

# Davos 2026: Special Address by Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine

22 January 2026

**Thank you very much!**

**Dear friends,**

Everyone remembers the great American film “Groundhog Day” with Bill Murray and Andie MacDowell. But no one would want to live like that – repeating the same thing for weeks, months, and, of course, for years. And yet, that’s exactly how we live now. And it’s our life. And every forum like this one proves it. Just last year, here in Davos, I ended my speech with the words: “Europe needs to know how to defend itself.” A year has passed – and nothing has changed. We are still in a situation where I must say the same words.

But why?

The answer is not just about the threats that exist or may appear. Each year brings something new – for Europe and for the world.

Everyone turned attention to Greenland. And it’s clear – most leaders simply are not sure what to do about it. And it seems like everyone is just waiting for America to “cool down” on this topic, hoping it will pass away. But what if it will not? What then?

There was so much talk about the protests in Iran – but they drowned in blood. The world has not helped the Iranian people enough. And it’s true – it has stood aside. In Europe, there were Christmas and New Year celebrations. The seasonal holidays. By the time politicians came back to work and started forming a position – the Ayatollah had already killed thousands.

And what will Iran become after this bloodshed? If the regime survives, it sends a clear signal to every bully: kill enough people, and you stay in power. Who in Europe needs that message to become a reality?

And yet – Europe hasn’t even tried to build its own response.

Let’s look at the Western Hemisphere. President Trump led an operation in Venezuela. And Maduro was arrested. And there were different opinions, but the fact remains: Maduro is on trial in New York.

Sorry, but Putin is not on trial. And this is the fourth year of the biggest war in Europe since World War II – and the man who started it is not only free, he’s still fighting for his frozen money in Europe. And you know what? He’s having some success. It’s true. It’s Putin who’s trying to decide how the frozen Russian assets should be used – not those who have the power to punish him for this war. Thankfully, the EU decided to freeze Russian assets indefinitely – and I am grateful for that – thanks, Ursula, thanks, António, and all the leaders who helped. But when the time came to use those assets to defend against Russian

aggression, the decision was blocked. Putin managed to stop Europe. Unfortunately.

Next point. Because of America's position, people are now avoiding the topic of the International Criminal Court. And that's understandable – it's American historical position. But at the same time, there's still no real progress on establishing a Special Tribunal for Russian aggression against Ukraine, against the Ukrainian people. And we have an agreement – it's true. Many meetings have taken place. But still, Europe hasn't reached even the point of having a home for the Tribunal – with staff and actual work happening inside. What's missing – time or political will? Too often in Europe, something else is always more urgent than justice.

Right now, we are working actively with partners on security guarantees, and I am grateful for that. But those are for after the war ends. Once the ceasefire begins, there will be contingents and joint patrols, and partner flags on Ukrainian soil. And that is a very good step, and a right signal, that the UK and France are ready to actually commit their forces on the ground – and there is already a first agreement on that. Thank you, Keir, thanks, Emmanuel, and all the leaders in our Coalition. And we are doing everything to make sure that our Coalition of the Willing truly becomes a Coalition of Action. And again – everyone is very positive, but – always but – but the backstop of President Trump is needed. And again – no security guarantees work without the U.S. But what about the ceasefire itself? Who can help make it happen? Europe loves to discuss the future but avoids taking action today – action that defines what kind of future we will have. That is the problem. Why can President Trump stop tankers from the shadow fleet and seize oil – but Europe doesn't? Russian oil is being transported right along European shores. That oil funds the war against Ukraine. That oil helps destabilize Europe. So Russian oil must be stopped and confiscated and sold for Europe's benefit. Why not?

If Putin has no money, there's no war for Europe. If Europe has money, then it can protect its people. Right now, those tankers are making money for Putin, and that means, that means Russia continues to push its sick agenda.

Next point. I've said it before, and I'll repeat it again: Europe needs united armed forces – forces that can truly defend Europe. Today, Europe relies only on the belief that if danger comes, NATO will act. But no one has really seen the Alliance in action. If Putin decides to take Lithuania or strike Poland, who will respond? Who will respond?

Right now, NATO exists thanks to belief – belief that the United States will act, that it will not stand aside, and will help. But what if it doesn't?

