



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on October 15, 2023

## Calls for EU to Change Ukraine Policy as Bloc Doubts Beijing's Neutrality on Ukraine

The “totally corrupt” regime in Kiev, to which the EU has channeled billions of euros, has been benefiting at the expense of ordinary Ukrainians, various members of the European Parliament (MEPs) declared at an event on October 11 organized by the think-tank Voice of Europe.

“We must stop this tragicomedy for Europe, for Ukraine and for Russia. We must try to find a path to prosperity again, and the first step is peace,” MEP Thierry Mariani of the French National Rally (RN) party contended at the event, held in the central hall of the European Parliament in Brussels.



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“Ukraine must remain a bridge” between Russia and Europe, Mariani elaborated, mentioning that the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian conflict can be traced back to 2013, when the EU tried to pressure Kyiv to forfeit a free trade deal with Russia and sign the Association Agreement with Brussels. Such actions culminated in the Maidan demonstrations and the Western-backed coup in 2014.

Maximilian Kra of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) characterized Ukraine as “a beautiful country with very decent people.”

“I’m afraid that these decent people of Ukraine are now being sacrificed for the interests of the Kyiv elite,” who own millions of dollars in real estate in southern France, Kra said.

Moreover, Kra also articulated worries that the United States might ask the EU to contribute financially to the Ukraine conflict, now that Washington has to set aside funding for Israel owing to the escalating Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“That’s what I’m afraid of. And I can tell you that this is already happening. Because Germany has already promised \$1 billion to Ukraine, while the US will allocate only \$200 million,” he asserted.

Furthermore, Marcel de Graaff of the Dutch Forum for Democracy (FvD) insisted that Ukraine has to make peace with Russia as soon as possible.

“I speak very directly because they have already lost. They are now sacrificing people up to 70 years old at the front. They no longer have reserves. They are losing right now,” admitted de Graaff.

Additionally, de Graaff lambasted Ukraine for being “the most corrupt country in the world,” now receiving “tens of billions of euros” from the West.

“I heard that [Ukrainian President Volodymyr] Zelensky’s mother-in-law bought a villa in Egypt for several million dollars, and we are still wondering where our money is going. This is a totally corrupt civilization,” de Graaf declared.

One key difficulty, de Graaff singled out, is that Russia no longer trusts the West after former German



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and French leaders admitted recently that the Minsk Agreements were merely a plan to buy time for Kyiv to prepare for war with Moscow.

Kra indicated that Ukrainian opposition leader Viktor Medvedchuk had offered the German Bundestag a “smart” peace under Minsk II, a recommendation that entailed Donetsk and Lugansk region remaining part of Ukraine with broad autonomy.

“At the time, no one knew that Minsk II was a fake, as Merkel later admitted,” Kra added, referencing former German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s December 2022 revelation.

Henri Malos, president of Voice of Europe and host of the roundtable, also bemoaned the decline of the Minsk Agreements, which he said provided security and sovereignty for both Russia and Ukraine.

Meanwhile, on October 11, European Commission Vice President Margaritis Schinas insisted that Türkiye either openly proclaim its backing for NATO, the EU, and the “ethos of the West,” or align with Russia as well as other Muslim states and militant groups.

Referring to the recent violent conflict between Israel and Hamas fighters in Gaza, Schinas highlighted that all 27 EU member states backed Israel’s “right to defend itself” and condemned terrorism following a deadly Hamas attack on Israel on October 7.

Addressing Türkiye, Schinas demanded that the country must “choose which side of history it wants to be on,” hinting it could neither adopt a middle ground between world powers nor remain neutral.

“[Türkiye will be] with us — the European Union, NATO, our values, the ethos of the West — or with Moscow, Tehran, Hamas, and Hezbollah,” Schinas said, as [quoted](#) by Greek news outlet Ekathimerini, emphasizing that “the answer needs to be clear.”

Although Schinas did not provide specific details regarding what Ankara had to do to show its loyalty to the West, his remarks came in the wake of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s comments that Türkiye was open to broker peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

“Türkiye ... is ready for all kinds of mediation, including prisoner exchange, if the parties request it,” Erdoğan hitherto said after separate discussions with Israeli President Isaac Herzog and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Nevertheless, Ankara has vehemently disapproved of Israel’s policies toward the Palestinians in the past, with Erdoğan condemning Israel’s latest military operations in Gaza as “shameful” and “a massacre.”

Moscow has publicly called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and indicated that civilians were suffering on both sides. On October 12, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov reinforced calls to enforce past UN resolutions and set up a Palestinian state — typically known as the “two-state solution.”

“All of us had the same opinion ... that this confrontation must be stopped immediately, that the parties should respect international humanitarian law, prevent any terrorist actions and the indiscriminate use of force,” Lavrov said.

Regarding China, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in an interview with the *South China Morning Post* on October 12 that Beijing should put in more effort to persuade Kyiv and its Western supporters that it was not backing Moscow in the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian hostilities. Borrell also voiced skepticism that a neutral position on the Russo-Ukrainian conflict was possible.



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“Being neutral in such a case is just like watching on the sidelines as the fox enters the henhouse and waiting for the outcome,” he posited.

“China can certainly do more, including in its engagement on the peace formula put forward by Ukraine,” the commissioner continued, referring to Zelensky’s proposal for a peace plan between Ukraine and Russia. This proposal insisted that Russia admit defeat, pay reparations, and hand over supposed war criminals to an international tribunal.

Borrell also stated that “a lot remains to be done to convince Ukraine that China is not on Russia’s side.”

Moscow has rejected Kyiv’s plan, stating that it was “detached from reality.”

Borrell said his goal during his three-day visit to China was to prove that “Europe takes China seriously and has no hidden agenda aiming at derailing its rise.”

In turn, Brussels hopes Beijing would regard it seriously and to “stop looking at us through the lens of its relations with others.”

Borrell elaborated that the “war in Ukraine has transformed us ... from the position of an economic power to a geopolitical one, taking its strategic responsibilities very seriously.”

Since 2022, the EU has distanced its economy from Russia over Russian military actions in Ukraine. By restricting cheap Russian energy, the EU has undermined the competitiveness of many businesses in its member countries, some of which have relocated to other nations, including the United States.

Senior EU officials have contended that the alliance has to “de-risk” economic relations with China, singling out Beijing’s non-alignment on Ukraine as a reason.

“How China continues to interact with [Russian President Vladimir] Putin’s war will be a determining factor for EU-China relations going forward,” European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stated in March.

While Beijing has lamented Moscow’s use of force in Ukraine, it concurs with Russia that NATO expansion in Europe was one of the main triggers of Moscow’s military operation in Ukraine. Beijing presented its own plan for a de-escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict last year, urging respect for the territorial integrity “of all countries” while tackling Russia’s national security concerns.



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