EU–Ukraine: Responding to Challenges Together

Media Digest. February 2025

The latest issue of Media Digest features publications on the key events of February 2025, reflecting the condition and prospects of EU-Ukraine relations.

February is a tragic and symbolic month for Ukrainians: 20 February is the Remembrance Day of the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred, and on 24 February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion, waging a war of aggression.

The world stands with Ukraine, and the European Union (EU) leads this support, strengthening Ukraine's geopolitical weight, because democratic and universal human values remain steadfast and will ultimately prevail.

Read more in the latest issue of the Media Digest.

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Standing Shoulder to Shoulder with Ukraine

On 24 February, senior EU leadership visited Kyiv to show solidarity with Ukraine and announce new military measures.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen presented the 16th package of sanctions against Russia. She also announced new macro-financial assistance of EUR 3.5 billion and a loan of EUR 1.5 billion for military support and a package of energy security measures. These measures aim to ease the burden on Ukraine's allies in the EU energy market and strengthen its resilience.

To date, the EU and its member states have provided Ukraine with EUR 134 billion in aid, more than any other state or organisation.

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EU leadership statement: Russia and its leadership bear full responsibility for this war and the atrocities committed against the Ukrainian people

This joint statement by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Parliament, made on the occasion of the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, addresses the responsibility of the Russian regime for crimes committed against Ukraine and its people, and underscores the punishment for war crimes and their accomplices. Work is currently underway to establish a Special Tribunal to prosecute the crimes of aggression against Ukraine.

The statement also highlights the 16th package of EU sanctions against Russia.

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Katarina Mathernová: "Ukrainians are defending not only their homeland. They are defending the freedom of all of Europe"

24 February marks exactly three years since Russia unilaterally launched its brutal aggression against the Ukrainian people.

On this solemn anniversary, I want to emphasise the immense impact of this war on the lives of Slovak citizens and society. Since assuming this post in September 2023, I have witnessed firsthand the toll this war has taken on Ukraine's people. Aggression – from the killing of innocent people and barbaric attacks on civilian infrastructure to the forcible deportation of populated areas. Ukraine and the democratic world must never forget the horrors and crimes of Russian aggression.

Read more in the opinion column by EU Ambassador to Ukraine Katarina Mathernová.

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UKRAINE-EU ACCESSION ALGORITHM

Ukraine's public administration reform roadmap: charting the path to EU accession

It is no secret that the road to the EU is not easy. The Ukraine-EU Association Forum, representatives of public authorities, the EU, and the expert community discussed Ukraine's public administration reform.

This negotiation process involves over 1,000 specialists from the EU and its member states who have collaborated with Ukrainian counterparts. For Ukraine, European integration is a nationwide process involving all branches of government, civil society, and the country.

First European integration hub opens in Lviv

Olena Pavlun, Director of the Lviv Bureau of European Integration, described the hub as an environment for those seeking to implement European reforms, seeking cooperation with international organisations.

"We aim to be a platform that facilitates collaboration, advocacy, and adaptation of European standards in Ukraine. We are the entire country's window towards the European Union, it is essential for the civil society, the business community, and self-government to be represented in this process. This is why we created this hub," she stated.

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SECURITY SUPPORT

Kaja Kallas: "No one from Russia's leadership is untouchable"

During the 13th meeting of the Core Group on the Establishment of a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, EU High Representative Kaja Kallas made the following statement:

"There has to be a clear division between war crimes and the crime of aggression. War crimes can be prosecuted by the ICC and national courts, but the crime of crimes cannot. Therefore, it is extremely important that there is also accountability for the crime of aggression."

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EU and UNDP bolster Ukraine's emergency response capacity

The EU and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Ukraine are providing emergency responders with essential specialised equipment for operating in the most dangerous conditions.

Units of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU) in the Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Khyshiv, and Kherson oblasts received new equipment, and local fire brigades in ten communities in the Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts got a boost. The value of the overall of this assistance exceeds USD 400,000.

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BUSINESS, ECONOMY, FINANCE

New EIB Support Package under the Ukraine Facility

The EIB has launched a new support package for Ukraine worth EUR 420 million. These funds will finance new public sector projects, specifically the restoration and modernisation of hospitals, healthcare facilities, and other critical infrastructure damaged by Russian aggression.

The new support package is the European Union's EUR 50 billion Ukraine Facility programme, designed to support Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction.

