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- Ukraine – European Union
- Foreign and Defense Policy of Ukraine
- The course of the Russian-Ukrainian war

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Ukraine – European Union

- *THEME ANALYSIS: The 19th EU package: will it force Russia to agree to a truce?*

Photo: Getty Images

The European Union has extended sanctions against Russia for another year for its 'hybrid activities.' The EU Council has decided to maintain individual restrictive measures until 9 October 2026, according to the institution's press service. The sanctions apply to 47 individuals and 15 legal entities involved in Russia's destabilising activities abroad. Their assets remain frozen, and EU citizens and companies are prohibited from providing them with any financial support. In addition, these individuals are prohibited from entering and transiting through the territory of the European Union.

The EU Council explained that the decision is related to Moscow's ongoing hybrid operations, in particular interference in the European information space, cyberattacks and acts of sabotage. The sanctions regime against Russia, aimed at countering hybrid threats, has been in place since October 2024. It has been expanded several times, including in May 2025, when financial sponsors of destabilising activities were subject to restrictions and it became possible to block Russian media licences.

Meanwhile, the EU is preparing a 19th package of sanctions against Russia, which is currently being considered by member states. The European Commission has proposed new restrictions in the energy, finance and military technology sectors, including a complete ban on transactions for Rosneft and Gazprom Neft and the freezing of assets of a number of other companies.

However, Slovakia has raised objections to some of the package's provisions related to energy and the automotive market. According to EU sources, certain member states have their own comments, so discussions are ongoing.

According to a number of sources, Austria insists that the 19th package of sanctions

against Russia include a clause on compensation for Raiffeisen Bank International (RBI) for the fine imposed on it in Russia. Diplomatic sources told Reuters that Vienna is also demanding the unblocking of shares in the Strabag construction group worth around €2 billion. These shares were previously recognised as assets of Russian businessman Oleg Deripaska, who is under EU sanctions.

The basis for these demands was a Russian court ruling that Raiffeisen Bank had to pay two billion euros in a lawsuit filed by Rasperia, a company previously associated with Deripaska. The court allowed the bank to receive a stake in Strabag in lieu of debt, but it is impossible to enforce this decision because the securities are frozen under EU sanctions. Deripaska was added to the sanctions list in 2022 for supporting the Russian defence industry after the start of the invasion of Ukraine.

Austria's proposal has been sharply criticised by some EU member states. One diplomat noted: ‘It would be an extremely questionable signal. Raiffeisen should have left the Russian market, but has not done so yet — thanks in particular to the support of Germany and Austria.’ RBI remains the largest Western bank still operating in Russia, including servicing energy transactions. [1]

The Vienna initiative is considered controversial. Critics fear that agreeing to such a scheme would effectively legitimise Russian courts that rule on the confiscation of Western assets in response to sanctions and set a dangerous precedent for appealing them. One diplomat emphasised: ‘If we go down this path, we could unblock a lot of Russian assets — and that contradicts the very logic of sanctions policy.’

On 26 September 2025, German Federal Chancellor Friedrich Merz (CDU) publicly supported for the first time the EU's plan to use the frozen assets of the Russian Central Bank — not through confiscation, but in the form of an interest-free loan to Ukraine of up to €140 billion. In an article for the Financial Times, he stressed the need to create a ‘legally watertight mechanism’ that would comply with international law and formally leave ownership of the funds with Russia.

The proposed model envisages that the European Commission will issue interest-free bonds secured by these reserves, converting them into phased loans to Ukraine. Formally, Russia would remain the owner of the assets, but they would remain frozen until the Kremlin compensated Ukraine for the damage caused. And on 20 September 2025, the European Commission presented the 19th package of sanctions against Russia, which includes new measures in the energy, finance and military-industrial sectors.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen presented the main provisions of the package, including:

— a ban on imports of Russian liquefied natural gas (LNG) from 1 January 2027 (previously planned for 2028);

— the inclusion of another 118 vessels in the so-called ‘shadow fleet’ (more than 560 in total), a ban on their reinsurance, as well as on the reinsurance of Russian aircraft;

— a complete ban on all transactions involving Rosneft and Gazprom Neft (previous exemptions are cancelled);

[1] ЄС продовжив на рік санкції проти Росії за "гібридні дії".03.10.2025.https://suspilne.media/1130252-es-prodovziv-na-rik-sankcii-proti-rosii-za-gibridni-dii/

