Foreign policy, international relations and security analysis

INTERNATIONAL WEEKLY

№7 01.10.2026 - 31.10.2026

Topics:

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

FPRI Foreign Policy Research Institute

Content

UKRAINE - EUROPEAN UNION

Theme Analysis: The EU and the Future of Support for Ukraine

_____ *3*

FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY OF UKRAINE

Theme Analysis: The United States has abandoned its pretence of acting as a mediator and openly sided with Russia in the Russia–Ukraine war

_____ *7*

THE COURSE OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

Russia: External and internal challenges_____ *12*

WEEKLY ANALYSIS: The EU and the Future of Support for Ukraine



Photo: Pravda.com

Against the backdrop of a deteriorating security situation in both Ukraine and Russia, and a sharp shift in the United States' tone in its efforts to mediate the Russia–Ukraine war, sustained support from European partners remains crucial, above all, to Ukraine's defence capabilities and overall national strength. The following overview examines the main trends from late September to late October 2026.

From a financial perspective, the past month can be considered a successful one for the Ukrainian government. On 25 September, EU member states reached a political agreement to mobilise €6.6 billion for Ukraine through the European Peace Facility (EPF). Among other measures, the agreement envisaged €1 billion in military assistance and a further expansion of training for Ukrainian military personnel under the European Union Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine) in 2027[1]. In early October 2026, it was announced that all the mechanisms needed to finance Ukraine's budgetary and defence requirements through the end of the year were in place. On 2 October, the European Commission announced two further financial assistance measures for Ukraine: the disbursement of a €2.9 billion tranche under the Ukraine Facility and plans to disburse approximately €34 billion more, conditional on Ukraine implementing the agreed reforms[2]. These include, in particular, adopting legislation to tackle the shadow economy, increasing tax revenues, and further aligning Ukrainian legislation with the EU legal framework.Further steps were also taken to strengthen the broader framework for

[1]Боярчук, Т. (2026, 26 жовтня). *ЄС виділяє €4,7 млрд на відшкодування державам-членам за військову підтримку України*. LB.ua. https://lb.ua/world/2026/10/26/776358_ies_vidilyaie_47_mlrd.htmllb

[2]Голівець, Є. (2026, 23 вересня). *ЄС висунув Україні умови для отримання додаткових коштів – Bloomberg*. Главком. https://glavcom.ua/world/world-politics/jes-visunuv-ukrajini-umovi-dlja-otrimannja-dodatkovikh-koshtiv-bloomberg-1144666.html

financial assistance and lending. On 26 October, the Council of the European Union adopted eight decisions concerning the use of European Peace Facility funds to support Ukraine[3]. These provided for €4.7 billion to partially reimburse member states for the costs of military assistance supplied to Kyiv. An additional €230 million was allocated to EUMAM Ukraine. Taken together, these measures brought the total increase in the Facility's resources to €10.8 billion. Although most of these funds were not transferred directly to Ukraine, such decisions help sustain the long-term effectiveness of EU financial assistance mechanisms. With this objective in mind, the EU stepped up diplomatic pressure in late October on partners outside the Union, including Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom, to secure additional contributions to safeguard Ukraine's financial stability[4]. According to a European Commission spokesperson, EU member states account for 80% of the assistance pledged for the following year. Nevertheless, Ukraine's financing needs cannot be met without contributions from other partners.

European countries remain uncertain and divided over the provision of weapons to Ukraine. On the one hand, European partners recognise the urgent need to strengthen Ukraine's air defences, particularly amid intensified Russian missile and drone attacks and given the importance of effective air defence to the operation of Ukraine's water supply, heating and energy infrastructure during the winter. At a meeting of the "Group of Five"—Germany, France, Poland, Italy and the United Kingdom—on 26 October, participants announced their intention to bolster Ukraine's defence capabilities by supplying air defence systems and other critical equipment ahead of winter. German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius indicated that such an assistance package was ready, although no details of its contents were disclosed[5]. These commitments, however, remain at the declaratory level. In practice, individual cases reveal a lack of unity among European leaders on this issue. On 27 October, reports emerged that Italy was once again postponing the delivery of its thirteenth military assistance package, despite its having already been approved[6]. This marked the third delay since December 2025. Rome had previously indicated that implementation would proceed by October 2026, yet deliveries remained on hold. Although the package's contents have not been officially confirmed, *La Repubblica* reported that it included four batteries of SAMP/T NG surface-to-air missile systems, Aster 30 interceptor missiles and long-range radars[7]. Citing *La Repubblica*, *Forbes Ukraine* identified two possible reasons for the delay. The first was disagreement within the governing coalition: on 25 October, Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini, leader of the League party, stated that Italy could no longer afford to support Ukraine. The second was a decision to await the outcome of the US midterm elections. As of 28 October, the timing of the package's delivery remained unknown. Earlier, on 21 October, the Bulgarian government decided to invoke constructive abstention in relation to European Peace Facility measures, thereby opting out of further collective financing for the procurement of new lethal weapons for Ukraine[8]. This did not

[3]Романська, О. (2026, 26 жовтня). *Рада ЄС виділяє 4,7 млрд євро компенсації державам-членам за підтримку України*. Європейська правда.
https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2026/10/26/7248632/eurointegration.com
[4]Кулешов, Р. (2026, 28 жовтня). *Допомога Україні від країн поза Євросоюзом може скоротитися майже вп'ятеро — FT*. ZN.ua.
https://zn.ua/ukr/ECONOMICS/dopomoha-ukrajini-vid-krajin-poza-jevrosojuzu-mozhe-skorotitisja-majzhe-vpjatero-ft.html
[5]Худякова, О. (2026, 26 жовтня). *«Європ'ятірка» обіцяє посилити ППО України перед зимою*. DW.
https://www.dw.com/uk/nimeccina-francia-italia-britania-ta-polsa-posilat-ukrainu-zasobami-ppo-pered-zimou/a-79770227dw
[6]Тарасовський, Ю. (2026, 27 жовтня). *Італія вже втретє відкладає передачу Україні військової допомоги – La Repubblica*. Forbes Ukraine.
https://forbes.ua/news/italiia-vze-vtretje-vidkladaje-peredacu-ukrayini-viiskovu-dopomogu-la-repubblica-27102026-43289
[7] Ibid
[8]Kirilov, K. (2026, October 21). *Cabinet approves constructive abstention on EU lethal arms funding for Ukraine*. Bulgarian News Agency.
https://www.bta.bg/en/news/world/1229608-cabinet-approves-constructive-abstention-on-eu-lethal-arms-funding-for-ukraine

amount to withdrawal from the mechanism; rather, Bulgaria's mandatory contributions could be directed exclusively towards non-lethal assistance to Ukraine. Bulgaria also indicated that it would not block other EU member states from adopting the relevant decisions. Explaining its position, the Bulgarian government argued that ending hostilities near the country's borders served the national interest and that diplomatic engagement offered the best means of achieving this. Nevertheless, October also brought positive developments. Dutch Prime Minister Rob Jetten announced an additional €500 million military assistance package for Ukraine, including air defence equipment and drones intended to counter Russian aerial attacks. However, neither a detailed, officially confirmed list of the equipment nor a clear delivery timetable was available. The announcement nonetheless came as Ukraine prepared for winter, with infrastructure protection a central priority.