The announcement was made during the visit to Kyiv by EIB President Nadia Calviño, who met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal.

Ukraine Facility Audit Board now fully operational

The European Commission has finalised the EU Ukraine Facility Audit Board with the appointment of three experienced specialists in financial control and management.

The Board will operate until the end of June 2027 to ensure independent oversight of the financial assistance provided under the Ukraine Facility, which allocates EUR 50 billion in grants and concessional loans for period 2024–2027 to used transparently and efficiently to support Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction.

The Board consists of: Marek Belka (Chair), a seasoned expert in public finance and debt management; Gy-Ale Vitre (Deputy Chair), a seasoned expert in audit and control; and Czesław Walińska (Member), a specialist in financial management.

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Ukraine's recovery needs assessment increased from USD 486 billion to USD 524 billion

The largest share of long-term recovery and reconstruction costs is in the housing sector, estimated at nearly USD 84 billion. The next largest sectors are transportation (USD 78 billion) and energy and extraction industries (around USD 68 billion). The estimated cost of debris removal and management alone reaches USD 20 billion.

"The EU is already supporting Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery by mobilizing the maximum financial resources of the Ukraine Investment Framework and helping the country integrate more deeply into the EU Single Market," said Marta Kos, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement.

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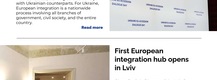

GOOD GOVERNANCE

EU4Recovery Programme launches new community spaces for veterans

The UNDP in Ukraine, the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark, Sweden, and the EU have supported the launch of community spaces for veterans in three Ukrainian communities in Sumy Oblast. The two grant projects have a total value of USD 400,000.

Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation to Ukraine, Ivanka Vasilevska, highlighted the significance of community-driven veteran reintegration, "Veteran reintegration is not just a social issue – it is anchored at the community level," noted Mr Schlumberg. "We are proud to support these initiatives in the Ukrainian Sumy region as part of the EU4Recovery programme. These hubs will provide veterans with the tools they need to begin their return to civilian life."

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New modular administrative service centres open in Dnipropetrovsk and Poltava oblasts

New modular Administrative Service Centers (ASCs) have operated in Kryvyi Rih, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, and Veliyki Sorochynci, Poltava Oblast.

In these centres, local residents and businesses can submit applications, pay for a process documents, register their place of residence and businesses, and also receive other services. The modular Administrative Service Centre in Kryvyi Rih is part of the "Vlas' ASC" ("City Centre"), which "Kryvyi Rih Modular Towns" is the latest of offers.

This is the first modular centre in the oblast to operate on a 24-hour basis seven days, providing veterans and their families with access to 600 government services.

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EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE

Together We Learn & Grow communication campaign concluded in Lviv

The all-Ukrainian communication campaign "Together We Learn & Grow" concluded in Lviv on 15 February. The campaign aimed to inform Ukrainians about the opportunities for continuing education and youth in Ukraine during wartime.

The final event gathered over 1,000 young people, educators, experts, and journalists, and was opened by EU Ambassador Katarina Mathernová and Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi. The event emphasised the importance of the continuity of EU educational and youth initiatives, as well as to showcase new opportunities for Ukrainian youth.

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Katarina Mathernová and Andriy Sadovyi unveil installation celebrating Lviv – European Youth Capital 2025

In front of Lviv City Hall, the European Union flag was ceremoniously raised and unveiled on Friday, 14 February, in honour of Lviv, unveiled to mark the city's EU Youth Capital 2025.

Lviv, as the European Youth Capital, is dedicating this year to all the heroic youth who are defending our country and setting an example for Europe and the entire world.

The EU flag in front of Lviv City Hall was raised by tenth-grader Ekaterina Ochina and eighth-grader Hardy Kuzmitsay, representatives of the Ukrainian Society of all-Ukrainian and International youth Olympiads, volunteers and society active individuals.

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EU launches project to support psychosocial support system for police officers

The European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) Ukraine, with financial and expert support from the EU, has launched a project in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, has launched the "Blue Heaven for Ukraine" project.

The initiative is focused on creating an effective psychosocial support system for the employees of the National Police of Ukraine (NPU), primarily in frontline areas, to prevent burnout, trauma, and psychological trauma.

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MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

The media digest was prepared by the EU project "Strengthening Ukrainian Resilience"

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