— a ban on investments in Russian special economic zones related to the military-industrial complex, and the possible extension of sanctions to ports outside Russia that are used for transshipment of weapons or the ‘shadow fleet’;

— a ban on transactions with cryptocurrency platforms, as well as the provision of crypto services to Russians;

— extension of sanctions to the MIR payment system and the Fast Payment System;

— restrictions on access to the EU capital market for new Russian banks and their operations in third countries;

— strengthening controls on exports of chemicals, metals, ores, salts and dual-use goods;

— extending bans on exports of technologies related to geoinformation systems, artificial intelligence and high-performance computing;

— sanctions against 45 organisations in Russia, China, India and other countries that cooperate with the Russian military-industrial complex;

— restrictions on individuals involved in the abduction and forced Russification of Ukrainian children;

— new restrictions on tourism to Russia.

There are currently no direct provisions regarding the tightening of visa policy.[2]

The procedure for adopting sanctions is as follows: following a proposal by the President of the European Commission, the draft is prepared by the Commission and the High Representative, discussed in EU Council working groups, then approved by ambassadors (COREPER II) and the Council of Foreign Ministers. The decision is taken unanimously and, after legal and linguistic verification, is published in the Official Journal of the EU. A ban on energy imports can be adopted by a qualified majority, while other sanctions require unanimity.

The European Commission also seeks to comply with the US president's call to stop purchasing Russian energy. In the first half of 2025, EU countries imported LNG from Russia worth €4.5 billion. The Commission proposes to reduce existing contracts a year earlier, by mid-2026. At the same time, Hungary and Slovakia will retain an exemption and will be able to receive Russian gas via the TurkStream pipeline for another two and a half years.

Despite this, **there are no signs of a real reduction in these countries' energy dependence**: According to data from the CREA analytical centre, in 2024, Russian oil accounted for 86% of Hungary's imports and around 90% of Slovakia's. Although these countries officially cite geographical and technical constraints, experts believe that this is not true: as early as 2019, half of Hungary's supplies came from alternative sources, and oil refineries successfully processed them.

At the end of August 2025, supplies via the Druzhba pipeline were temporarily halted due to attacks by Ukrainian drones, prompting a sharp reaction from Budapest and Bratislava.

[2] Санкционный пакет ЕС № 19.03.10.2025.https://www.cisg.info/sanctions-eu-package.php?id=19

Despite this, the economy ministers of both countries have declared their readiness for gradual diversification if the stability of supplies is maintained.

Ursula von der Leyen reiterated her support for the idea of a reparations loan to Ukraine against frozen Russian assets, stressing: ‘The loan will only need to be repaid if Russia pays reparations after peace is achieved. This is its war, and it is the aggressor that must pay.’ The finance ministers of Germany, Spain and other EU countries also spoke in favour of more active use of these funds. Currently, the EU only allocates interest from the placement of assets, but Spain, for example, has already announced its intention to reduce imports of Russian LNG, despite remaining one of its largest consumers in the EU.

At the same time, ***Although the EU continues to pursue a policy of increasing pressure on Russia, there is still no unity within Europe and no full understanding of the need for tough economic restrictions on the aggressor.*** **Constant concessions to Russian oligarchs and the desire for quick profits on the part of their Russian partners preserve Moscow's leverage, which makes such economic restrictions temporary and, therefore, ineffective in influencing their desire to continue the war.**

- *THEME ANALYSIS: Trump's change of position on the Russian-Ukrainian war: rhetoric or a reorientation of US foreign policy?*

Source: AP

US President Donald Trump has unexpectedly changed his rhetoric regarding Ukraine's chances of regaining territory within its internationally recognised borders. After speaking at the UN General Assembly and meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in New York on 23 September 2025, Trump wrote on Truth Social that Ukraine "**may regain all territories, and possibly even more**He noted that he 'fully understood the military and economic situation in Ukraine and Russia' and believes that ***with the support of the EU, Ukraine is capable of restoring its original borders.*** In his opinion, Russia, which has been at war for more than three years, has been unable to achieve significant success in a war that 'a real military force should have won in a week.'