Progress in Ukraine's EU accession process also merits attention. According to analysis by the Razumkov Centre, in late September Ukraine was simultaneously working to implement reforms and unblock further accession negotiations. Its immediate priorities included adopting 44 government resolutions, securing parliamentary approval for 26 bills already submitted to the Verkhovna Rada, and submitting a further 17 bills as a matter of urgency. Despite these efforts, implementation of the reform commitments under the Ukraine Facility remained behind schedule[9]. Hungary's position further complicated the accession agenda, delaying the screening process and, consequently, the opening of additional negotiating clusters. On 7 October, however, Budapest agreed to lift its objections to the opening of the second and third clusters[10]. Cluster 2 covers the free movement of goods, services, workers and capital, as well as competition, financial services and company law. Cluster 3 encompasses taxation, economic and monetary policy, industry, digital transformation, employment, education, research and customs matters[11]. This agreement followed the Verkhovna Rada's adoption of amendments to education legislation sought by Hungary in connection with national minority rights. The clusters were formally opened at an intergovernmental conference in Luxembourg, as confirmed by the Council of the European Union and the European Commission[12]. Nevertheless, further challenges remained. Despite Ukrainian Foreign Minister Sybiha's remarks that relations with Hungary had been put on a sound footing, Budapest declined to endorse the screening results at the meeting of the Council's Working Party on Enlargement on 27 October[13]. The results concerned two clusters: Cluster 4, "Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity", covering transport, energy, trans-European networks, the environment and climate; and Cluster 5, "Resources, Agriculture and Cohesion", encompassing agricultural policy, fisheries, regional development and budgetary matters. Ukraine's Ambassador to Hungary, Fedir Shandor, nevertheless maintained that bilateral dialogue had not deteriorated and that describing Hungary's position as "blocking" was inappropriate. According to Budapest's official explanation, the Hungarian side had merely requested additional time to examine the matter[14].

---

[9]Центр Разумкова. (2026, 19 жовтня). *Україна: від війни до миру та відновлення (вересень 2026)*. https://razumkov.org.ua/assessments-uk/ukraina-vid-viiny-do-myru-ta-vidnovlennia-veresen-2026

[10]Vysotska, T., & Pohorilov, S. (2026, October 27). *Hungary still blocks opening of Ukraine's EU accession negotiating clusters 4 and 5*. Ukrainska Pravda. https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2026/10/27/8059933/pravda.com

[11]Directorate-General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood. (2026, October 13). *EU opens accession negotiations with Ukraine on internal market, competitiveness and inclusive growth*. European Commission. https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-opens-accession-negotiations-ukraine-internal-market-competitiveness-and-inclusive-growth-2026-10-13_en

[12]Council of the European Union. (2026, October 13). *Enlargement: EU opens accession negotiations with Ukraine on internal market, competitiveness and inclusive growth* [Press release]. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/10/13/enlargement-eu-opens-accession-negotiations-with-ukraine-on-internal-market-competitiveness-and-inclusive-growth/

[13]Vysotska, T., & Pohorilov, S. (2026, October 27). *Hungary still blocks opening of Ukraine's EU accession negotiating clusters 4 and 5*. Ukrainska Pravda. https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2026/10/27/8059933/pravda.com

[14]*Угорщина не блокувала відриття останніх двох переговорних кластерів про вступ України до ЄС — Шандор*. (2026, 28 жовтня). NV.

Uncertainty also surrounded the European Commission's roadmap for Ukraine. On 26 October, media reports suggested that it envisaged the completion of accession negotiations by the end of 2029[15]. The following day, however, *European Pravda*, citing its own EU sources, reported that no specific dates for concluding negotiations with Ukraine or Moldova were expected to be included. Another source cautioned that the approach could still change before the enlargement package was published. Its presentation was scheduled for 4 November[16]. Separately, according to a Ukrainian government statement available as of 28 October, Ukrainian representatives and European Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos discussed the implementation of interim benchmarks under Chapter 23, "Judiciary and Fundamental Rights", and Chapter 24, "Justice, Freedom and Security"[17]. The discussions focused on preparations for a positive assessment in the Interim Benchmark Assessment Report (IBAR). The government explained that confirmation of progress would signal the possibility of moving towards the provisional closure of negotiating chapters.

EU involvement in peace negotiations saw the fewest breakthroughs over the past month. Coordination among the EU, Ukraine and the United States in the negotiating process has effectively broken down following the US administration's conclusion of a separate diesel deal with the Kremlin, which derailed the round of talks in Miami in early October. Consequently, as of late October, the arrangements for the participation of EU member states and the United Kingdom in the next trilateral meetings, scheduled for November, remained unclear. Nevertheless, European institutions issued several statements outlining their position on the peace process. In the conclusions of its October meeting, the European Council reaffirmed that the path to peace in Ukraine could not be determined without Ukraine's participation. It also underscored the EU's agency and strategic autonomy: decisions on matters falling within the Union's competence must be taken by the EU alone[18]. The European Commission's Deputy Chief Spokesperson, Arianna Podestà, expressed the expectation that subsequent negotiations would take place in a multilateral format involving, among others, senior EU officials. According to *Euronews*[19], the Union's interests were to be represented jointly by the European Commission and the European Council[20].

Overall, the EU's commitment to comprehensive support for Ukraine, particularly in the financial, institutional and diplomatic spheres, remains unchanged. On the one hand, this makes the Union a reliable and predictable partner—a valuable foreign policy asset, especially amid the strategic uncertainty generated by the Trump administration's actions. On the other hand, crises of this kind call for greater unity and a more assertive, "hawkish" stance, particularly on arms deliveries and security guarantees. Yet, as of late October, the EU had shown no sign of taking such steps.

---

https://nv.ua/ukr/world/geopolitics/vstup-ukrajini-do-yes-posol-sprostuvav-blokuvannya-vidkrittya-klasteriv-ugorshchinoyu-50654273.html

[15]Костіна, І., & Мазуренко, А. (2026, 26 жовтня). *ЗМІ: «Дорожня карта» передбачає завершення переговорів про вступ України до ЄС в кінці 2029 року*. Українська правда. https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2026/10/26/8059751/pravda.com

[16]Висоцька, Т. (2026, 27 жовтня). *Джерело: у «дорожніх картах» ЄС для України та Молдови не буде дати завершення переговорів*. Європейська правда. https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2026/10/27/7248690/eurointegration.com

[17]Служба Віце-прем'єр-міністра України. (2026, 28 жовтня). *Всеволод Ченцов обговорив з Єврокомісаром Мартою Кос подальші кроки у переговорному процесі щодо вступу України до ЄС*. Урядовий портал. https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/vsevolod-chentsov-obhovoryv-z-ievrokomisarom-martoiu-kos-podalshi-kroky-u-perehovornomu-protsesi-shchodo-vstupu-ukrainy-do-ieskmu.gov

[18]European Council. (2026, October 16). *European Council meeting (15 and 16 October 2026) – Conclusions* (EUCO 14/26). https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/4tglqede/en-20261016-european-council-conclusions.pdf

[19]Liboreiro, J. (2026, October 23). *EU vies to expand role in Ukraine-Russia peace talks to influence US thinking*. Euronews. https://www.euronews.com/2026/10/23/eu-vies-to-expand-role-in-ukraine-russia-peace-talks-to-influence-us-thinking

[20]Укрінформ. (2026, 23 жовтня). *ЄС планує брати участь у наступному раунді перемовин про мир в Україні*. https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-polytics/4177470-es-planue-brati-ucast-u-nastupnomu-raundi-peremovin-pro-mir-v-ukraini.html

WEEKLY ANALYSIS: The United States has abandoned its pretence of acting as a mediator and openly sided with Russia in the Russia–Ukraine war



Photo: Hromadske

US diplomatic efforts to resolve the Russia–Ukraine war, which resumed with visits to Moscow and Kyiv by a delegation led by Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner in early September 2026, have taken on a qualitatively different character. On 9 October, while representatives of Ukraine, the United States, European countries and NATO were meeting in Miami to discuss possible avenues for de-escalation and an end to the war before the onset of winter, Donald Trump reached an agreement with Vladimir Putin by telephone to temporarily lift sanctions on Russian diesel fuel. In our assessment, this move had at least three significant consequences.

