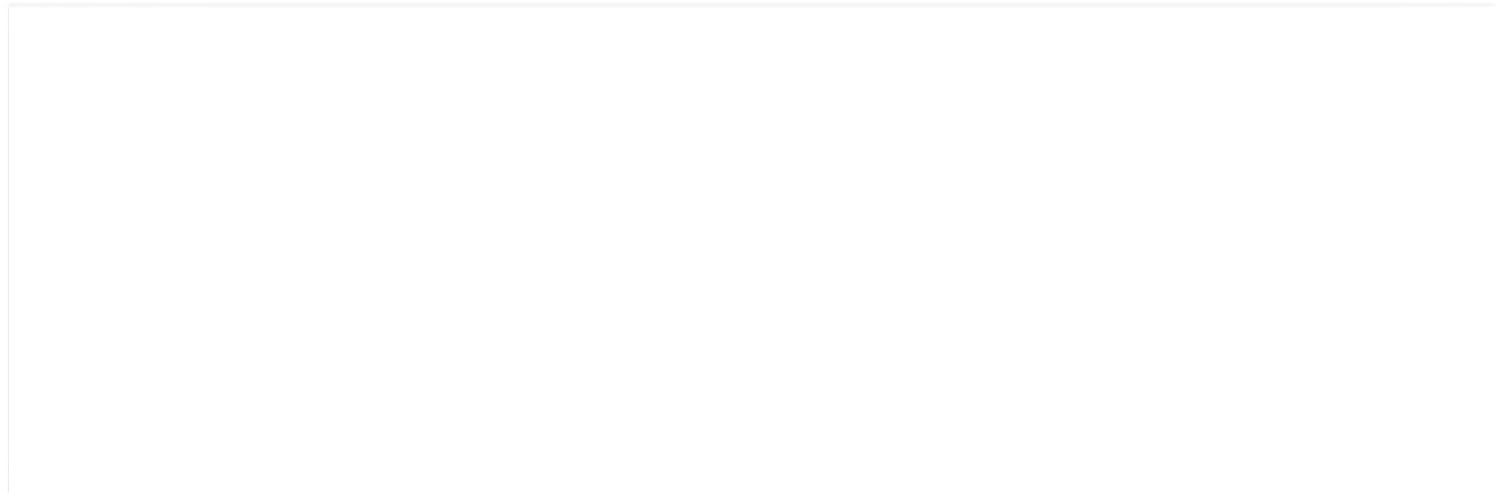


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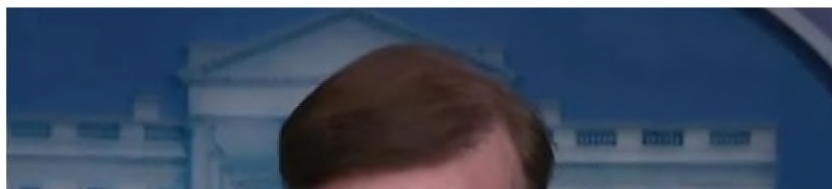
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**NEWS**

# Ukraine Urges EU to Sanction Russia Before it Can Invade So Move Isn't 'Meaningless'

BY **AYUMI DAVIS** ON 12/15/21 AT 8:38 PM EST





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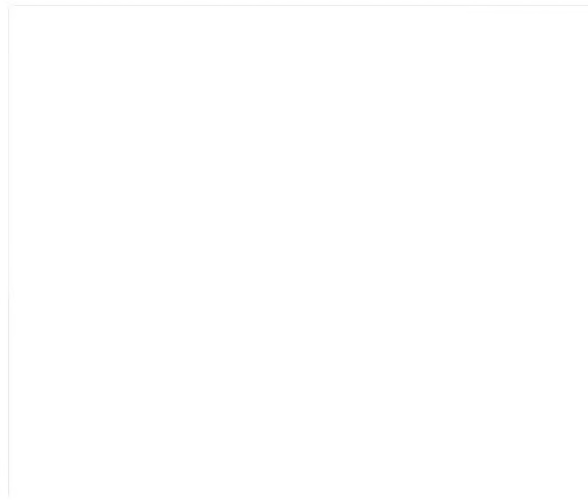
**O**n Wednesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged European Union leaders to sanction Russia before it can invade so the move isn't "meaningless."

"For us, it is important to have sanctions applied before, rather than after, the conflict would happen, because if they were applied after the conflict would happen, this would basically make them meaningless," Zelenskyy told reporters in Brussels.

"We have war going on for eight years. We understand that only if the sanctions are applied prior to the armed conflict would they become a prevention mechanism for any possible escalation," he said.



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Zelenskyy said that Ukraine is ready to enter talks with Russia to alleviate tensions, but Russian President Vladimir Putin does not appear to be willing.

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EU Council President Charles Michel was asked by reporters if Europe would heed Zelenskyy's call, to which he replied, "We have sanctions in place, we are ready to take additional sanctions if needed, and we will see" what happens.

While the U.S. and the EU have been working together on their response to Russia, no real details of any sanctions have been released. EU nations in the east believe that sanctions should be enforced immediately, but others, like France and Germany, are worried it could cause an invasion.



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On Thursday, the EU's 27 national leaders will have a summit and determine how to best prevent a Russian invasion into Ukraine. A statement drafted for the meeting, which [The Associated Press](#) saw, says that "any further military aggression against Ukraine will have massive consequences and severe cost in response."



On Thursday, the European Union's 27 national leaders will have a summit and determine how to best prevent a Russian invasion into Ukraine. In this photo, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy speaks during a media conference at an Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels, Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2021.

JOHANNA GERON/POOL PHOTO VIA AP

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Zelenskyy said he and some EU leaders discussed five options for responding to any Russian attack, but he provided no details. European officials argue that it's a better deterrent to keep Putin in the dark about what measures might be used

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Earlier, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the EU has a battery of fresh sanctions ready if Moscow sends its troops across the border. Beyond scaling up existing sanctions, she said, the EU can adopt "unprecedented measures with serious consequences for Russia."

French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz held a special meeting with Zelenskyy focused, at least in part, on how to revive the "Normandy format" involving their two countries plus Russia and Ukraine for talks aimed at ending the conflict.

So far, Moscow has refused pleas to return to the negotiating table.

Zelenskyy said Ukraine is open to negotiations of any kind, but that "what we are lacking is a willingness on the other side, on the Russian side, to engage in any kind of format or negotiations with us."

France and Germany brokered a peace agreement in 2015 that helped end large-scale hostilities in eastern Ukraine, where Ukrainian forces have been fighting Russia-backed separatists since 2014. Still, the conflict that has left 14,000 dead has mered.

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Scholz warned that more talks "must not be misunderstood as a new German 'Ostpolitik,'" referring to West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's policy of détente toward the communist Eastern bloc in the early 1970s.

There "can only be a European 'Ostpolitik' in a united Europe" that is based on principles of international law and order that Russia committed itself to but violated with the annexation of Crimea, he said.

Compounding the testy relations with Moscow, Germany decided Wednesday to expel two Russian diplomats after a court concluded that Moscow was behind the killing of a Chechen man in Berlin two years ago

*The Associated Press contributed to this report.*



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