

# **Declaration by the Prime Minister on behalf of the Government on Ukraine and European security**

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Luxembourg, Chamber of Deputies

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*Courtesy translation of the Verbatim of the Prime Minister's address*

Mr Speaker,

There are moments in the history of a country, or even a continent, when one can sense that something fundamental is happening, that history, the reality we live in, are changing, perhaps even shifting in a new direction, that history is being written.

The unprecedented outburst at the White House last week stands in stark contrast to the warm welcome President Zelenskyy received at the White House in July on the sidelines of the NATO summit, which I could witness. Together with the US Vice-President's speech at the Munich Security Conference and the possible suspension of arms deliveries to Ukraine — a decision the United States seems to have made yesterday—it marks a significant shift, not only in US policy but also in the relations with Europe. At such a critical moment, it seemed only right to the Government to explain how it views the situation and to do so in front of the Luxembourg Parliament.

I would like to limit this declaration **to five key points**, knowing that this is not a debate we are only starting to have today and it is not one that will end today.

**The first point is the following: the Ukrainian President is the President of a country that has been at war for three years. A war that wasn't started by Ukraine, but by Russia.**

This war is a flagrant violation of international law and the United Nations Charter. This is why so many European democracies, including Luxembourg, but also the United States, Canada, and Japan, have stood by Ukraine until now. Luxembourg remains steadfast in that commitment. On Friday evening, following the incident at the White House, I made it clear— together with other European leaders, including via social media—that, regardless of what happens in one place or another, we remain firmly committed to these principles. Because Ukraine is not only fighting for its own freedom, but also for ours and for the preservation of an international society that functions according to common rules and international law.

Russia has attacked Ukraine. Russia is the aggressor, and Ukraine is the victim. Ukraine was invaded just as Luxembourg was invaded by Nazi Germany during the Second World War. Russia wanted to change borders by force and Russia wanted to destroy that country, as its President himself declared in 2022.

Luxembourg will therefore stand by Ukraine and provide the support it needs, within our modest means, working closely with our European partners. Crucially, we believe that no decision concerning Ukraine's future can be taken without Ukraine itself at the negotiating table. One cannot simply impose territorial losses on a sovereign nation without its direct involvement in negotiations.

The second point in this context, is that no negotiations on Europe's security can take place without Europe itself being involved, and without considering the broader European and global security dimension. The security of Ukraine and the security of Europe are inextricably linked.

Thirdly, it is clear to us that, while a ceasefire is, of course, desirable—since we cannot accept war as a permanent condition—it must be part of a wider plan for lasting peace. For Luxembourg, for Ukraine, and for many of our European partners, this means that credible security guarantees must be put in place for Ukraine. Without such guarantees, any ceasefire would merely be an invitation for Russia, or others, to resume hostilities tomorrow, even if they were temporarily forced to pause the war. This is why a just and lasting peace must be our objective—as Europeans, and in the interests of Ukraine.

Luxembourg will continue to provide financial and military support to Ukraine, within the limits of our modest resources. However, in proportional terms, our contribution will be in line with that of other nations. If necessary, we are also prepared to contribute to future security guarantees, when the time comes. At present, such guarantees are not under discussion, and we have not been asked to provide them. However, this could change. Should the question arise, Luxembourg's soldiers would only be deployed to the region under an international or European mandate, as stipulated by our national laws, and only with the approval of the Chamber of Deputies. For us it is clear that any such participation would be limited to a peacekeeping mission. And, as its very name suggests, such a mission could only be deployed once a peace agreement has been signed.

Luxembourg remains committed to supporting Ukraine, and I trust that the Chamber of Deputies will continue to uphold this position, as it has done on multiple occasions in the past.

**A second key message I wish to convey today is that we are witnessing a historic moment—one where we no longer see the United States as being exactly on the same path as us, at least since 20 January. Its commitment to defending Ukraine and ensuring that Ukraine can negotiate peace from a position of strength, now seems less certain. In light of this, Europe must close ranks and assume greater responsibility. This is not a stance against the United States, it is a commitment to Europe.**

This is why we must take action across multiple sectors, not only in military affairs, but also in the economy. We must become more sovereign, stronger, and ensure that we are not overly dependent on a single energy supplier. We must develop a strong industrial base—not just in the defence sector, but across other key economic sectors as well. And we must take a comprehensive approach to regain control over our strategic interests.

In this regard, we welcome the direction of the proposals made this morning by the President of the European Commission under the title 'ReArm Europe', which aims to strengthen Europe's defence capabilities. Likewise, the strategy the President outlined a few weeks ago to boost Europe's competitiveness, by creating and safeguarding jobs within the continent, is also a step in the right direction. We will analyze these proposals in detail and engage constructively in shaping them.

When it comes to European security, it is essential that we cooperate closely with like-minded partners beyond the EU, such as the United Kingdom, Norway, and Canada. While Canada is not part of Europe, it occasionally takes part in our meetings and strongly upholds the values that define Europe, and which I mentioned earlier.

