

## MEP McAllister: We will support Ukraine for as long as it takes

The war in Ukraine reminds us of the darkest chapters of European history, says David McAllister, the chair of Parliament's foreign affairs committee.



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David McAllister (EPP, Germany) is the chair of Parliament's foreign affairs committee. [Watch the full interview on Parliament's Youtube channel](#) to find out his views on a potential international tribunal, the decision to send tanks to Ukraine and the possibility of a ceasefire, marking the first year of Russia's war in Ukraine. Below you can already read some extracts.

**We're now almost one year into this war. Did you think it was going to last this long?**

I guess every one of us was totally shocked on 24 February when the fully-fledged Russian invasion of Ukraine began, or as people in Ukraine would say "the second stage of the war", which began in 2014. I guess nobody would have predicted this outcome. What we have seen is that the Ukrainians have been tremendously brave in defending their country, their freedom, their liberty. They are not only defending their own country, but defending European values.

## **How would you say that this war has changed global geopolitics and Europe in particular?**

War has come back to our continent. This is a military escalation, a fully-fledged war, which a lot of people would have considered as unimaginable. This is not only a war of the largest country in Europe, the Russian Federation, against the second-largest country by size, Ukraine, this is ... a brutal, violent attack on European peace and security. We have to be very clear in condemning the actions of the Russian Federation and of Mr Putin who is a dictator and at the helm of a terrorist regime.

## **Would you say that the European Union was naive about Russia and Putin?**

Well, looking back you always know what could have been done better. I think we saw in recent years that some of our member states were too dependent on Russian energy imports. This has been corrected. The 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea should have been a real warning signal that the man in the Kremlin has a plan, and this plan has been announced through a number of interviews and speeches throughout the last 10-15 years.

Mr Putin and his entourage have this "spheres of interest concept" of the 19th or 20th century that everything that used to be the Russian empire until 1917 or the Soviet Union until 1991-92 is obviously in the Russian sphere of influence. That is totally bizarre. That is why, if we support Ukraine now, it's also about giving a clear signal to the Russian dictator that this shouldn't happen again.

## **The Parliament has called for a war crimes tribunal to prosecute Russia's actions in Ukraine. What does it take for such a tribunal to become reality?**

What we have witnessed in Ukraine reminds us of the darkest chapters of European history. We have seen outrageous war crimes. It is so shocking what the Russian forces have done - to kill civilians, to rape women, to torture innocent people. These are war crimes and the people responsible for this are war criminals.

There's only one place for war criminals in the end; to be held to account in front of an international war crimes tribunal. That's why the European Parliament is very much in favour, like many national parliaments, of a special tribunal for the war crimes committed by the

Russian armed forces in Ukraine. It's very important that we document carefully all the war crimes... I pray that one day Mr Putin and others will be held to account.

**Europeans are still supportive of Ukraine, but they're increasingly worried about the impact on their daily lives, especially the rise in energy prices. How long will the EU be able to continue supporting in Ukraine?**

Of course, this war is affecting citizens in the EU: the rising energy prices you mentioned, the inflation rate and other things, but compared to the burden of the brave Ukrainian people with millions of mothers and children being forced to leave the country, where men have to fight at the frontline against the Russian invaders... Compared to Ukraine, it's a rather soft burden we have to share.

It is remarkable how great the unity is among Western societies. My impression is that EU citizens know very well that if the Russian dictator succeeds in Ukraine, that will not be the end. He has announced that he will target other countries. Think of Moldova or Georgia, two countries who "dared" to have a pro-European, Euro-Atlantic integration policy. The Russian federation is a dangerous country. It's a dangerous regime. It's a heavily armed nuclear power. The big challenge for us in Europe will be how to tackle the Russian Federation as long as somebody like Mr Putin is responsible in the Kremlin. That will be the big challenge and is why we need to remain united.

**So the support will continue for as long as it takes?**

We will support Ukraine for as long as it takes. And in the end, war will come to an end. For a war to come to an end, ceasefire negotiations are the first step. The Russian Federation is talking about the necessity of peace and ceasefire and on then sending more and more troops to the frontline. They are shelling Ukrainian cities. They are attacking civilian infrastructure.

I fully understand that the Ukrainian leadership does not trust the Russian leadership. That's why we will continue to support Ukraine in their defence against this barbaric war of aggression by the Russian Federation. And when the conditions are there, then a ceasefire can happen, and then this might lead to peace. I pray that there will be peace, but it has to be a peace that is not a Russian dictated peace.