

Metsola: Courage and hope to the people of Ukraine

Kyiv, Ukraine
Yesterday

Today, the European Parliament President Roberta Metsola was in Kyiv to deliver a message of courage and hope to all Ukrainians defending their country. In her address to the Verkhovna Rada, she reiterated the European Parliament's support to Ukraine's European path, to hold those responsible for the war accountable, and to rebuild cities and towns once the war is over.



© European Union | European Parliament President Roberta Metsola addressing the Verkhovna Rada in Kyiv, Ukraine

Dear Ruslan,
Dear Members of the Rada,
Dear brave warriors
Dear brothers and sisters,

Thank you for inviting me to Kyiv to address the Rada. It is an honour to be here among you fellow European parliamentarians. But more than that, it is a duty for me to be here. It is a duty that I must fulfil. A responsibility to you on the frontline. To show the world that even in the darkness of war, parliamentary democracy is the light.

I am here today, as a representative of the European Parliament, of the people of Europe, to tell you one thing. We are with you. In good times and in less good times - we are with you.

The images we have seen around the world these last horrible months have been of destruction, of death, of innocent lives torn apart, women, children forced to abandon their homes and their lives.

But Europe and the world have also seen your courage and the defiance of Ukrainian families. The heroes of Snake Island are known across the globe. The proud warriors of Mariupol will inspire generations and generations to come.

And soon - I have no doubt- we will see the triumph of hope over fear. Because you show the world, that no amount of terror can intimidate and that bombs will never destroy pride and they will never destroy dignity.

The EU and the world has seen : you are the defenders of your country. But you are not fighting only to protect your homes and your territory. You are fighting for what we all believe in. Freedom. Democracy. The rule of law. And here, in Ukraine, these values are not buzzwords; they are being fought for, because you know that without them, there is nothing else.

The European Union was created to interlink the destinies of the nation states of Europe so that they could no longer engage in the kind of conflict that led, in less than thirty years, to two world wars. The European Union is a project for peace. But even above that, it is a project about freedom.

And let me say that Ukraine is Europe.

These are sad and tragic times. So many Ukrainians have lost their lives, you have lost family members, relatives and friends. Our thoughts are first of all with all of you. And please believe me, when I say that the European Parliament, the European Union and the people of Europe Stand With Ukraine.

Now words, they can inspire. And words can sometimes change the world. But the world also needs action. And the world also needs compassion. And I am here to convey that message of support and hope, that we will not abandon Ukraine. And that we will not ever let down our guard.

Mariupol is a town I have never visited, but it is the name of a town that I will never ever forget. The shelling of a maternity ward and the killing of children is an act that will go down in infamy. It is an act of inhumanity that sums up the nature of the threat that you have risen to face down. And we will never forget that has happened there. Ever.

Now, let me make three promises to you.

First of all, this invasion of your country puts Russia in direct confrontation with Europe, the international community and the rules-based world order. And it is not something that we will let Putin do unchallenged. We need more and harder sanctions. We will hold those responsible accountable for what they have committed here.

Second, the European Union recognises Ukraine's European ambitions and your aspirations to be a candidate country for accession. And I stand before all of you here to say, that you can count on me, you can count on the European Parliament in supporting Ukraine's path in achieving this goal. We know what blood was spilt to get here. And we will not let you down.

And we know more than ever that Ukraine looks to the European Union as its destination. We will respond with honesty and with hope. Every country has its own path - but the European Union future of Ukraine should never be in doubt.

Thirdly, we will take care of your families who are forced to flee, until the day they can safely return to their homes and rebuild their lives. And we will help you to rebuild your cities and your towns when this illegal, unprovoked and unjustified invasion is over. We have already provided assistance : financial, military and humanitarian. This will continue and this will increase. We will create the Ukraine Solidarity Trust Fund and organise an International Donors Conference, to help rebuild. Because this attack on your homeland has changed everything.

You did not invite this invasion. Nor did you provoke it. You did not seek a confrontation. But you have risen to meet this moment that is testament to the greatness of a people, to your courage, to your strength of character.

Now, my call is for the Europe Union to meet this moment with the same vigour. Because this must be our whatever-it-takes moment.

The rules-based order of the world remains strong. Putin miscalculated not only the courage and resistance of your country, but the strength of the democratic order. He fundamentally mistook our debates for weakness. And he has paid an unprecedented cost. Our sanctions hurt and we must go further still.

Millions of your country women and men have fled this country. Millions more are internally displaced and are expected to make their way to other European countries. We must be ready - but more importantly we are willing to do what is necessary to provide a future without fear for those arriving at our borders. And that willingness will remain steadfast. And it will never wane.

The face of Europe, we will show, will continue to be one that is of open hearts and open homes - a tangible expression of our shared European way, where we match compassion with strength.

We need to re-double our efforts to reduce our energy dependencies on the Kremlin. And I want to see a moment when Europe is completely free and secure with our energy supplies.

In this moment of crisis, we need to remember that energy is – and has always been - political. Russia has understood this for years. But so have you.

Europe's target must be towards a future of zero gas from Russia. Zero gas. This is ambitious but it is necessary.

Because the bottom line is that: we should not, in consuming Kremlin energy, indirectly fund the bombs falling on your homes. And we will speed up our efforts to make sure that this happens sooner rather than later.

Allow me a word on the information war that we are facing. Not only do we need to bolster, strengthen our cyber-defences but we need to keep pushing back against the narrative that confronting Putin makes Europe somehow anti-Russia. Russians are standing up to Putin - and there are many - despite the threat of jail, they are on the right side of history. They are on our side.

Let me end by quoting Jonathan Sacks who said "It's hard to defeat fear in the name of hope; it needs enormous courage. Yet as our powers of destruction grow even greater, we need that courage even more."

And in the words of your national poet Taras Shevchenko "Keep fighting - you are sure to win".

You have the courage.

Ukraine has that courage.

We are with you today, we will be with you tomorrow and we will never ever leave your side.

Slava Ukraini.

You can watch the speech [here](#).