During a meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron, Trump reiterated that Russia may be a 'paper tiger,' but acknowledged that the war would continue for a long time. Volodymyr Zelensky called Trump's statements a 'positive signal' and expressed hope that the United States would remain with Ukraine until the end of the war. He also noted that the current conversation with Trump was the 'most comprehensive' of all previous ones, and that their relationship had improved. The White House quoted Trump as saying that Zelensky "**a brave man who fights fiercely**".[3]

The reaction of Ukrainian opposition politicians to Trump's words was mostly restrained. Oleksiy Goncharenko, a member of the European Solidarity party, believes that Trump is

[3] Зустріч у Нью-Йорку і зміна риторики Трампа. Головне з переговорів за тиждень.27.09.2025.https://www.dw.com/uk/zmina-ritoriki-trampa-sodo-vijni-rf-ak-reaguut-v-ukraini/a-74121838

effectively shifting responsibility for the war onto the EU, while Volodymyr Ariev stressed that a real change in position is only possible if military aid and sanctions are increased. Yaroslav Zheleznyak, a member of the Voice party, said that Trump's words change nothing, while Danylo Getmantsev, a member of the Servant of the People party, noted that even Trump is no longer confident that the war will end quickly.

Experts have offered different explanations for Trump's change in rhetoric. In particular, Dmytro Levus from the Ukrainian Meridian Centre believes that this is the result of systematic diplomatic work by Ukraine and its partners, as well as Trump's disappointment with the Kremlin's behaviour. Oleksandr Kraiev from Ukrainian Prism suggests that Trump is simply repeating what he has heard at meetings, trying to maintain a tone that is pleasant for his interlocutors. Meanwhile, military officer and political strategist Taras Berezovets is convinced that Trump's new statements are more related to the American strategy towards China than to Ukraine. In his opinion, the US president is raising the stakes in the geopolitical game, and therefore his assessment of the situation may change again. Political strategist Taras Zagorodniy believes that this change is not accidental and is related to a number of factors that influence the US president. According to him, it is under Trump that Ukraine has a real chance to restore its 1991 borders, as there are fundamental differences between him and Putin in the oil and gas sector. The visits of Special Representative Keith Kellogg to Kyiv also had an impact: after them, Trump was informed that Russia is weaker than previously thought and is losing the war. Ukraine's systematic attacks on Russia's energy infrastructure only confirmed its strategic advantage, which is a key factor for the US. Zagorodniy also recalled that Trump is under pressure from his Republican colleagues ahead of the midterm elections to Congress — without foreign policy successes, their support may decline. A victory for Ukraine would be an important achievement for the party.

The key event of the week was the meeting between the US and Ukrainian presidents in New York on 23 September on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. After talks with Volodymyr Zelensky, Donald Trump said on Truth Social that Russia is a ‘paper tiger’ and that Ukraine has every chance of fully restoring its territory with the support of the European Union — and even ‘going further.’

The US president noted that, after familiarising himself in detail with the military and economic situation in Ukraine and Russia, he had come to the conclusion that: **With the support of the EU, Kyiv is capable of regaining its original borders.** He added that this would be possible thanks to time, patience and financial assistance from Europe and NATO. Trump also confirmed that the US would continue to supply weapons to the Alliance so that it could use them to support Ukraine.

Zelensky attributed Trump's change of position to information obtained during their personal meeting and said that the American president supported Ukraine's right to retaliate against Russian targets, including energy facilities. ‘We discussed several promising ideas for bringing peace closer — I hope they will yield quick results,’ Zelensky said.

Regarding sanctions and Russian energy resources, ***Trump previously emphasised that new US restrictions would only be possible after all EU countries — including Slovakia and Hungary — refused to purchase Russian oil and gas.*** Zelensky noted that Bratislava may agree to this provided that alternative supply routes appear, and Trump promised to talk to Viktor Orbán, expressing confidence that he would ‘stop buying Russian oil.’ **Hungary, however, through its Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó, responded that it had no plans to change its policy.** During his meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Trump also called on Ankara to reduce its purchases of Russian energy resources and hinted that Turkey's return to the F-35 production programme could be an incentive for this step.

The Kremlin reacted cautiously to Trump's rhetoric, although the number of provocations by Russian aircraft near NATO borders has increased sharply. Dmitry Peskov rejected comparisons with a ‘paper tiger,’ saying that Russia is a ‘bear, and there are no paper bears.’ US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, meeting with Sergey Lavrov, repeated Washington's demand that Moscow stop the killings and take concrete steps towards a peaceful settlement.

