Ukraine and for reducing the EU's energy dependency.

European Council President Charles Michel sent a direct message to the Russian soldiers involved in war crimes, saying, “If you don’t want to be a criminal, stop fighting. Leave the battlefield”. He also mentioned the need for more sanctions: “Measures on oil and even gas will also be needed sooner or later.” On China, President Michel said, “we need to raise the awareness amongst the Chinese authorities not to support the war and not to help Russia avoid sanctions.”

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said “humanity itself was killed in Bucha”, that the perpetrators must pay, and that they will be held accountable. With regard to the new package of sanctions against Russia, she said that the pressure on Putin must be further increased, to limit the Kremlin’s political and economic options. “Those sanctions will not be our last sanctions”, President von der Leyen said, stressing that “we must look into oil” and that Russia’s fossil fuel revenue stream must end.

“We have to have fewer rounds of applause but more arms for Ukraine” so they can defend themselves against Russia, EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell said, urging Europe to step up. Connecting energy policy with defence, he said Europe has so far spent roughly one billion euros on supporting Ukraine, the same amount the EU pays to Russia every day for its energy. “We have to reduce our energy dependence: for once, climate change and geopolitics go hand in hand,” he said.

You can watch the [opening statements here](#)

MEPs expressed shock at the images of the massacre in the Ukrainian town of Bucha, with several calling Vladimir Putin a war criminal and demanding he be tried at an international criminal court. In parallel, many MEPs argued for more support for Ukraine, including both money and weapons.

You can watch political group [leaders’ interventions here](#)

MEPs welcomed the fifth EU sanctions package presented on 5 April, but all speakers demanded the EU go further, with several proposing an immediate oil embargo. MEPs called for a complete ban on the use by Russian banks of the SWIFT system and bringing a wider group of oligarchs under the EU’s sanctions regime.

Several speakers warned that the surge in energy prices is affecting each member state differently and some of them dramatically so. They called for assistance for member states to ease their burden.

You can watch the [full debate here](#)

Further information

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