First, the disruption of the multilateral negotiating framework. Although Washington's diplomatic efforts between February 2025 and late September 2026 had failed to establish a common negotiating agenda, the diesel deal and the subsequent attacks on Ukraine and Volodymyr Zelenskyy signalled a marked shift towards the primacy of the US–Russia bilateral relationship. Ukraine, meanwhile, was relegated to a secondary role rather than treated as an active participant whose interests had to be taken into account. Significantly, Ukrainian representatives, along with the other delegations present in Miami, were informed of the agreement during the negotiating session itself[21]. Moreover, anonymous sources who participated in the talks claimed that, before news of the deal emerged, the US and Ukrainian delegations had reached an understanding on territorial issues. In exchange for freezing the front

[21] *Україна дізналася про рішення США щодо російського дизелю під час переговорів*. (2026, 11 жовтня). Новий Формат. https://newformat.info/news/ukraina-diznalasia-pro-rishennia-ssha-shchodo-rosijskoho-dyzeliu-pid-chas-perehovoriv/

line and effectively relinquishing control over the temporarily occupied territories, Ukraine would receive substantially stronger security guarantees, albeit without any provision for NATO membership. However, the Ukrainian delegation's early departure in response to the diesel deal rendered that understanding null and void[22]. Even if these accounts are accurate, the episode provides further evidence that US mediation has not been productive in advancing a resolution to the war, at least at this stage. In this context, Vladimir Putin's proposal for a trilateral meeting of the US, Russian and Chinese leaders on the sidelines of the APEC summit, scheduled for 17–19 November in Shenzhen, also warrants attention[23]. Although the meeting's precise agenda remains unclear, ending the war in Ukraine is certain to feature in the discussions. The White House has yet to confirm officially whether the US president will participate. Nevertheless, the prevailing view in expert circles is that he would enter such talks in a weaker position than either his Chinese or Russian counterpart. From the perspective of managing the Russia–Ukraine conflict, such a summit would be disastrous not only for Ukraine but also for the wider Euro-Atlantic community. The US administration, effectively acting as its representative, has not coordinated its position with NATO partners, EU member states or key allies in the Indo-Pacific. Furthermore, the Trump administration's policy of accommodating Russia while pressuring and criticising partners and allies would leave the US president with a weak negotiating hand at the proposed meeting. On all the principal flashpoints likely to be discussed in Shenzhen—the war in Ukraine, the war against Iran and the Taiwan issue—the United States has adopted an ambiguous position that, in some respects, overlaps with Russian and Chinese perspectives[24]. Washington's agreement to participate in this trilateral meeting would therefore risk substantially weakening US influence in both Europe and Asia while deepening strategic uncertainty in Europe, particularly amid reports of Russian plans to attack NATO member states[25].

Second, the Trump administration's approach to resolving the Russia–Ukraine war prioritises short-term gains over a sustainable peace. Since 9 October 2026, the administration has intensified pressure on Ukraine to make unilateral concessions to Russia. Trump has repeatedly portrayed Zelenskyy's alleged unwillingness to end the war as an obstacle to peace, implying that the Ukrainian president derives some benefit from its continuation[26]. This has included publicly questioning Zelenskyy's legitimacy through statements suggesting that Ukraine should elect a new leader[27]. These accusations have been accompanied by suggestions that peace negotiations could proceed without Zelenskyy's participation. Such suggestions encompass both separate agreements[28]—as reflected in Trump's assertion that Zelenskyy and Putin need not meet in the same room—and his calls for presidential elections in Ukraine[29].

---

[22] *Дизельна угода — Переговори у Маямі зіпсувало повідомлення про домовленість Трампа з Путіним*. (2026, 14 жовтня). NV. https://nv.ua/ukr/world/geopolitics/dizelna-ugoda-peregovori-u-mayami-zipsuvalo-povidomlennya-pro-domovlenist trampa-z-putinim-50650020.htmlnv

[23] Бондарєва, Х., & Балачук, І. (2026, 21 жовтня). *У Кремлі заявили, що Китай «вже готує» тристоронній саміт зі США і РФ*. Українська правда. https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2026/10/21/8059094/pravda.com

[24] Гурін, А. (2026, 23 жовтня). *«Двоє проти одного»: Трампу варто відмовитися від саміту з Сі та Путіним — Bloomberg*. ZN.ua. https://zn.ua/ukr/POLITICS/dvoje-proti-odnoho-trampu-varto-vidmovitisja-vid-samitu-z-si-ta-putinim-bloomberg.h tml

[25] *Российские гибридные атаки на страны Балтии могут привести к сепаратизму отдельных регионов и реализации «украинского сценария» 2014 года*. (б. д.). OBOZ.UA. https://news.obozrevatel.com/section-abroad/news-rosiyski-hibrydni-ataky-na-krayiny-baltiyi-mozhut-pryzvesty-do -separatyzmu-okremykh-rehioniv-i-realizatsiyi-ukrayinskoho-stsenariyu-2014-roku-18-10-2026.html

[26] Пикало, О. (2026, 19 жовтня). *«Він не хоче закінчувати цю війну». Трамп знову розкритикував Зеленського*. Forbes Ukraine. https://forbes.ua/news/vin-ne-xoce-zakincuvati-ciu-viinu-tramp-znovu-rozkritikuvav-zelenskogo-19102026-43066

[27] Reuters. (2026, October 24). *Key dates in the latest slump in US-Ukrainian ties*. U.S. News & World Report. https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2026-10-24/key-dates-in-the-latest-slump-in-us-ukrainian-ties

[28] Олійник, Т. (2026, 20 жовтня). *Трамп про угоду між Путіним та Зеленським: Їм не обов'язково бути в одній кімнаті*. Українська правда. https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2026/10/20/8058986/pravda.com

[29] Первак, Г. (2026, 16 жовтня). *Трамп, згадавши про атаки РФ, знову заявив, що Україні потрібні вибори*. Радіо Свобода. https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-tramp-vybory-viyna-ukrayina/33877673.htmlradiosvoboda

Alongside this rhetorical pressure to capitulate, the United States has taken practical steps to deliberately weaken Ukraine's defence capabilities. On 13 and 14 October, Kyiv came under ballistic missile attack, yet air raid warnings were not issued in time[30]. This was attributed to the absence of relevant US intelligence, despite Trump's claims that intelligence sharing was continuing[31]. A separate issue concerns disruptions to Starshield, the military-oriented Starlink service, which began on 14 October[32]. A speed restriction of 160 km/h was introduced, beyond which connectivity was lost and terminals shut down. As a result, interceptor drones could no longer be used to engage Russian jet-powered drones, while the use of drones to deliver provisions and other supplies to dangerous sectors of the front was also constrained[33]. The restrictions additionally reduced the potential range of strikes against strategic targets deep inside Russia. Although Zelenskyy announced on 24 October that the restrictions had finally been lifted[34], it remained unclear who had initiated a measure so damaging to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Some reports attributed it to an agreement between Elon Musk and White House representatives; others suggested that Musk had acted independently. Regardless of its origins, the measure clearly favoured the Kremlin, coinciding both with US pressure on Ukraine and with Russian battlefield setbacks, including those resulting from Operation Vivaldi, led by Brigadier General Andrii Biletskyi. Washington also continued to pressure Ukraine over its attacks on Russian oil refineries. This line of criticism emerged shortly after the diesel deal. Speaking to journalists on 10 October, Trump argued that the Ukrainian government's actions directly affected US interests, citing diesel shortages and the welfare of American farmers[35]. On 11 October, Washington subsequently proposed an "energy ceasefire", which, according to the US president, had secured the agreement of both sides[36]. Once again, however, Ukraine learned of the initiative only after the fact. Kyiv's response was clear: it supported de-escalation, but any such measures had to be reciprocal and backed by guarantees. In other words, Ukraine would cease strikes on Russian strategic facilities only if Russia stopped attacking Ukrainian energy infrastructure. Although Ukraine accepted the US initiative and observed the terms of the ceasefire, the Kremlin nevertheless violated it[37]. Yet when Ukraine announced on 15 October that it would resume its campaign against Russian oil refineries, the White House directed its criticism not at Russia—which carried out 76 strikes against Ukraine's electricity, oil and gas infrastructure[38] in the week following the ceasefire announcement—but once again at Zelenskyy