Analysts have different assessments of the motives behind Trump's sharp change in tone. According to The Wall Street Journal, American advisers briefed the president on the real situation on the front lines — Russia's minimal successes and the potential for a new Ukrainian counteroffensive, which requires US support. The Telegraph and Reuters suggest that ***Trump is effectively shifting responsibility for further aid to Ukraine onto Europe, seeking to distance Washington from the war.*** The New York Post, however, believes that his statement is part of a negotiating strategy aimed at putting pressure on Moscow, which has not yet shown any willingness to compromise.

Despite his loud statements, Trump's actual steps have been limited so far. At the same time, the decision to lift restrictions on the sale of American weapons to Ukraine remains an important positive signal for the future.

US President Donald Trump is becoming increasingly intolerant of Russia's behaviour. If Moscow refuses to negotiate a settlement to the war in Ukraine, the consequences for it will be very negative. This statement was made by Vice President Jay D. Vance, who stressed that the head of the White House is guided by the realities on the ground. According to Vance, the United States has held serious negotiations with both the Russians and the Ukrainians, but Trump is losing patience because he believes that the Russian side is not offering enough to end the fighting. Vance also stressed that the war is hurting everyone — Russia, Ukraine and the United States — and the American administration wants the killings to stop. Trump sees the economic indicators from Eastern Europe and knows about the numerous human losses on both sides. He has already called on Vladimir Putin to stop the killings and has said so to Zelensky; the administration is working towards peace every day. If the Russians do not show a willingness to negotiate, Vance believes this will have very bad consequences for them.

After meeting with Volodymyr Zelensky, Donald Trump said that Ukraine is capable of regaining all occupied territories and achieving victory. In his opinion, Russia is in economic trouble, so the advantage is now on Kyiv's side.

However, Valery Klochok, head of the Vezha Centre for Public Analytics, is convinced that Trump's statements do not indicate a radical change in his position. He continues to believe that Ukraine can win with the support of the EU and NATO, while distancing the US from direct involvement. Klochok emphasises that Trump is essentially shifting responsibility for further developments to Europe and Ukraine, demonstrating to Putin his willingness to support Kyiv ‘with the hands of Europe.’ According to the analyst, this position does not contradict Trump's desire to appear as a peacemaker and preserve his chance at the Nobel Peace Prize.[4] Політолог Ігор Рейтерович додає, що хоча нові заяви Трампа не означають суттєвого збільшення підтримки України, у риториці президента США для Києва є позитив. Його слова прозвучали на тлі успіхів ЗСУ й можуть бути елементом тиску на Москву. У Росії ж така позиція викликала різку реакцію — пропагандисти змінили тон, а Мєдвєдєв і Пєсков звинуватили Трампа у спотворенні реальності та «зраді»,

[4] Трамп не просто так заговорив про перемогу України: про що свідчать гучні заяви лідера США.25.09.2025.https://24tv.ua/geopolitics/zayava-trampa-pro-peremogu-ukrayini-chomu-lider-ssha-zminiv-ritoriku_n2921447

обурившись його оцінками стану російської економіки та твердженнями, що Росія є лише «паперовим тигром».

Political scientist Igor Reiterovich adds that although Trump's new statements do not mean a significant increase in support for Ukraine, there is a positive aspect for Kyiv in the US president's rhetoric. His words came against the backdrop of the Ukrainian Armed Forces' successes and may be an element of pressure on Moscow. In Russia, however, this position provoked a sharp reaction — propagandists changed their tone, and Medvedev and Peskov accused Trump of distorting reality and 'betrayal,' outraged by his assessments of the state of the Russian economy and his claims that Russia is only a 'paper tiger.'

President Volodymyr Zelensky explained why Donald Trump changed his rhetoric on the war in Ukraine. According to him, the main reason is that the American side now better understands the situation on the front lines and believes in Ukraine's ability to defend its territory. Distrust of Russian dictator Vladimir Putin also played an important role. As Zelensky noted, during meetings with leaders, including Trump, various aspects of the hostilities are discussed in detail. The president stressed that Ukraine should not show weakness in the face of threats from the Kremlin. 'If they threaten a blackout in Kyiv, they should know that there could also be a blackout in the Russian capital,' he said. Zelensky stressed that the change in the rhetoric of Western leaders is due to a deeper understanding of the real situation on the battlefield and a strengthening of faith in Ukraine. He cited the example of American systems, such as Delta, which track the movements of Russian troops. According to him, some short-term successes of the enemy are sometimes perceived as 'occupation,' although Ukrainian forces quickly regain control. Such details become clear only after a series of meetings and explanations that he regularly holds with international partners, including the US president.

