

Trade

NEWS ARTICLE | 25 February 2024 | Abu Dhabi | Directorate-General for Trade

Solidarity with Ukraine: trade ministers express support for Ukraine ahead of WTO Ministerial - Joint statement

Joint Statement of trade ministers in solidarity with Ukraine

Joint Statement of Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, The Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Ukraine and United States

We, the trade ministers/heads of delegation of the undersigned WTO Members, have met in Abu Dhabi today on the occasion of the 13th Ministerial Conference of the WTO, to reiterate our full support for and solidarity with the people of Ukraine. We express our deep sadness at the devastating human losses and profound suffering caused by Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, which continues for the third year in gross violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. In so doing, we reiterate our full support for the UN General Assembly Resolution of 2 March 2022 ([A/RES/ES-11/1](https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/RES/ES-11/1&Lang=E) [↗](https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/RES/ES-11/1&Lang=E) (<https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/RES/ES-11/1&Lang=E>)) and all other resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly at its eleventh emergency special session.

We reaffirm our commitment to Ukraine's fight for its sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity and call for the Russian Federation to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues to have devastating global and regional impacts, including on Ukraine's economy and ability to trade. The destruction of significant parts of Ukraine's transportation, port infrastructure, and grain storage facilities as well as mining of agricultural land is impeding Ukraine's ability to produce, export, and import normally. We are gravely concerned about the consequences of this destruction for Ukraine and for global trade, in particular with regard to the supply to international markets of a number of key commodities produced by Ukraine, including agricultural and food products, fertilisers, and critical minerals. We are also deeply concerned by numerous reports of grain being plundered by Russia from Ukraine. These actions violate the principles and values of the WTO.

Ukraine is one of the world's top exporters of key agricultural products such as wheat, maize, barley, and sunflower oil. We recognise Ukraine's determination, despite Russia's war of

aggression, to ensure food security and supply to some of the most vulnerable parts of the world, particularly developing countries. In this regard, the “Grain from Ukraine” initiative continues to be an important tool to help to respond to hunger. Russia weaponized food, and hit the world’s most vulnerable with its sea blockade. We praise Ukraine’s achievement of reopening grain exports by its Black Sea corridor to the global markets and welcome the establishment in 2022 of the EU Solidarity Lanes, which have allowed the exports of around 67 million tonnes of grain since May 2022 from Ukraine to global markets. This benefits all countries, notably the countries most in need. In this context, it is necessary to ensure free, full, and safe navigation in the Black and Azov Seas and ensure that sea routes and ports are not threatened or blocked by threat of or use of force.

Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine has also caused profound environmental damage to Ukraine and resulted in unprecedented pollution and disruption of the regional ecosystems.

We underscore the need to reach, as soon as possible, a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine, in full respect of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We welcome Ukraine’s efforts aimed at achieving peace, including through the principles laid out in President Zelenskyy’s 10 Point Peace Formula. We reiterate that the Russian Federation must bear the legal consequences of all of its internationally wrongful acts, including making reparation for injury and loss, including for any humanitarian, economic, and environmental damage caused by such acts.

We will continue work to support Ukraine and to facilitate its exports and supply chains for the benefit of global food security. We encourage all WTO Members to do likewise in a manner commensurate with their capacity, including by facilitating the use of infrastructure, as well as facilitating and simplifying customs procedures. Within the capacity of each WTO Member, we will continue to provide assistance to Ukraine to alleviate the suffering of the Ukrainian people. We will also look for practical ways to help and assist Ukraine in its reconstruction efforts, activities, and projects to overcome the negative consequences of Russia’s war of aggression.

Details

Publication date	25 February 2024
Author	Directorate-General for Trade
Location	Abu Dhabi
Country or region	Ukraine
Trade topics	Trade policy