

## ZPP appeal in support of Ukraine's accession to the European Union

Ukraine has been barbarously invaded by the Russian Federation. The Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers (ZPP) strongly condemns this unjustified aggression and supports Ukraine in maintaining its full sovereignty and self-determination of its statehood.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenski signed Ukraine's application for membership in the European Union. Simultaneously, he asked the Member States leaders for the immediate accession of Ukraine under a special procedure. Ukraine's representative to the European Union has already forwarded the application to the French Presidency of the European Council representative, Philippe L glise-Costa. This means that the application has been officially notified, and the procedure has begun.

We believe that Ukraine's efforts should be strongly supported, and its place in the democratic European family should be recognised. For this reason, we call on the European institutions and the Member States to take immediate action and start the fast track to European Union membership for Ukraine. In our opinion, Ukraine's candidate status must be announced immediately to begin accession talks. Furthermore, we believe that Ukraine should be given access to EU funds to enable its rebuild and increase cohesion with the other Member States.

Ukraine's intention of accession to the European Union has already been supported by many Member States leaders, including the President of Poland, Andrzej Duda, and the Presidents of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Bulgaria. Ukraine's accession to the European Union is also supported by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, who drew attention to the progressive convergence of the Ukrainian market with the EU single market.

The European Parliament accepted Ukraine's application for membership in the European Union for consideration. In addition, the Parliament voted on 1 March 2022 a resolution calling on the European institutions to take steps to grant Ukraine the status of candidate country for EU membership under Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union. MEPs condemned the invasion of Ukraine called for stricter sanctions against Russia and an immediate end to military action. In addition, they called on the Commission and the Member States to continue providing humanitarian aid to Ukraine and to extend sanctions to Belarus due to its support in the Russian aggression. ZPP supports the resolution adopted by the European Parliament and expects the rapid action of the EU institutions.

Ukrainian gross domestic product has been progressing in recent years. However, it has not yet restored the level it had before the financial crisis of 2007 - 2009, nor to the level before Russia's aggression on Donbas territory in 2014.<sup>1</sup> Although Ukraine's economy has great potential, it cannot fully unleash it due to the geopolitical situation and its economic and energy dependence on Russia. Ukraine has done much in recent years to reform its economy and law. Poland's economic ties with Ukraine are becoming stronger. This is evidenced by data from the State Tax Service of Ukraine,

<sup>1</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=UA>

which reported that Poland became the primary export market for Ukraine in 2019. Poland thus overtook the previous leader, Russia.<sup>2</sup> This shows Ukraine's gradual process of moving away from trade with Russia towards increasing exchange with the EU market.

Another important reason for recognising Ukraine's membership in the European Union is its political transformation. Ukraine has undergone a thorough political transformation as a result of the Orange Revolution and the Euromaidan protests. Thanks to these grassroots social movements, the Ukrainian authorities are democratically elected and have the legitimacy of the people to hold power.

Ukraine's membership in EU structures is a strategic goal for the Union. It will strengthen the EU single market and expand the Union's values. The EU enriched with Ukrainian membership will become economically stronger and consolidate its position as a democratic bloc in Europe. For Ukraine, this means reducing the possibilities of Russian interference in its politics. The accession of Ukraine will benefit both the European Union and Ukraine. Although there are still many reforms to be carried out by Ukraine, this process is already underway, and accession will help to speed it up.

Considering the above, we, the Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers, appeal to the EU member states and European institutions to launch a special accession procedure and immediately start the accession negotiations to welcome Ukraine into the European Union.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.forbes.pl/gospodarka/xiii-forum-europa-ukraina-ukraina-przyspiesza-reformy/tm0msxd>