---

[30]Гамерська, І., & Лєліч, М. (2026, 13 жовтня). *«Поки не знаємо, чи це тиск»: джерело у владі про відсутність розвідданих по балістиці*. РБК-Україна. https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/poki-znaemo-chi-tse-tisk-dzherelo-vladi-vidsutnist-1791924282.html

[31]Бджола, О. (2026, 13 жовтня). *Трамп пояснив ситуацію з наданням розвідданих Україні*. РБК-Україна. https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/tramp-poyasniv-situatsiyu-nadannyam-rozviddanih-1791907770.html

[32]Подвишенна, Д. (2026, 15 жовтня). *Starlink в Україні обмежили — наскільки це погано для нас і що робити, якщо це повториться*. DOU. https://dou.ua/lenta/articles/starlink-starshield-was-disconnected/dou

[33]Рожик, С. (2026, 17 жовтня). *Зеленський сказав, у чому проблема вимкнення StarLink*. 24 Канал. https://24tv.ua/sogodni-nashi-perehoplyuvachi-ne-pratsyuyut-zelenskiy-skazav_n3162473

[34]Погорілов, С. (2026, 24 жовтня). *Зеленський підтвердив відновлення роботи Starlink/Starshield: Зараз швидкість, як потрібно нам*. Українська правда. https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2026/10/24/8059550/pravda.com

[35]Fenbert, A. (2026, October 10). *'He better damn well stop' — Trump slams Zelensky for attacking Russian refineries, says Ukraine should get 'new president'*. The Kyiv Independent. https://kyivindependent.com/he-better-damn-well-stop-trump-slams-zelensky-for-attacking-russian-refineries-says-ukraine-should-get-new-president/

[36]Служба новин. (2026, 11 жовтня). *Трамп заявив про енергетичне перемир'я. Зеленський підтримує, але чекає деталей*. BBC News Україна. https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/articles/cmjrwylzlwwjo

[37]Романенко, В. (2026, 13 жовтня). *Зеленський: Україна дві доби не била по НПЗ в Росії. Кремль же не послухався Трампа*. Українська правда. https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2026/10/13/8057773/pravda.com

[38]Fenbert, A. (2026, October 19). *'I want this war end' — Trump defends pro-Russian policies in scathing diatribe against Zelensky*. The Kyiv Independent. https://kyivindependent.com/i-want-this-war-end-trump-defends-pro-russian-policies-in-scathing-diatribe-against-zelensky-2/kyivindependent

personally[39]. Russia also benefited from the Trump administration's failure to support Ukraine's proposals for mutually beneficial arrangements to halt strikes on strategic infrastructure[40]. Kyiv put forward two options: 1) A halt to strikes on Russian oil refineries in exchange for an end to attacks on Ukraine's electricity infrastructure; 2) A 30-day suspension of strikes on Russia's energy sector in exchange for US assistance in protecting Ukrainian airspace during that period, including the provision of Patriot interceptor missiles. Taken together, these developments provide grounds for concluding that Trump's approach to ending the Russia–Ukraine war displays a clear bias in Russia's favour. For Ukraine, the central danger is that its vital interests—preserving its sovereignty, territorial integrity and statehood—would be traded away for temporary gains for the US administration and the satisfaction of the Putin regime's demands.

Third, the diesel deal calls into question the integrity and effectiveness of the sanctions regime against Russia. On 10 October 2026, it emerged that Russia and the United States had reached an agreement to temporarily lift sanctions on Russian diesel exports, with the final details discussed by Putin and Trump during their telephone conversation on 9 October. Specifically, the agreement involved the issuance of General License No. 135 by the US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). The licence authorises, until 12:01 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time on 7 April 2027, transactions involving the sale, delivery, unloading and importation of Russian-origin diesel fuel, including imports into the United States, that would otherwise be prohibited under the relevant US sanctions provisions[41]. Western experts have questioned the scale and significance of the practical benefits for Washington. Edward Chow, an expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and David Kramer, executive director of the George W. Bush Institute, argue that the deal is primarily political, while its energy and economic benefits for the United States remain uncertain: potential Russian shipments to the United States could amount to only around 10% of total US diesel exports[42]. The Trump administration is thus seen as pursuing three objectives ahead of the congressional elections: 1) To "sell" voters on the administration's ability to improve conditions in the fuel market; 2) To shift responsibility for rising prices and costs onto another actor—in this case, the Ukrainian government; 3) To deflect attention from the Iran issue as a source of disruption in global fuel markets[43] [44]. These measures, however, are unlikely to help Republicans retain their congressional majority. As of 23 October, the *Cook Political Report* rated Democrats as favoured in exactly 218 House districts and Republicans in 198, with a further 17 classified as toss-ups. Cook's most likely projected range was 227–237 Democratic seats, which would place the party comfortably above the threshold required for a majority[45]. Furthermore, polling cited by *The Hill* on 23 October put Trump's job approval rating at 36% in the *New York Times*/Siena

---

[39]Golubkova, J. (2026, October 16). *Ukraine's resumption of strikes on Russian refineries is 'disgrace', Trump says*. Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/ukraines-resumption-strikes-russian-refineries-is-disgrace-trump-says-2026-10-16/

[40]Хмілевська, В. (2026, 20 жовтня). *Зеленський: Україна пропонувала два варіанти зупинки ударів по російських НПЗ — один відкинув Путін, а інший проігнорував Трамп*. ZN.ua. https://zn.ua/ukr/POLITICS/zelenskij-ukrajina-proponuvav-dva-varianti-zupinki-udariv-po-rosijskikh-npz-odin-vidkinuv-putin-inshij-proihnoruvav-tramp-.html

[41]Office of Foreign Assets Control. (2026, October 9). *Authorizing transactions related to the sale, delivery, offloading, and importation of diesel fuel of Russian Federation origin* (General License No. 135). U.S. Department of the Treasury. https://ofac.treasury.gov/media/937216/download?inlineofac.treasury

[42]Голос Америки. (2026, 12 жовтня). *Економічні вигоди сумнівні, політичні наслідки значні. Експерти про дизельну домовленість США та Росії*. https://www.holosameryky.com/a/8210512.htmlholosameryky

[43]Reuters. (2026, October 23). *Trump's diesel price relief efforts grow costlier as election nears*. https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/trumps-diesel-price-relief-efforts-grow-costlier-election-nears-2026-10-23/