Believe me, this question is... It's everywhere, in the minds of every European leader. And some try to get closer to President Trump. It's true. Some wait – hoping the problem will disappear. Some have started acting – investing in weapons production, and et cetera, building partnerships, getting public support for higher defense spending...

But let's remember: until America pressured Europe to spend more on defense, most countries were not even trying to reach 5% of GDP – the minimum needed to ensure security. Europe needs to know how to defend itself.

And if you send 30 or 40 soldiers to Greenland – what is that for? What message does it send? What's the message to Putin? To China? And even more importantly, what message does it send to Denmark – the most important – your close ally?

You either declare that European bases will protect the region from Russia and China – and establish those bases – or you risk not being taken seriously because 30 or 40 soldiers won't protect anything.

And we know what to do. If Russian warships are sailing freely around Greenland, Ukraine can help – we have the expertise and weapons to ensure not one of those ships remains. They can sink near Greenland just as they do near Crimea. No problem – we have the tools, and we have people. For us, the sea is not the first line of defense, so we can take actions, and we know how to fight there. If we were asked, and if Ukraine were in NATO – but we are not – we would solve this problem with the Russian ships.

As for Iran, everyone is waiting to see what America will do. And the world offers nothing; Europe offers nothing and does not want to enter this issue as a supporter of the Iranian people and the democracy they need.

But when you refuse to help a people fighting for freedom, the consequences return – and they're always negative. Belarus in 2020 is an example. No one helped their people. And now, Russian "Oreshnik" missiles are deployed in Belarus – within range of most European capitals. That would not have happened if the Belarusian people had won in 2020.

And we've told our European partners multiple times: act now. Act now against those missiles in Belarus. Missiles are never just decoration. But Europe still remains in "Greenland mode" – maybe... someday... someone will do something.

The issue of Russian oil is the same. It's good that many sanctions exist. Russian oil is getting cheaper. But the flow has not stopped. And Russian companies that fund Putin's war machine are still working. And that will not change without more sanctions. And we're grateful for all the pressure put on the aggressor. But let's be honest – Europe must do more, so its sanctions block enemies as effectively as American sanctions. Why is that important? Because if Europe is not seen as a global force, if its actions don't scare bad actors, then Europe will always be reacting – catching up with new dangers and attacks.

We all see that the forces trying to destroy Europe do not waste a single day – they operate freely, even operate inside Europe.

Every "Viktor" who lives off European money while trying to sell out European interests deserves a smack upside the head. And if he feels comfortable in Moscow, it doesn't mean we should let European capitals become little Moscows. We must remember what separates Russia from all of us. The most fundamental line of conflict between Russia and Ukraine and all of Europe is this: Russia fights to devalue people, to make sure that when dictators want to destroy someone – they can. But they must lose power, not gain it.

For example, Russia's missiles are produced only because there are ways to bypass sanctions. It's true. Everyone sees how Russia tries to freeze Ukrainians now, our people, Ukrainians, to death at –20°C. But Russia couldn't build any

ballistic or cruise missiles without critical components from other countries. And it's not just China. Too often, people hide behind the excuse that "China helps Russia." Yes, it does. But not only China. Russia gets components from companies in Europe, the United States, and Taiwan.

Right now, many are investing in stability around Taiwan. To avoid war... But can Taiwanese companies stop contributing electronics to Russia's war? Europe says almost nothing. America says nothing. And Putin makes missiles.

And I thank every country, of course, and every company that helps Ukraine repair its energy system. This is crucial. Thank you to all who support the PURL program, helping us buy Patriot missiles. But wouldn't it be cheaper and easier to just cut Russia off from the components it needs for missile production? Or even destroy the factories making them?

Last year, most of the time was spent talking about long-range weapons for Ukraine. And everybody said that the solution was within range. Now, no one is even talking about it. But Russian missiles and "shaheds" are still here. And we still have the coordinates of the factories where they're made. Today, they target Ukraine. Tomorrow, it could be any NATO country.

And here, in Europe, we're advised not to mention Tomahawks to the Americans – not to spoil the mood. And we're told not to bring up Taurus missiles. When the subject is Türkiye, diplomats say – don't offend Greece. When it's Greece, they say be careful with Türkiye.

