
Ukraine: the EU “most firmly” condemns Russian attack. Today, emergency meetings with EU Parliament and EU Council, NATO and G7

“We condemn this barbaric attack and the cynical arguments to justify it. President Putin is responsible for taking war back to Europe”. Very harsh words in front of the press from the president of the EU Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, this morning to react to the attack launched by Russian forces on Ukrainian territory in the night. These are “dark hours”, Von der Leyen says, but “the European Union is united with Ukraine and its people”, she reassured. With this “unprecedented aggression” against a sovereign and independent country, “Russia’s target is not Donbass, it is not just Ukraine, it is stability in Europe and the whole international rule-based order”. The EU will respond with a second set of “massive, targeted” sanctions, Von der Leyen mentioned, to hit strategic sectors of Russian economy, “by blocking their access to technology and markets. We will weaken the economic base of Russia and its capacity to modernise, we will freeze Russian assets in the EU, and we will block access of Russian banks to the European financial market”. “We know that millions of Russians do not want this war”, the president went on, and instead Putin “is trying to turn the clock back to the time of the Russian Empire”. What is at stake here is the future of the Russian people. “We will not let president Putin demolish the security architecture that has given Europe peace and stability in the last few decades”. Putin “should not underestimate the determination and strength of our democracies”. Next to the president, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, who defined the attack as “not only the greatest breach of international law, but an attack on the basic principle of human coexistence. Unknown consequences are looming ahead”. Today, Borrell will be working with the international community to respond in one voice to such behaviour and put Russia in “unprecedented isolation”. “We remain united in saying that there is no room for violence and destruction to get political victories”. Early in the morning, the president of the EU Council, Charles Michel, with president Von der Leyen, had already issued a statement, condemning “most firmly Russia’s unprecedented military attack on Ukraine”. With its “unprovoked and unjustified military attack”, Russia “is seriously breaching international law and undermining European and global security and stability”. Europe is asking Russia to “immediately cease the hostilities, withdraw its military from Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine’s territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence”. “We deplore the loss of human lives and human suffering”, the European leaders go on and state that the EU is willing “to urgently provide a response to humanitarian emergencies”, as well as financially and politically supporting Ukraine. A special meeting of the European Council has been planned for this afternoon to discuss the crisis and the further restrictive measures which the EU commission is working at right now. Meetings have also been planned for this afternoon with NATO and with the G7 leaders. Earlier this morning, an emergency meeting was chaired by the president of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, with the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament and with the presidents of the EU Council and EU Commission. In a tweet, Metsola too condemned “the unprovoked and unjustified attack”, which “Kremlin will be held responsible for”.

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