[44]Godfrey, M. K. (2026, October 19). *Trump's Russian diesel deal, explained*. Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.cfr.org/articles/trumps-russian-diesel-deal-explained

[45]Chakraborty, S. (2026, October 23). *Cook Political Report shifts 19 House seats in Democrats' favor*. The Hill. https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/6167727-cook-political-report-democrats-19-house-seats/thehill

poll and 32% in the CNN poll[46]. Both outlets described these figures as record lows in their respective polling series. Public dissatisfaction concerned both the state of the economy and the country's overall direction. By contrast, the diesel deal poses a potential long-term threat to the resilience and effectiveness of sanctions as an instrument for constraining Russia. A senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) argues that the administration's latest decisions may represent its most significant attempt yet to begin dismantling the US sanctions architecture against Russia. The rationale is that threats of further sanctions lose credibility when Moscow repeatedly sees Washington choosing not to impose them. This, in turn, could reinforce Putin's calculation that the United States is growing weary of confrontation and of supporting Ukraine[47]. Stephen Sestanovich, an expert in Russian and Eurasian studies at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), describes the agreement as a shock to Ukraine, European governments and members of Congress who had expected stronger US pressure on Moscow. In his assessment, the diesel deal demonstrated Washington's willingness to begin rolling back sanctions unilaterally[48]. Maksym Gardus, communications manager at Razom We Stand, emphasises that other major purchasers of Russian energy, including India, China and Türkiye, could follow the US example and invoke similar justifications for continued purchases[49]. This would undermine the sanctions mechanism itself, which is intended to compel Russia to end its aggression by restricting the trade revenues available to finance its budget. Instead, ambiguity in the interpretation and application of sanctions—with the diesel deal setting a precedent—would facilitate the gradual restoration of Russia's economic strength.Matthias Matthijs, a senior fellow for European studies at CFR, also identifies a problem of allied coordination. For years, the United States urged European countries to reduce their reliance on Russian energy, yet it has now eased sanctions to permit diesel purchases without consulting Europe[50]. In his view, this indicates that domestic price concerns and electoral calculations have taken precedence over a common transatlantic strategy.

Thus, the Trump administration's current mediation efforts in the Russia–Ukraine war are not aimed at securing a lasting, sustainable and constructive peace. Rather, the trends outlined above reveal a clear bias towards one party to the conflict—Russia—at the expense of the interests of the other, smaller party, Ukraine. Moreover, the White House is prioritising short-term populist measures ahead of the elections over effective conflict management—a role the United States unilaterally assumed in early 2025. Amid this strategic uncertainty, the Ukrainian government should continue resisting Russian aggression in the areas where the Kremlin has been least successful: on the battlefield and through strikes against critical infrastructure behind Russian lines. As of late October 2026, incrementally weakening the adversary through sustained, protracted attrition represents Ukraine's most viable strategy.

.

[46] Там же

[47] *Trump sidelines sweeping Russia sanctions as GOP allies warn pressure on Putin is slipping*. WFIN. https://wfin.com/fox-political-news/trump-sidelines-sweeping-russia-sanctions-as-gop-allies-warn-pressure-on-putin-is-slipping/

[48] Godfrey, M. K. (2026, October 19). *Trump's Russian diesel deal, explained*. Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.cfr.org/articles/trumps-russian-diesel-deal-explainedcfr

[49] *Дизель спотикання. Експерт розповів, чим угода Трампа з Путіним загрожує Україні*. (2026, 15 жовтня). NV Бізнес. https://biz.nv.ua/ukr/markets/dizel-iz-rosiji-chim-ugoda-trampa-z-putinim-zagrozhuye-ukrajini-50650335.htmlbiz.nv

[50] Godfrey, M. K. (2026, October 19). *Trump's Russian diesel deal, explained*. Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.cfr.org/articles/trumps-russian-diesel-deal-explainedcfr

Operation Vivaldi and Its Implications for the Future Course of the Russia–Ukraine War



Photo: Rubryka

According to General Andrii Biletskyi, Operation Vivaldi, an operational-tactical operation, was effectively complete as of 20 October 2026. Official figures released by the Third Army Corps indicate that, by 14 October, Ukrainian forces had regained control of 277 km², liberated or cleared 16 settlements, inflicted approximately 8,000 casualties on Russian forces, including those killed and wounded, and taken around 250–270 prisoners[51]. Notably, most of the operation, which began in May 2026, unfolded under a media blackout. The information blackout was lifted only on 15 September, when Vivaldi was entering its final phase[52] [53]. This article examines the course of the operation and its implications for further Ukrainian advances along the front line.

The operation's tactics centred on several key elements. Third Army Corps forces systematically struck Russian command posts, depots, crossings, artillery, electronic warfare

[51]Відділ новин. (2026, 14 жовтня). *Операція «Вівальді» завершилась: які її підсумки і чого вона досягла*. BBC News Україна. https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/articles/cmgr8gekp84yo.ampbbc

[52]Stanovych, S. (2026, October 14). *Ukraine blocks Russia from outflanking its fortress cities in Donbas, retaking 277 square kilometers and hitting 8,000 Russian troops*. Euromaidan Press. https://euromaidanpress.com/2026/10/14/ukraine-blocks-russia-from-outflanking-its-fortress-cities-in-donbas-retaking-277-square-kilometers-and-hitting-8000-russian-troops/

[53]Відділ новин. (2026, 14 жовтня). *Операція «Вівальді» завершилась: які її підсумки і чого вона досягла*. BBC News Україна. https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/articles/cmgr8gekp84yo.ampbbc

assets and logistics before infantry units advanced[54]. To weaken fortified Russian positions, they conducted "middle-strike" attacks against targets up to approximately 200 km behind Russian lines, including ammunition depots, repair facilities and fuel installations in the temporarily occupied part of Luhansk Oblast. In parallel, small teams infiltrated behind Russian lines to disrupt resupply and block withdrawal routes, after which the main forces cleared the isolated positions[55]. Remotely operated systems were also used extensively to achieve the operation's objectives. Uncrewed ground vehicles, including modified BTR-60 armoured personnel carriers loaded with explosives, were deployed against fortifications and a command node near Nove and Katerynivka[56]. Heavy-lift drones also delivered ground robots more than 10 km behind Russian lines[57]. Notably, the operation achieved its objectives despite the loss of Starlink connectivity. Pre-established backup communications channels proved critical, enabling commanders to retain control of reconnaissance assets and uncrewed aerial vehicles[58].

The effectiveness of Operation Vivaldi is also reflected in the scale of Russian losses. According to information published in the media, more than 8,000 Russian personnel were killed or wounded, while approximately 270 were taken prisoner, including more than 20 officers, a battalion chief of staff and 13 reconnaissance platoon commanders[59]. Surrenders on this scale can be attributed not only to the effectiveness of individual combat missions but also to the breakdown of command and control, supply chains and morale within some Russian units. The Third Army Corps command reported an overall casualty ratio of approximately 7:1 in Ukraine's favour: wounded personnel accounted for most Ukrainian casualties, whereas fatalities predominated among Russian casualties. Regarding military equipment, Biletskyi reported that 3,800 assets of various types had been struck, including 1,800 artillery systems[60]. According to ArmyInform, 50 air defence assets and 68,000 uncrewed aerial vehicles were also destroyed[61]. The operation also substantially degraded the capabilities of Russia's 20th and 25th Combined Arms Armies and 1st Tank Army[62]. Biletskyi stated that **the 20th Army's 144th Motor Rifle Division had been so severely degraded that it had ceased to function as an organised fighting force**. The Institute for the Study of War (ISW)[63], meanwhile, assesses that Russia will