In Europe, there are endless internal arguments and things left unsaid that stop Europe from uniting and speaking honestly enough to find real solutions. And too often, Europeans turn against each other – leaders, parties, movements, and communities – instead of standing together to stop Russia, which brings the same destruction to everyone. Instead of becoming a truly global power, Europe remains a beautiful but fragmented kaleidoscope of small and middle powers. Instead of taking the lead in defending freedom worldwide, especially when America's focus shifts elsewhere – Europe looks lost, trying to convince the U.S. President to change. But he will not change.

President Trump loves who he is. And he says he loves Europe. But he will not listen to this kind of Europe.

One of the biggest problems in today's Europe – though it's not often talked about – is the mindset. Some European leaders are from Europe, but not always for Europe. And Europe still feels more like a geography, a history, a tradition – not a real political force, not a great power.

Some Europeans are really strong. It's true. But many say: "We must stand strong." And they always want someone else to tell them how long they need to stand strong. Preferably – until the next election. But that's not how great power works, to my mind. Leaders say: "We must defend European interests." But they hope someone else will do it for them. And speaking of values they often mean valuables.

They are all like: "We need something to replace the old world order with." But where is the line of leaders who are ready to act – act now on land, in the air, and at sea – to build a new global order? You can't build the new world order out of words. Only actions create real order.

Today, America has launched the Board of Peace. Ukraine was invited. So was Russia, Belarus – though the war hasn't stopped. And there is not even a ceasefire. And you've seen who joined. Everyone had their reasons. But here's the thing: Europe hasn't even formed a united position on the American idea. Maybe tonight, when the European Council meets, they will decide something. But the documents were already signed this morning. And tonight they might also finally decide something on Greenland. But last night, Mark Rutte had spoken to President Trump – thank you, Mark, for your productiveness. America is already changing its position – but nobody knows exactly how. So things move faster than us, things move faster than Europe. And how can Europe keep up?

### **Dear friends,**

We should not degrade ourselves to secondary roles – not when we have a chance to be a great power together. We should not accept that Europe is just a "salad" of small and middle powers, seasoned with enemies of Europe. When united, we are truly invincible. And Europe can and must be a global force. Not one that reacts late, but one that defines the future.

That would help everyone – from the Middle East to every other region in the world. That would help Europe itself because the challenges we face now are challenges to the European way of life, where people matter, where nations matter.

Europe can help build a better world. Europe must build a better world. And a world without war, of course.

But for that, Europe needs strength. For that, we must act together – and act in time. And most of all – we must have the courage to act.

And we are actively working to reach solutions. Real solutions. Today we met with President Trump – and our teams are working almost every day. It's not simple. The documents aimed at ending this war are nearly ready. And that really matters. Ukraine is working with full honesty and determination. And that brings results. And Russia must become ready too, to finish this war, to stop this aggression – Russian aggression, Russian war against us. So the pressure must be strong enough. And the support for Ukraine must grow even stronger.

Our previous meetings with the President of the United States brought us air defense missiles. And thanks, Europeans. They helped also. And today, we also spoke about protecting the skies – which means protecting lives, of course. And I hope America will continue to stand with us.

And Europe must be strong. And Ukraine is ready to help – with anything needed to guarantee peace and prevent destruction. We are ready to help others become stronger than they are now. We are ready to be part of a Europe that truly matters – a Europe of real power – great power.

Today, we need that power to protect our own independence. But you need Ukraine's independence, too, because tomorrow, you may have to defend your way of life. And when Ukraine is with you, no one will wipe their feet on you. And you will always have a way to act – and act in time. This is very important – act in time.

**Dear friends,**

Today is one of the last days of Davos – though definitely not the last Davos, of course. And everyone agrees on that. Many people believe that, somehow, things will work out on their own. But we cannot rely on “somehow.” For real security, faith is not enough – faith in a partner, in a lucky turn of events.

No intellectual discussions are capable of stopping wars. We need action. World order comes from action. And we just need the courage to act. Without action now, there is no tomorrow. Let’s end this “Groundhog Day.” And yes – it is possible.

Thank you.

**Glory to Ukraine!**