The head of state also commented on Trump's statement about the possibility of liberating all Ukrainian territories, stressing that Washington remains committed to supporting Kyiv. If Moscow does not show a willingness to make peace, the United States is ready to increase its assistance to Ukraine, particularly in the field of armaments. At the same time, Zelensky reminded that Ukraine did not choose war and always strives for a diplomatic solution to the conflict. Earlier, the president noted that he was not surprised by Trump's new statements, as he is convinced that the American leader sincerely wants Ukraine to win the war with Russia.

Given how difficult it is to predict Trump's future actions, it is difficult to give an unambiguous assessment of his position today. **For Kyiv, this is a welcome sign, but not one that should be treated as decisive or even relied upon. It is necessary to continue the multifaceted course of consolidation, especially with European allies.**

Source: Army FM

Changes at the frontline

Trend: ***The Russian forces are conducting intensive offensive operations along the entire front line in thirteen main operational directions, with an average intensity of 160-190 assaults per day.***

The Russians are building up their forces in the direction of Kostiantynivka and other towns in Donetsk Oblast and are continuing their attempts to break through from Donetsk Oblast to Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.

The aim of the Russian troops' breakthrough is to attack settlements on the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast side and to try to attack and consolidate their positions there with the same small groups. The enemy is also trying to establish complete control over the settlements of Chasiv Yar and Toretsk, create conditions for blocking Kostiantynivka from the east, south and west, and encircle the Pokrovsk-Myrnohrad agglomeration.

During the summer offensive campaign, the Russian Federation planned to create a buffer zone in the Kharkiv and Sumy regions, capture the Pokrovsk agglomeration, reach the borders of the Donetsk region, and capture a number of territories in the Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk, and Kherson regions. However, thanks to the well-thought-out actions of Ukrainian commanders, the Russian Federation's plans were not realised.

Since the beginning of summer, the Russian Federation has switched to a new tactic of ‘a thousand cuts.’ It consists of the Russian Federation deploying small assault groups of 4-6 soldiers simultaneously in many areas. These groups are supposed to advance under the cover of the terrain and penetrate Ukrainian territory. "In fact, this situation unfolded in the

Dobropillia direction, where the enemy, with the forces of the 8th and 51st combined arms armies and the 68th army corps, began to implement this tactic in practice. After a series of heavy battles in the Pokrovsk direction, in the direction of the city of Myrnohrad and in the area of the village of Novoeekonomichne, the fighting gradually shifted north. The enemy, stretching our front and having a significant advantage in forces and means, mainly with the forces of the 51st Army brigades and advanced battalions, was able to advance in separate groups to a depth of 12 to 20 km," said Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine General Oleksandr Syrskyi.

The most tense situation remains in eastern Ukraine. There, the Russian forces have a significant advantage in terms of forces and resources and, with the support of aviation, artillery, and the widespread use of strike UAVs, are conducting high-intensity offensive operations in the Pokrovsk and Novopavlivka directions. More than a dozen attacks also took place in the Lyman and Toretsk directions.

In the Siverskyi direction, Russians constantly attacked the positions of the Defence Forces, but no confirmed progress was achieved.

In the Lyman direction, Russian troops advanced south of Zarichne (west of Lyman) during the month.

In the Kramatorsk direction, there were clashes with the Russian forces in the areas of Minkivka, Stupochky, Bila Hora, and towards Bondarne.

In the Toretsk direction, there were constant Russian assaults in the areas of Toretsk, Pleshchiivka, Shcherbinivka, Katerynivka, and Poltavka.

In the Pokrovsk direction, the Russian forces continued their offensive operation but failed to make any progress. Ukrainian defenders stopped numerous attacks in the areas of the settlements of Rodynske, Myrolyubivka, Promin, Zvirove, Kotlyne, Udachne, Novopidhorodne, Dachne, Novoukrainka, Sukhyi Yar, Shakhov, Molodetsk, and towards Pokrovsk, Toretsk, Novookonomichne, and Novopavlivka.