---

[54]Tuck, C. (2026, October 14). *Operation Vivaldi: Success of Ukraine's counteroffensive shows it has learned to manoeuvre on a drone-filled battlefield*. Yahoo News UK. https://uk.news.yahoo.com/operation-vivaldi-success-ukraine-counteroffensive-114452555.htmlnews.yahoo

[55]Terajima, A. (2026, October 22). *How Ukraine outmaneuvered Russian troops in Operation Vivaldi*. The Kyiv Independent. https://kyivindependent.com/inside-ukraines-secret-counteroffensive-in-heavily-fortified-donbas/

[56]The Third Army Corps. *Operation Vivaldi*. Retrieved October 30, 2026, from https://ab3.army/en/operations/vivaldi/ab3

[57]*Сили оборони звільнили ще два села на Донеччині під час операції «Вівальді»*. (2026, 20 вересня). Суспільне Донбас. https://suspilne.media/donbas/1407840-sili-oboroni-zvilnili-se-tri-sela-na-doneccini-pid-cas-operacii-vivaldi/

[58]The Third Army Corps. (n.d.). *Operation Vivaldi*. Retrieved October 30, 2026, from https://ab3.army/en/operations/vivaldi/ab3

[59]Горбань, В. (2026, 19 жовтня). *ЗСУ звільнили 277 км² на Лиманському напрямку: Білецький розкрив результати операції «Вівальді»*. 5 канал. https://www.5.ua/ukrayina/zsu-zvilnyly-277-km-na-lymanskomu-napriamku-biletskyi-rozkryv-rezultaty-operatsii-vivaldi-384981.html

[60]Сушкова, В. (2026, 19 жовтня). *Третій армійський корпус завершив операцію «Вівальді»: звільнено 277 км² на Лиманському напрямку, — Білецький*. Цензор.НЕТ. https://censor.net/ua/news/4029294/operatsiya-vivaldi-zavershena-zvilneno-277-kvadratnyh-km

[61]*Величезні втрати ворога, 270 полонених, зрив плану росіян: Андрій Білецький про результати операції «Вівальді»*. (2026, 19 жовтня). АрміяInform. https://armyinform.com.ua/2026/10/19/masshtabni-vtraty-voroga-270-polonenyh-zryv-planu-rf-andrij-bileczkyj-pro-rezultaty-operacziyi-%C2%ABvivaldi%C2%BB/

[62]Степанова, Т. (2026, 20 вересня). *Операція «Вівальді» набирає обертів. Білецький розповів про нові успіхи ЗСУ на Донеччині*. РБК-Україна. https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/operatsiya-vivaldi-nabirae-obertiv-biletskiy-1789893555.html

[63]Institute for the Study of War [@TheStudyofWar]. (2026, October 21). *Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 30, 2026: Operation Vivaldi and other Ukrainian counteroffensive efforts in the Oleksandrivka and Kupyansk* [Post]. X. https://x.com/TheStudyofWar/status/2112713284604289066x

have to restore the division's combat effectiveness before undertaking further major operations in the Lyman sector.

From a strategic perspective, the successful execution of Operation Vivaldi *enabled the Armed Forces of Ukraine to retain control of a critical section of the so-called "fortress belt"*. This comprises four key cities—Sloviansk, Kramatorsk, Druzhkivka and Kostiantynivka. Russian advances towards these cities through Lyman and Sviatohirsk from the north, and through Dobropillia from the southwest, would have threatened the rear lines of communication of the Ukrainian force grouping. This would have given Russian forces considerable leverage, potentially compelling a Ukrainian withdrawal without the need to capture the cities through direct assaults[64] [65]. According to the operation's command, the Russian offensive also threatened the Kharkiv–Sloviansk highway, a critical supply route for Ukrainian forces in the Donbas. The operation's success, however, enabled Ukrainian forces to drive Russian troops from their bridgehead, reducing their ability to physically sever this route[66]. Furthermore, the advance to the Chornyi Zherebets River shortened the front line and established a natural barrier against Russian forces. According to ISW, this allows Ukraine to concentrate its infantry more densely and employ artillery and drones more effectively. Any renewed large-scale Russian offensive towards Lyman would consequently require another river crossing, placing Russian forces in a highly vulnerable and disadvantageous position[67]. Beyond its measurable gains, the operation also created greater scope for subsequent manoeuvre. It inflicted substantial losses on Russian combat formations, forcing Moscow to divert considerable resources away from offensive operations towards committing reserves and recovering positions previously secured in 2025–2026. Even if Russia subsequently resumes its offensive, it will first have to replenish depleted units, restore logistics and re-establish a bridgehead. This delays the threat to Sloviansk and Kramatorsk and gives Ukraine additional time to strengthen its defences.

The operation's direct impact on the wider battlefield can be outlined as follows. **In the Lyman sector, Ukraine regained the initiative locally**: the Russian salient was reduced, though the forces holding it were not completely defeated, and Russian troops were pushed back by 15–17 km, bringing the front line closer to a natural defensive barrier[68]. **The operation thwarted Russia's attempt to consolidate gains achieved through infiltration into a secure operational bridgehead. Success in this sector also facilitated Ukrainian advances near Kupiansk**. Russia was compelled to redeploy elements of its 1st Tank Army, easing pressure in the Kupiansk-Vuzlovyi area. ISW also identified signs of Russian difficulties in reinforcing and resupplying forces near Kupiansk, linking these to the cascading effects of troop redeployments towards Lyman[69]. Nevertheless, ***Operation Vivaldi did not eliminate the threat from the south and southwest***. Russian forces continued to exert pressure around Kostiantynivka and Dobropillia. ISW, in particular, reported an ongoing threat to Kostiantynivka despite the failure of the northern axis of the Russian offensive. ***Thus, Ukraine's success near Lyman improved the overall defensive posture of the "fortress belt", but did not decisively settle the campaign for Donetsk Oblast***[70].

---

[64]Institute for the Study of War. (2026, October 20). *Russian offensive campaign assessment, October 20, 2026*. Critical Threats. https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-20-2026
[65]Institute for the Study of War. (2026, October 8). *Ukraine disrupts Russia's Donetsk offensive*. https://understandingwar.org/research/russia-ukraine/ukraine-disrupts-russias-donetsk-offensive/
[66]Відділ новин. (2026, 14 жовтня). *Операція «Вівальді» завершилась: які її підсумки і чого вона досягла*. BBC News Україна. https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/articles/cmgr8gekp84yo
[67]Institute for the Study of War. (2026, October 20). *Russian offensive campaign assessment, October 20, 2026*. Critical Threats. https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-20-2026
[68]Відділ новин. (2026, 14 жовтня). *Операція «Вівальді» завершилась: які її підсумки і чого вона досягла*. BBC News Україна. https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/articles/cmgr8gekp84yo
[69]Institute for the Study of War. (2026, October 20). *Russian offensive campaign assessment, October 20, 2026*. Critical Threats. https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-20-2026
[70]Institute for the Study of War. (2026, October 8). *Ukraine disrupts Russia's Donetsk offensive*. https://understandingwar.org/research/russia-ukraine/ukraine-disrupts-russias-donetsk-offensive/

ISW provides a detailed assessment of the extent to which Operation Vivaldi disrupted Russian military planning[71]. Before the operation, the Russian General Staff had considered three options for advancing deeper into Ukrainian territory: advancing through Lyman and Sviatohirsk to reach the rear of Sloviansk; 2) linking the northern and southwestern enveloping forces near Barvinkove; 3) applying simultaneous pressure from the east and south to tie down Ukrainian reserves. Following Operation Vivaldi, the first two options are no longer viable unless Russian forces recapture the positions they lost and restore the combat effectiveness of the 20th and 25th Combined Arms Armies. ISW assesses that the Russian command must either abandon the northern pincer or redeploy substantial forces from other sectors, thereby creating vulnerabilities elsewhere along the front. Looking ahead, ***potential Russian courses of action include: 1) intensifying frontal pressure on Sloviansk and Kramatorsk from the east; 2) maintaining their focus on the Dobropillia and Kostiantynivka sectors, where opportunities for flanking manoeuvres remain; 3) reverting to small-group infiltration and drone-based interdiction of Ukrainian supply lines rather than large-scale mechanised assaults***; 4) attempting another crossing of the Chornyi Zherebets River after assembling sufficient reserves.

