



# Five Reasons for Direct Negotiations Between the EU and Russia

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The will to fight to the bitter end is still strong among the warring parties in the Ukrainian conflict. They must be stopped, for their own sake and for the sake of others, especially Europe. The unnecessary bloodshed and destruction are one thing, but even the slightest risk of implosion on either side would be catastrophic for the entire world. Leaders across Europe should be aware of this reality and act accordingly. There are many reasons for this but let us focus on five credible reasons, all of which are rooted in the fate of European civilization. Before delving into these reasons, we will first reflect on the preconditions that must be met before direct negotiations between the European Union and Russia could begin.

### **Preconditions for Direct Negotiations**

In order for there to be the chance for peace, there must be a ceasefire. But a total ceasefire is almost impossible to achieve and very difficult to monitor. It is probably with this reality in mind that President Emmanuel Macron of France proposed a [piecemeal approach](#) to build trust in the ceasefire process on both sides. We may need to reach an initial ceasefire first, followed by a longer and more detailed ceasefire process. The European Union should do all it can to facilitate this.

For this to happen, the war rhetoric must stop, as must the vilification of leaders on both sides. Those who support war as the only solution should change their narrative from one of war to peace and stop castigating the long-standing initiators of peace as troublemakers.

### **Reason One: The War is Destroying Europe**

Among the reasons for the start of negotiations between the EU and Russia, first and foremost, this war will go down as one of the greatest human catastrophes of the twenty-first century. We do not have exact figures, but it is estimated that hundreds of thousands have been killed or maimed. In addition to the dead and injured, millions have been displaced and families torn apart. Society is traumatized and will be handicapped for generations to come. This war is a human tragedy now,

but it could easily become a crime against humanity if it drags on. The European elite should understand that Ukraine is facing a very determined opponent. Forcing young Ukrainian men and women into the trenches is resulting in the [demographic destruction](#) of Ukraine, a greater crime than taking a piece of its territory. To save the Ukrainian nation from slaughter, Europe should open urgent negotiations with Russia. Better now than tomorrow.

### **Reason Two: The European Economy Has Been Hit Hard**

This human tragedy inevitably leads to economic turmoil. Not only for the warring countries, but also for neighboring regions such as Europe, especially the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The Ukrainian economy has been shattered and faces the daunting task of reconstruction, while both financial and human resources are scarce. Europe could help, but for the third year in a row, most European countries are experiencing zero or negative growth. Europe is the sick man of the world in terms of economic growth. Given such weakness, it is unwise and unfair to raise the expectations of a war-weary Ukraine by suggesting that the EU will support its war effort for as long as needed. For the past three years, the United States has footed half the bill to keep Ukraine financially afloat and supply arms. The combined effort has amounted to €250 billion. As the war intensifies and new fronts are opened, this will have to be at least doubled to €500 billion. The EU is not a country, and it is difficult to imagine member states spending such colossal sums. It is probably to get around this that Brussels launched the €800 billion "[Rearm Europe](#)" program to boost defense. It is highly probable that the European Commission will channel this money to the Ukrainian war effort. The problem is that the EU began its journey to oversee economic welfare but is now being pushed to become a "military union." The only way to stop this distortion of purpose and return to a state of growth is to put an end to the Ukrainian conflict. For this to happen, responsible EU members should push for direct negotiations with the Kremlin.

### **Reason Three: War Undermines the Stability of European Societies**

Conflict with Russia and continued involvement in financing the war against it will cost Europe its cherished welfare system. The war in Ukraine is very costly and burdensome. In the context of low growth and relatively high budget deficits and public debt, there are serious concerns about how and where the extra resources to pay for the war will come from. In a prolonged low-growth

scenario, the only way to free up resources would be to reduce social spending. To make matters worse, if Europe is forced to finance the war in Ukraine alone, without the contribution of the United States, there is a real chance that the welfare state will be reduced. This will have a devastating effect on the economy and society. Indeed, the disappearance of the social protection system will exacerbate the social upheavals as social protest grows. Since social spending accounts for between [15 and 25 percent of GDP](#), the diversion of a substantial part of this funding to finance the war will lead to a collapse in consumption. The consequences will not only be a sharp increase in poverty and social marginalization, but also the weakening of the entire state system. Europe needs to focus on other things than the prospect of perpetual war with Russia.

#### **Reason Four: Europe Needs Relations with Russia**

Continuing this war is geopolitical nonsense. Any zone of high population and consumption density must secure zones of high resource density. Before the war in Ukraine, Europe had influence over three resource-rich regions: Russia, the Middle East, and Africa. Today, its influence in these regions is close to zero. If Europe wants to become a credible player in the international system again, it needs peaceful and [stable access to resources](#). What U.S. President Donald Trump has shown in his first weeks in office with his claims to mineral-rich regions close to Europe, whether by jest or whim, is that Europe is not only ill-prepared, but also very disoriented and distracted in the way it sets its priorities and chooses its partners and even enemies. There is no geopolitical logic to treating Russia as an enemy, and it is a proximity that Europe cannot risk losing. Somewhere, something has gone very wrong in a troubled relationship. Instead of turning this misstep into a perpetual war, Europe should enter into direct negotiations with Russia to normalize relations. War cannot be the new normal.

#### **Reason Five: Direct EU-Russia Negotiations Can Keep the Peace Process on Track**

Europe should stop the war before Russia is made into a real enemy, with the United States nowhere to protect it. The first time the “coalition of the willing” term was used was in 2003, when Iraq was invaded and occupied on the pretext of getting rid of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction. The two leaders who wanted to save the world at the time were U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair. As it turned out, there were no weapons of

mass destruction. Iraq was bombed into oblivion with precision bombs anyway. Now the two merry men of a similar [coalition of the willing](#), British Prime Minister Kier Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron, want to save Ukraine from Russia. The omens are not good. After the disappointment of the Global Britain strategy, Britain is going local in Eastern Europe, and a war-ravaged Ukraine is a perfect opportunity to nest. Similarly, France, having been pushed out of the Sahel and losing its influence in the Mediterranean, wants to get closer to Russia's vast expanses. If France and Britain march their battalions into Ukraine, one thing is guaranteed: instability in the German economic sphere, which means trouble across the continent. The EU can avoid this by negotiating directly with Russia.

### **Conclusion**

From the very beginning, the whole European project was about peace. Having been the victim of two bloody world wars, the purpose of the EU was to banish war from the continent and to help others do the same. It was a deeply humanist and conservative commitment. Since then, leaders on all sides have done their best to stick to that goal, a path to sustainable prosperity. From around 2012, things began to change as liberal internationalism was emboldened after taking control of key EU member states and, ultimately, the EU's corridors of power. The agenda of this clique, when the pieces are put together, was to create a rift between the West and Russia to make coexistence an impossible prospect. This path inevitably led us to 22 February 2022. The war cannot be stopped without eliminating the rift created by the liberals. This can only be done through direct negotiations between the EU and Russia. Once this happens, Europe will have the opportunity to return to its original mission: creating peace through prosperity.