In the Novopavlivka direction, the Russian forces continued their advance in the areas of Filiya, Yalta, Piddubne, Tolstoy, Lisny, Oleksandrograd, Sichneve, Komyshuvakha, Novoivanivka, Zelenyi Hai, Maliivka, Novogeorgiivka, Zelenyi Pol, Zaporizhzhia, Obratne, Olgivske, and Poltavka.

In the Velykomykhailivka direction, Russian troops continued their offensive operations but did not achieve any confirmed progress.

In the Prydniprovsk direction, Russian units repelled four Russian attacks towards the Antonivsky Bridge.

Military aid

The US is cutting back on some weapons to Europe because of a shortage of Patriot missiles and changing priorities. The Pentagon said there's a shortage of some weapons and is blocking new requests from Europe.

Sweden announced a ‘winter’ support package for Ukraine worth almost €100 million.

EU. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced an agreement with Ukraine to allocate €2 billion for the production of drones.

Europe has provided Ukraine with an additional $1.5 billion to purchase American weapons as part of the PURL defence support initiative for Kyiv.

Russia: External and internal challenges

Trend: ***Russia opens a war front against NATO***

Russia is opening a new front and provoking NATO, which increases the risk of escalation in the region, writes The Economic Times. The incident with Russian drones violating Polish airspace prompted an immediate response from Warsaw: Polish and allied fighter jets were scrambled, and air defence systems were activated. According to the publication, **These actions by Moscow may indicate an attempt to create a new hotspot that could potentially draw NATO into direct confrontation with Russia.**

Poland currently occupies a key position on the eastern flank of the Alliance. The country is actively strengthening its defence capabilities: in 2024, it signed a contract to purchase 96 Boeing AH-64 Apache attack helicopters, conducts joint exercises with the United States, and is testing Israeli Spike NLOS missiles. This makes Warsaw not only an important link in European security, but also ***a potential target for Russian provocations.***

The publication reminds us that Article 5 of the Washington Treaty guarantees collective defence: an attack on one NATO member is considered an attack on all. However, its application is not automatic — a decision is made only after an official request from the affected country and consultations with allies. The response can be either diplomatic or military, depending on the political consensus within the Alliance. The Economic Times emphasises that although there are no official signs of the start of a global war, the situation remains tense. Any cross-border incident between Russia and NATO countries could be a catalyst for a wider conflict. On the night of 10 September, the Russian Armed Forces carried out a massive attack with Shahed-type drones, some of which violated Polish airspace. Polish troops were forced to shoot them down, and a Saab 340 AEW&C long-range radar detection aircraft was spotted in the sky near the border.

German political scientist Gerfried Münklers believes that Russia is opening a 'second front' in Europe by sending drones to Poland. In his opinion, **The aim of the operation was not only to test the response capabilities of Poland and NATO, but also to present Europe with a strategic dilemma: whether to support Ukraine or to concentrate resources on the Alliance's western flank.** Münkler emphasises that the order for the drone operation probably came from 'above' — from the Kremlin authorities — and had both military and political objectives. The pressure was to force NATO to quickly redeploy forces to the eastern flank, which could divert attention from Ukraine and limit assistance to Kyiv, particularly air defence systems. According to the Polish Operational Command, on the night of 9-10 September, Russian drones repeatedly violated Polish airspace, posing a real threat to the safety of citizens. Polish and allied aircraft shot down the drones, marking the first time the Polish Air Force had used weapons in its own airspace. In total, 21 Russian drones entered Polish airspace, as confirmed by Defence Minister Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz and the Presidential Bureau of International Policy.[5] According to Münkler, such actions by the

[5] Політолог: Путін відкриває другий фронт у Європі. 10.09.2025.https://www.pap.pl/ua/ukrainian/news/politolog-putin-vidkrivae-drugiy-front-u-evropi

Kremlin are aimed at tying up NATO forces, preventing them from acting in key areas of Ukraine, and generally weakening Western support for Kyiv.