Thus, the success of Operation Vivaldi marked a significant turning point in the fighting, although its effects were localised and qualitative rather than theatre-wide. The operation disrupted Russia's offensive campaign, neutralised the northern component of the threatened broad envelopment of the "fortress belt", and preserved critical supply routes, securing a more favourable defensive line along the Chornyi Zherebets River. ***At the same time, it did not alter Russia's numerical superiority in several sectors*** or eliminate pressure around Kostiantynivka and Dobropillia and east of Sloviansk. In other words, while **Ukraine succeeded in reshaping the front line to its advantage, Russia's overall superiority in personnel and resources remains a central challenge for the Armed Forces of Ukraine**.

Trend: ***The successful execution of Operation Vivaldi enabled the Armed Forces of Ukraine to seize the strategic initiative along a section of the front. Russian forces, however, are seeking to regain the upper hand***

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) analysed how the situation changed along key sectors of the front in October. Russian forces have still not completed the capture of Kostiantynivka, despite a campaign lasting more than a year. They first infiltrated the city in October 2025[72]. "Russian casualty figures and territorial losses are consistent with conditions on the battlefield, where **Russian forces have lost the initiative and offensive capability across substantial sections of the front**," ISW assesses. Using infiltration tactics, Russian forces captured 10 settlements covering a total area of 5.86 km². Ukrainian forces, meanwhile, liberated or cleared Russian sabotage teams from 11 settlements covering 3.24 km².

According to the analysts, Russian forces retain only a limited degree of initiative in the Dobropillia area of Donetsk Oblast. Ukrainian defence forces, meanwhile, have seized the initiative in the Kupiansk, Lyman and Oleksandrivka sectors and are contesting it in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast. ISW attributes Russia's continued initiative around Dobropillia to the substantial resources committed there and the intensity of its offensive operations. According to the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Russian forces have conducted an average of approximately 30 assaults per day in this sector since 1 August 2026. Their limited gains have also relied on infiltration missions, which, however, have not enabled them to establish control over territory. Against this backdrop, Russian forces have completed **preparations for**

[71]Там же

[72] Росія втратила ініціативу та наступальний потенціал і другий місяць поспіль втрачає більше територій, ніж захоплює — аналіз ISW. (2026, 2 листопада). *NV*. https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/operaciji-vivaldi-ta-veles-rosiya-vtratila-iniciativu-na-fronti-u-zhovtni-karti-isw-50655445.html

mechanised assaults in southern Ukraine and begun moving armoured vehicles into staging areas from which they intend to launch offensive operations. This follows a pause of several months in such attacks.

Meanwhile, ISW concludes that the sustained offensive around Dobropillia has not produced significant gains that would enable Russia to achieve its objective of capturing the Donbas fortress cities by spring 2027. The analysts argue that even the eventual capture of Dobropillia would serve little operational purpose in advancing towards other key cities in the region. Russian forces currently lack the manpower required to conduct large-scale offensive operations along the Oskil River in Kharkiv Oblast. ISW assesses that sustained Ukrainian pressure in these sectors will likely compel the Russian command to deploy additional forces to stabilise its existing front-line positions[73].

Russia also continued to redeploy personnel and mechanised units to the Huliaipole sector and western Zaporizhzhia Oblast as part of an operation envisaging an offensive towards Orikhiv and subsequently Zaporizhzhia. **Russian forces have concentrated substantial strength in the area and are attempting to outflank Orikhiv in order to advance towards Zaporizhzhia and sever critical Ukrainian supply routes**. At the same time, they continue attempts to advance along the Dnipro River. The Russian command seeks to bring its units closer to the outskirts of Zaporizhzhia, but Ukrainian defences around Orikhiv remain an obstacle. “To avoid a frontal assault on Orikhiv, the enemy is attempting to bypass it through Huliaipole on one side, while also continuing efforts to outflank the city on its own left flank by advancing along the Dnipro river channel.”

Consequently, **the Huliaipole sector** has become the most active area within the operational zone of the Southern Grouping of Forces. There, Ukrainian defence forces face one of the largest Russian force concentrations, comprising elements of several combined arms armies. An average of 10–20 combat engagements per day is recorded in this sector. Russian forces are attempting to advance towards the settlements of Rybne, Nove Zaporizhzhia, Rivne, Kosivtseve, Ternuvate, Verkhnia Tersa, Hirke, Charivne, Zaliznychne, Omelnyk, Novoselivka and Yehorivka.

Taking advantage of fog and longer hours of darkness, Russian forces are increasingly attempting to infiltrate gaps between Ukrainian positions. Units from two full-strength combined arms armies, alongside other Russian formations, are operating within a single Ukrainian corps’ area of responsibility. “Within the area of responsibility of just one corps, we are facing units from two full-strength combined arms armies, another understrength army—the 36th Combined Arms Army—as well as the 68th Army Corps, the 155th Naval Infantry Brigade and Russia’s 22nd Special Forces Brigade. This is an enormous concentration of forces and assets. Naturally, the enemy will seek to exploit its numerical superiority, turning it into a bloody advance through our defensive lines.”[74]

Russian forces have abandoned offensive operations along a broad front in favour of infiltration tactics. Using this approach, they captured 10 settlements covering a total area of 5.86 km². Ukrainian forces, however, liberated or cleared Russian sabotage teams from 11 settlements covering 3.24 km².

“In addition, the enemy periodically attempts small-group assaults supported by motorcycles and quad bikes. Russian forces should not expect to advance unopposed. Our units maintain fire control over enemy supply routes and systematically detect and strike their vehicles and personnel while they are still moving into position.”[75]

---

[73] Там же

[74] РФ намагається обійти Оріхів із флангів і наблизитися до Запоріжжя, — Польовий. https://ua.news/ua/war-vs-rf/rf-namagaietsia-obiiti-orikhiv-iz-flangiv-i-nablizitisia-do-zaporizhzhia-polovii

[75] Укрінформ. (2026, 22 жовтня). *Росіяни готуються відновити механізовані атаки на півдні після кількамісячної паузи — військові*. https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/4176957-rosiani-gotuutsa-vidnoviti-mehanizovani-ataki-na-pivdni-pisla-kilkamisacnoi-pauzi-vijskovi.html

During October:

- **In the Northern Slobozhanshchyna sector**, Russian forces attempted attacks near Bachivsk, Tovstodubove, Korenok, Ulanove and Korchakivka.
- **In the Southern Slobozhanshchyna sector**, Ukrainian units repelled Russian attacks near Ternova, Starytsia and Radkivka, as well as towards Zakharivka and Volokhivske.
- **In the Kupiansk sector**, Russian forces conducted no assault operations.
- **In the Lyman sector**, Russian attempts to advance were halted near Kopanky, Chervonyi Stav, Shyikivka, Lyman, Zarichne and Donetske.
- **In the Sloviansk sector**, Russian forces launched attacks near Ozerne, Yampil and Pyskunivka.
- **In the Kramatorsk sector**, Ukrainian troops repelled Russian attacks near Tykhonivka and Malynivka.
- **In the Huliaipole sector**, Russian attacks were repelled near Ternuvate, Dolynka, Hirke, Charivne and Yehorivka.
- **In the Orikhiv sector**, Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Pavlivka.
- **In the Volyn and Polissia sectors**, the situation remained largely unchanged. No signs of Russian offensive force concentrations were detected.