**The third point the Government wishes to address concerns the actions that Luxembourg must take in this context. As a European nation, we are directly impacted by the situation in Ukraine.** What is happening there today could affect Poland, the Baltic States, or other regions tomorrow. If we fail to act decisively and uphold our commitments to Ukraine, we too risk endangering our freedom and peace. This is why Luxembourg must also enhance its defence capabilities, or rather, its security capabilities, which encompasses a broader concept than defence alone.

Luxembourg has already significantly increased its defence spending over the last two legislative periods. In my State of the Nation address, I indicated that we intend to reach the NATO target of 2% of GDP by 2030. However, numerous discussions within Europe and NATO suggest that we will have to review this path and that this objective will have to be revised upwards compared to current projections. If we move in this direction, it will be in consultation with our partners and, of course, in close consultation with this Parliament. A fundamental reorientation of our security spending will be inevitable in the years to come. Today, we are one of half a dozen countries that are still below the 2% mark. Most European countries have already reached this target. Our Belgian neighbours, as well as Spain and Slovenia, are at around 1.3% to 1.5%. It is therefore essential that we show our solidarity in this regard.

The Government takes this task very seriously. It is in Luxembourg's interest to make its own contribution to peace in Europe. It is difficult to justify to other countries, many of which are in a far more precarious situation than ours, why we contribute proportionally less compared to our national wealth. In the past, this may have seemed understandable, given our location at the heart of a peaceful Europe. However, the evolving geopolitical landscape, the threat from Russia, and the potential shift in U.S. policy make this commitment absolutely essential.

**The fourth point I would like to address on behalf of the Government concerns our relationship with the United States of America.**

Our relationship is built on a shared history and common cultural values. After all, who doesn't enjoy an American film or American music? This is a clear example of the United States' soft power. It is also rooted in principles enshrined in the American Constitution, almost identical to those of European constitutions, as well as in human rights concepts that were drafted simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic in the 18th century. America and the American people remain our friends, even in challenging times. We have never forgotten, and will never forget, that the peace and freedom we enjoy today are the result of a decisive choice made by the United States—and by President Roosevelt in particular—not to remain on the sidelines despite the distance, but to send their soldiers to liberate Luxembourg and Europe.

We are members of NATO and wish to continue cooperating both with the United States and within the Alliance. This is also a matter of political realism: approximately 70% of the military expenditures of NATO member states come from the United States of America. This represents a significant commitment, and their military capabilities far exceed those of many other countries. Together we are stronger. This is why we are part of NATO, an organization that has deterred those who sought to attack member states, including Luxembourg, since 1945. The well-known Article 5 states that if one member is attacked, we are all attacked. We do not want to relinquish this security guarantee and hope that the American people, as well as Congress, will recognize and uphold this shared responsibility for global peace, which is enshrined in NATO's principles. However, this in no way contradicts what I previously stated: within NATO, we must also strengthen the European pillar.

**The fifth message concerns values and freedom.** An army, like an economy, is not built solely from a military or economic perspective. It always fits into a broader framework. Just as the economy helps create prosperity, justice, and social progress, an army serves to protect our values, as well as our freedom and peace.

But of course these values and freedoms do not exist in a vacuum. No freedom is absolute; it is defined by our Constitution, our laws, the European Convention on Human Rights, and international human rights treaties. We remain firmly committed to these principles, even as they have been challenged in other parts of the world in recent weeks.

That is why today's debate goes far beyond the question of defending Ukraine, if one can say it like that, it is about fundamental principles, the future of our part of the world and the values we hold dear - the same values that our parents and grandparents defended in times of trouble.

**Europe and our country are facing major decisions.** We want freedom, peace and prosperity to prevail on our continent for decades to come. But peace and freedom come at a cost, a cost which we are already feeling, and which will be felt even more in the years to come. What choices do we make? If we must devote more resources to our security and to our collective security, the question is: how are we going to finance it? Should we increase our debt? Rethink our fiscal priorities? Make greater use of European funds? All these questions will have to be debated, in Europe as well as in Luxembourg, in the coming years, months, even weeks. They surely will be at the heart of the discussions ahead of the NATO summit in the Netherlands in June. These are fundamental questions that go beyond foreign policy and will affect more than a single legislative term. This is why an extraordinary summit of heads of state and government will be held on Thursday in Brussels. In this context, over the next two weeks, I will also be consulting with all parties represented in Parliament to reach the broadest possible consensus on security, defence, and the future of our continent. The decisions made in Europe and within NATO in the coming weeks will have long-term implications, spanning multiple legislative terms. It is essential that we build a strong consensus within our society on these crucial issues, a consensus that extends beyond the parliamentary framework.

Russia has brutally deprived us of the comfort and optimism we had known after World War II and the end of the Cold War, first in 2014, then again in 2022. It has challenged the global order and the peace in Europe that had been established in the aftermath of these conflicts. Since January 20, the United States of America have shown to us in a certain manner that our partnership is being tested. And while efforts are being made to maintain it, it will take a new direction in the coming weeks. Europe must therefore act with determination. And today, Luxembourg, too, must make decisive choices. When history is being written later, I want people to say that in 2025 Luxembourg stood on the right side of history, the side of freedom, human rights, and international law.

Thank you.