Military expert Serhiy Grabsky believes that Russia is currently unable to wage war on two fronts, even while remaining in Ukraine. According to him, Russian forces are fully focused on the main direction, while secondary areas receive minimal cover. Previously, former US State Department Special Representative Kurt Volker noted that Russia's provocations against NATO countries are demonstrative in nature and reflect the Russian Federation's weakness in the war against Ukraine. If such systematic provocations continue, Western countries may consider more decisive measures, but at present there is no broad support for direct intervention.[6]

NATO claims that Russia is waging a hybrid war against the alliance and preparing for potential full-scale aggression. The increase in the number of incidents involving violations of NATO airspace has led to a sharp escalation of tensions in Europe and raised concerns about Russia's long-term intentions. Western experts note that Russia's economy is increasingly geared towards the needs of war, which at the same time increases its military potential. However, there are currently no clear signs of immediate preparations for an invasion, such as a mass troop deployment. Therefore, most assessments suggest that Russia would need years to prepare for a possible attack on Western Europe.

BBC military analysts have compiled key questions about Europe's readiness for a potential large-scale war and attempted to answer them. The reasons why the West fears a Russian attack on NATO are linked to the war in Ukraine, the Russian leadership's hostile attitude towards the Alliance and Russia's active militarisation. There are no obvious signs of an attack at this stage. Relations between Russia and the West have deteriorated since 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and engaged in hybrid warfare in Donbas.

The first major Russian Zapad exercises in Belarus in 2017 caused concern in the Baltic states and Poland, but no invasion took place at that time. It was only in February 2022 that the 'Allied Resolve' exercises preceded a real full-scale invasion of Ukraine. After the war began, Finland and Sweden joined NATO, changing the balance of power near Russia's borders and increasing the alliance's infrastructure presence. NATO expansion is perceived by the Kremlin as a serious threat; Ukraine's hypothetical accession to the alliance was one of the reasons for the invasion.

The Baltic states are a potential theatre of war due to their land borders with Russia and their geographical vulnerability, particularly through the Suwalki Corridor, which provides land supply routes. NATO is preparing to deter the enemy until the main forces arrive from deep within the continent.

A hybrid war against Europe is already underway: damage to submarine cables, drone incursions into Polish airspace, Russian MiG-31 flights over Estonia, and drones near airports in Denmark and Norway. NATO has launched Operation Baltic Guardian and Operation Eastern Guardian to protect critical infrastructure and airspace. If the conflict with Russia escalates into war, NATO's tactics will be radically different from those on the Ukrainian front: the focus will be on high-precision weapons, aviation and naval forces, with drones being used more for reconnaissance and target designation. ***The main strategy on the eastern flank is to hold back the enemy's advanced units and quickly transfer reinforcements.***

[6] Європа почала готуватися до можливої великої війни з Росією. 10 основних питань.03.10.2025.https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/articles/c9v72p8x84wo

NATO does not have a unified army, but the total strength of the alliance's forces in Europe is comparable to that of the Russian army. European countries are actively preparing mobilisation resources, including reserves and compulsory military training. For example, Finland and Poland have established effective reserves, while the Baltic states are reinstating conscription and strengthening their territorial defence. Medical services are preparing to receive thousands of wounded every day, adapting processes to new combat conditions, including injuries from kamikaze drones. The Bundeswehr is developing systems to stabilise the wounded directly on the front line and evacuate them by various means.

Nuclear weapons remain an important deterrent. In Europe, they are possessed by France, the United Kingdom and the United States (where tactical warheads are stored), while Russia stores its nuclear weapons in Russia and Belarus. Although the use of such weapons is less regulated, nuclear deterrence can prevent large-scale conflict.

Europe relies partly on the US, although it is increasingly developing its own defence capabilities and strategies within NATO and the EU. The economies and military-industrial complexes of NATO countries are gradually adapting: defence spending is increasing, new factories are being built, and the production of ammunition, artillery and air defence systems is growing. However, production capacities are not yet capable of ensuring mass production of weapons on the necessary scale, and modern threats, such as drones, require new solutions.

Despite the build-up of forces, the risk of a full-scale war between NATO and Russia in the near future is low. Russia must first end the war in Ukraine and accumulate sufficient forces for an invasion, which will take years. The Kremlin's hybrid actions indicate a complex situation on the Ukrainian front and limited opportunities for a simultaneous attack on Europe. However, this possibility remains as long as Ukraine holds out, serving as a shield for Europe. **However, as soon as Kyiv's sovereignty falls, there will be no borders for Russia, and its actions already show that Ukraine is only the beginning.**