

MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE EU AND OTHER EXTERNAL ACTORS TO THE EU'S EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

KEY FACTS

- ▶ There have been three distinct phases in the role of the European Union (EU) and EU member states as providers of military assistance to the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood. Before 2014, several EU member states were developing military relations with Russia, but neither EU member states nor the EU were involved in major military assistance to any of the Eastern Neighbourhood states.
- ▶ From 2014, the EU became more engaged in security sector reform in the Eastern Neighbourhood. A few EU member states began supplying military assistance to Ukraine and some sold arms to Azerbaijan and Georgia.
- ▶ In reaction to the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, most EU member states massively increased their military assistance to Ukraine. The EU became a key institution for financing and channelling large-scale military assistance to Ukraine and—though to a far lesser extent—to Armenia and Moldova.
- ▶ Military assistance to the Eastern Neighbourhood through NATO increased massively from 2022.
- ▶ The United States was a dominant provider of military assistance to the Eastern Neighbourhood from 2010 to 2025, significantly ahead of individual European states and the EU. However, its role as a provider of military assistance has become uncertain since early 2025, as US security policy towards Europe has entered a period of flux.
- ▶ Russia's role as a supplier of military assistance to the Eastern Neighbourhood has changed drastically. Throughout 2010–25 it was by far the main supplier to Belarus. However, its role as a supplier of military assistance to Armenia and Azerbaijan has dwindled since 2020.
- ▶ The role of other external actors providing military assistance to the Eastern Neighbourhood has been relatively limited.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE BY EU ACTORS

EU and EU member state military assistance to the Eastern Neighbourhood was limited before 2014. In reaction to Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014, a small number of EU member states started providing arms and military training to Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. Other EU member states refrained from doing so. From 2022, the EU's and EU member states' military assistance to Ukraine expanded dramatically. The EU established the European Peace Facility (EPF) and earmarked €11 billion for military assistance to Ukraine between 2022 and 2025, including for large numbers of weapons. From 2022 nearly all EU member states, together with the United Kingdom and Norway, supplied lethal and non-lethal military assistance to Ukraine, often coordinated through NATO frameworks. Though on a much smaller scale, the EU and a small number of EU member states also expanded military assistance to Georgia from 2019, to Moldova from 2022 and to Armenia from 2024.

RECIPIENTS AND SUPPLIERS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE



MILITARY ASSISTANCE BY OTHER EXTERNAL ACTORS

NATO

NATO has played a central role in coordinating military assistance by the USA and EU members states to the Eastern Neighbourhood throughout 2010–25. After 2014 this included projects to combat corruption in the military, train civilian security and military personnel, and reform military education in Ukraine. From 2022 NATO played a key role in coordinating the provision of military training and equipment to Ukraine. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova also received military assistance through NATO during 2010–25. NATO's close cooperation with Georgia during that period was suspended in 2024.

RUSSIA

During 2010–25 Russian military cooperation with Belarus intensified. Russia was by far the largest supplier of arms to Belarus and the two states conducted regular large-scale joint military exercises. Russia has based nuclear weapons in Belarus. In 2011–20 Russia accounted for an estimated 94 per cent of Armenia's imports of major arms and 59 per cent of Azerbaijan's. But Azerbaijan has not imported major arms from Russia since 2019. In 2024 Armenia suspended its membership of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which is dominated by Russia.

OTHER EXTERNAL ACTORS

The role of other external actors providing military assistance to the Eastern Neighbourhood has been relatively limited. Türkiye stood out as an important provider of military assistance to Azerbaijan, including through joint exercises, military education and arms sales. It also provided Georgia logistics reform funding, exercises and transfers. Before 2022 Türkiye engaged in arms sales to Ukraine, and it became a relatively modest provider of military aid from 2022. Israel was an important arms supplier to Azerbaijan between 2011 and 2025. China supplied small quantities of arms to Belarus and later Azerbaijan, and provided small-scale military advice and training to Moldova.

THE UNITED STATES

The USA was the largest provider of military assistance to Ukraine between 2014 and 2025. This assistance was initially limited but expanded gradually after 2014, and from 2017 it included lethal equipment, starting with small arms and light weapons. US arms sales and military aid to Ukraine were worth \$1.7 billion between 2014 and 2020. From February 2022, the USA rapidly increased its military assistance to Ukraine. In 2022–25 the USA committed over \$40 billion for providing newly produced equipment, training and services as security assistance to Ukraine, of which \$20.6 billion had been delivered by the end of 2025. In the same period the USA also delivered weapons and military equipment valued at \$31.7 billion

directly from its stockpiles to Ukraine. The US administration in 2025 drastically changed its policy on military assistance to Ukraine, providing limited additional military aid and instead selling arms and military equipment to NATO allies and partners for supply to Ukraine. During 2010–25 Georgia has been one of the USA's largest recipients (after Ukraine, by a significant margin) of US military assistance in Europe, including arms supplies and training. The USA also provided military assistance to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova at low levels compared to overall US external military assistance, but at generally higher levels than provided by the EU or EU members states.

KEY EVENTS

- 2010
EU adopts "Eastern Neighbourhood" framework.
- 2014
Russia annexes Crimea. EU arms embargo on Russia. NATO expands military training support to Ukraine. EU cannot agree on military assistance to Ukraine. EU launches Ukraine civilian security reform mission.
- 2015
UK starts large-scale training of Ukrainian military.
- 2016
A few EU member states start arms supplies to Ukraine.
- 2017
USA approves lethal weapons for Ukraine. Denmark contracts patrol boats for Ukraine. Slovakia supplies artillery to Azerbaijan.
- 2020
Ukraine gains NATO Enhanced Opportunity Partner status. Türkiye contracts frigates for Ukraine. Armenia stops importing major Russian arms.
- 2021
EU agrees on first EPF military aid for Ukraine and Moldova.
- 2022
Full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. EU funds large-scale funding of arms to Ukraine. Most EU states start arming Ukraine NATO takes on key role in coordination of military aid to Ukraine.
- 2023
France and Armenia sign defence partnership.
- 2024
EU agrees on €5 billion more EPF funding for Ukraine. EPF non-lethal military aid to Armenia starts. Moldova signs EU Security and Defence Partnership. EU aid for Georgia partly suspended. Armenia suspends CSTO membership.
- 2025
EU includes Ukraine in EU defence-industry support programmes. USA decreases military aid to Ukraine and instead sells arms to NATO partners for supply to Ukraine.