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Germany's Ukraine aid: a fact check

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Under Trump, the U.S. is proving a less-than-reliable ally

At campaign rallies ahead of the presidential election, Donald Trump boasted that he would end the war in Ukraine in a day. Had he pulled it off, I would even have been glad to see him win the Nobel Peace Prize. But nothing of the sort has happened. Instead, Vladimir Putin's Russia is now trying to demoralize civilians in Ukrainian cities by deliberately bombing them. Night after night. Putin is thus committing war crimes every day: the shelling serves no military purpose.

The U.S. appears to be turning toward Russia

Relations between Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky were troubled from the start. Recall the Ukrainian president's first official visit to the White House in February 2025 ("You don't have the cards!"). Later – probably driven by fear of a crushing defeat in the congressional midterm elections – Trump made his position clearer and openly switched sides. He called on Zelensky to resign and demanded new elections. How those are supposed to be held in a war zone is far from clear. And that was only the beginning.

Trump then eased sanctions on Russia and brokered a diesel deal, apparently to lower fuel prices in the U.S. ahead of the midterm elections – though the total volume agreed, spread over months, would cover even under optimistic assumptions less than ten days of U.S. demand. The short-term effect is more like 14 hours of domestic diesel consumption. Next, "Secretary of War" Pete Hegseth refused to release Patriot air-defense missiles that had already been paid for. Kyiv urgently needs them to protect civilians from the shelling. More recently, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Ukraine had attacked what he called

Trump's empty promise

Washington is hard to count on

“American-linked ships” and referred to the “American oil supply.” The vessels were Russian tankers. Where their oil was headed remains unclear. Finally, Trump signaled openness to a kind of Yalta 2.0, in which he would negotiate a settlement to the war with Putin and Xi Jinping – without Ukraine or the Europeans at the table. They are more likely to be on the menu.

Europe must now stand together

At best, then, the U.S. can be expected to take a neutral stance. Europe must therefore present an even more united front. Yet within Germany, critics still argue that the country is sending too much money to Ukraine – money they say is needed at home. Alice Weidel, co-leader of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), recently made that argument in an interview with Zanny Minton Beddoes, editor-in-chief of the British magazine The Economist. Ms. Weidel would also like to buy Russian gas again.

Ms. Weidel claims that Germany has provided more than €100 billion in military aid to Ukraine. That is simply untrue. According to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy’s Ukraine Support Tracker, as of 2026 Berlin had paid out just under €42 billion since the war began (see fig. 1). Another €36 billion went toward domestic spending – including payments to Ukrainian refugees through Germany’s basic welfare program, transfers to Germany’s states and municipalities, and export guarantees for German companies. The remaining €22 billion consists of commitments for 2027–30, should the war continue that long. Germany’s share of aid through the EU budget adds roughly €23 billion. As so often in war, truth is the first casualty. Alice Weidel should know better. Perhaps she does.

Relative to its size, Germany is rather stingy

It is no surprise that Germany, Europe’s largest economy, pays more to Kyiv than many other European countries. But Germany does not rank among the most generous countries when payments are measured against GDP (see fig. 2).

Since the war began, Germany has spent the equivalent of about 1.5% of its 2021 GDP on aid to Ukraine. That figure already includes its share of payments from EU funds. It puts Germany only tenth in Europe. Of course, some countries give less – including fellow heavyweights France, Italy and Spain. But these figures do not suggest that Germany is making a disproportionately large contribution to Ukraine’s brave defense. Anyone who claims otherwise, as the AfD leader does, is pursuing a clear political aim and taking a clear stance in favor of the aggressor.

And, of course, Germany also bears responsibility. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kyiv gave up nuclear weapons and missiles in exchange for the understanding that the West would defend Ukraine if the need arose. That moment has arrived. The federal government is to be applauded for its unwavering support for war-torn Ukraine.

Europe must support Ukraine now – more than ever!

Fig. Germany outlays related to Ukraine (2022-2026, Bn. €)

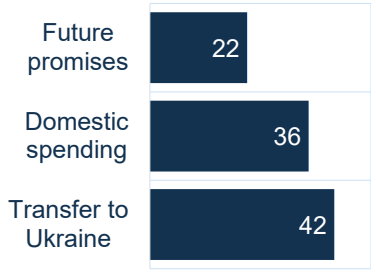

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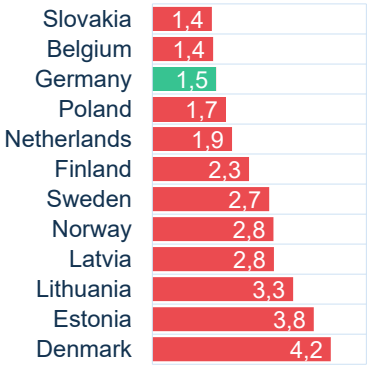
Fig. 2: Cumulative support for Ukraine in % of 2021 GDP



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