Military Assistance

The United Kingdom will supply Ukraine with an additional batch of Storm Shadow long-range missiles[76]. The British government has also announced a further £10 billion in financial support for Ukraine, equivalent to approximately €11.96 billion[77].

Finland will provide Ukraine with a new support package and expanded access to its satellite capabilities. In total, the two countries have signed seven agreements worth €300 million[78].

The European Union has allocated €2.86 billion to meet Ukraine's defence needs. According to the European Commission's press service, the funding will support the procurement of uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) and missiles, as well as urgent battlefield requirements[79].

France has delivered additional MICA air-to-air missiles and ammunition for Ukraine's Mirage 2000 fighter aircraft[80].

---

[76] Забазнова, Н. (2026a, 15 жовтня). *Велика Британія передасть Україні партію крилатих ракет Storm Shadow*. ZAXID.NET. https://zaxid.net/velika_britaniya_peredast_ukrayini_partiyu_krilatih_raket_storm_shadow_n1648027

[77] Прадід, Я. (2026a, 28 жовтня). *Велика Британія надасть Україні додаткову підтримку на майже 12 млрд євро*. ZAXID.NET. https://zaxid.net/velika_britaniya_nadast_ukrayini_dodatkovu_pidtrimku_na_mayzhe_12_mlrd_yevro_n1648938

[78] Прадід, Я. (2026d, 22 жовтня). *Фінляндія надасть 300 млн євро підтримки та розширить супутникові послуги для України*. ZAXID.NET. https://zaxid.net/finlyandiya_nadast_300_mln_yevro_pidtrimki_ta_rozshirit_suputnikovi_poslugi_dlya_ukrayini_n1648539

[79] Прадід, Я. (2026b, 14 жовтня). *Євросоюз перерахував Україні майже 3 млрд євро на оборонні потреби*. ZAXID.NET. https://zaxid.net/yevrosoyuz_pererahuvav_ukrayini_mayzhe_3_mlrd_yevro_na_oboronni_potrebi_n1647897

[80] Прадід, Я. (2026e, 25 вересня). *Франція передала Україні ракети MICA та боєприпаси для винищувачів Mirage 2000*. ZAXID.NET. https://zaxid.net/frantsiya_peredala_ukrayini_raketi_mica_ta_boyepripasi_dlya_vinishhuvachiv_mirage_2000_n164

NATO-backed arms deliveries to Ukraine under the Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List (PURL) mechanism, through which NATO countries finance purchases of US weapons, are continuing despite reports of US threats to suspend supplies[81].

Germany will provide Ukraine with a new assistance package worth more than €1.3 billion, equivalent to UAH 65.9 billion at the National Bank of Ukraine's exchange rate. The package includes weapons deliveries and support for Ukraine's energy sector ahead of winter[82].

Over the first eight months of 2026, **the largest percentage increases in assistance to Ukraine among the countries[83]** compared were recorded by **Italy**, whose contribution rose from €2.80 billion to €4.31 billion, an increase of 53.9%; **Slovenia**, from €0.13 billion to €0.19 billion, or 46.2%; **Ireland**, from €0.45 billion to €0.64 billion, or 42.2%; **Japan**, from €10.54 billion to €14.42 billion, or 36.8%; **Switzerland**, from €1.12 billion to €1.45 billion, or 29.5%; and **Norway**, from €8.92 billion to €11.53 billion, or 29%. **Sweden** increased its assistance by 27%, while Germany's contribution rose by 23%, from €25.07 billion to €30.84 billion.

Assistance from **EU institutions**—the European Commission and the European Council—increased by 18.7% over the first eight months of the year, from €84.05 billion to €99.77 billion. Two additional tranches of EU assistance were disbursed in October. On 7 October, the European Union provided €1.2 billion under the Ukraine Support Loan to address priority defence needs[84]. Earlier, on 2 October, the EU disbursed a further tranche of almost €3 billion under the Ukraine Facility[85].

The United Kingdom's assistance to Ukraine has increased by 18% this year.

Countries with modest or minimal increases in assistance

Over the first eight months of 2026, assistance from **Latvia** increased by 14.1%, **Luxembourg** by 11.8% and **Finland** by 10.5%. Contributions from **Lithuania** rose by 8.8%, while **Denmark's** increased by 7.2%. **Poland** and **Croatia** each increased their assistance to Ukraine by 5.7%. **France** and **Slovakia** recorded similar increases of 4.6% and 4.2%, respectively, while **Belgium**'s contribution rose by a slightly smaller 3.8%.

Cumulative **US assistance** to Ukraine from the start of Russia's full-scale invasion through the end of 2025 was estimated at €115.33 billion. Over the first eight months of 2026, this figure remained virtually unchanged, reaching €115.38 billion—an increase of just 0.04%. This can be attributed to the fact that the United States has not resumed direct arms supplies to Ukraine; instead, allies continue to purchase US weapons for the Armed Forces of Ukraine through the PURL initiative[86].

6551

[81] Прадід, Я. (2026c, 12 жовтня). *НАТО не припинило постачати американську зброю Україні попри погрози США*. ZAXID.NET. https://zaxid.net/nato_ne_pripinilo_postachati_amerikansku_zbroyu_ukrayini_popri_pogrozi_ssha_n1647719

[82] Забазнова, Н. (2026b, 4 жовтня). *Німеччина надасть Україні новий пакет підтримки на понад 1,3 млрд євро*. ZAXID.NET. https://zaxid.net/nimechchina_vidilit_ukrayini_noviy_paket_pidtrimka_na_ponad_13_mlrd_yevro_n1647116

[83] Які країни найбільше наростили обсяги допомоги Україні за вісім місяців 2026 року. https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2026/10/15/infografika/finansy/yaki-krayiny-najbilshe-narostyly-obsyahy-dopomohy-ukrayini-visim-misyacziv-2026-roku

[84] Слово і Діло. (2026, 7 жовтня). *Україна отримала новий транш від ЄС у розмірі 1,2 млрд євро*. https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2026/10/07/novyna/ekonomika/ukrayina-otrymala-novyj-transh-yes-rozmiri-12-mlrd-yevro

[85] Слово і Діло. (2026, 2 жовтня). *Україна отримала 2,9 млрд євро траншу від ЄС*. https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2026/10/02/novyna/ekonomika/ukrayina-otrymala-29-mlrd-yevro-transhu-yes

[86] Слово і Діло. (2026, 21 квітня). *Закупівля американської зброї для ЗСУ через PURL: скільки грошей внесли союзники* [Інфографіка]. https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2026/04/21/infografika/bezpeka/zakupivlya-amerykanskoyi-zbroyi-zsu-cherez-purl-skilky-hroshej-vnesly-soyuznyky

Assistance from **Estonia** and **Czechia** increased by less than 2%. The reported figures for **Romania**, **Portugal**, **Australia**, **Greece**, **Iceland**, **Türkiye**, **New Zealand**, **Hungary**, **Cyprus** and **Malta** remained unchanged from December 2025. In **South Korea**'s case, the figures appear to reflect a revision of aid allocations.