

European mayors call on their governments to stop buying Russian fuels immediately and shut down all trade

“The sudden shock of ending our addiction to oil, gas and coal is a necessary sacrifice, much smaller than the sacrifice of innocent Ukrainian women and men”, declare mayors in a joint call. 100 mayors of European cities, including Barcelona, Leipzig, London, Prague, Rome, Mannheim or Oslo signed the so-called Joint Call from Mariupol. They demand that the EU shut down all trade with Russia and Belarus immediately.

Launching humanitarian corridors, introducing systemic solutions to the refugee issue and the immediate cessation of coal, oil and gas purchases - these are the most important demands of the mayors and representatives of European cities regarding the war in Ukraine. Following an online meeting initiated by mayors of Gdansk and Florence, the resolution was adopted on Tuesday, March 15, to the European Commission and individual governments in which mayors support increased sanctions and more decisive actions.

The meeting was initiated and hosted by **Aleksandra Dulkiewicz**, the Mayor of Gdansk, and **Dario Nardella**, the Mayor of Florence. Over 100 mayors, deputy mayors and representatives of cities participated in the meeting.

“We are the representatives of the local governments, which means we’re located closer to people than any other government institution or council. That’s why we should speak to our state bodies and that’s why they should hear us. On behalf of our people we call on the European Union and European governments: please do not let Europe be guided by fear. Please take immediate, concrete, and severe measures to help our Ukrainian brothers and sisters”, Aleksandra Dulkiewicz said.

The meeting began with a speech by **Serhii Orlov**, the vice-Mayor of Mariupol, the Ukrainian city under strong Russian attacks. *“Everyone has seen photos of our bombed maternity hospital. Hospitals, kindergartens and schools are targets of Russian bombing. Mariupol is now a city of martyrs - we are cut off from all utilities, water, energy, etc. Humanitarian actions are impossible, there is no way to evacuate people. Putin’s goal is to take over Ukraine without Ukrainians”, Mayor Orlov said.*

In the joint resolution submitted during the meeting, European local governments representatives demand a stop to all trade relations with Russia and Belarus until the Russian army withdraws from Ukraine. *“We believe that the lives of women and men are more important than trade, jobs and even energy”,* stated in the resolution.

They call on the European Commission to force the Russian government to open humanitarian corridors: *“We cannot accept that so-called humanitarian corridors “opened” by the Russian army are corridors in which civilians are being shot at and killed, trying to escape on foot or by bus”.*

According to Mayors, there is a necessity of European solidarity to work out and swiftly adopt decisions concerning the refugees’ capable reception and relocation in Europe.

"We need a system based on the expertise of the UN and the EU, institutions experienced in dealing with these problems in a structured manner", said **Rafał Trzaskowski**, the Mayor of Warsaw, the city hosting the largest number of refugees from the Ukraine.

European Mayors also want to speak with one voice: deliberate attacks on civilians are war crimes - we read in a resolution. *"I hope there will be a trial of Putin, and his staff also will be prosecuted for war crimes",* said **Luca Orlando**, the Mayor of Palermo.

Summarising the resolution, the Mayor of Gdańsk states: "Launching humanitarian corridors and setting up competent and professional international institutions may take many days, but must be our priority. The entire cessation of trade exchange is, however, an exclusive single competence of the EU. It might be decided overnight. The Commission must act now. All 100 Mayors agree - Europe does not trade with murderers and liars. Europe must do more.

You will find attached the full text of the Joint Call and the list of mayors who signed it. Mayors from another cities can support the Call through European city organizations such as: European Association of Local Democracy (ALDA), the Eurocities, METREX, Metropolis, and the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC), CEMR, the Committee of the Regions - Group Ukraine, the Union of Polish Metropolises (UMP) and the Union of the Polish Cities (ZMP).

The recording of the meeting in English you can find there: <https://fb.watch/bNhBlx5Ra5/>