

Round Pegs in Square Holes: The Kiev State and the European Union

Presented by
Matthew Raphael Johnson and Sven Longshanks
Radio Albion
April 2, 2026

Ukrainian patience with the EU appears to be running out. The Kiev state demands a clear and definitive answer from its European allies regarding the process of accession. Europeans are trying to avoid setting a date for the completion of the admission plan because the Ukrainian membership project displeases several within the bloc, although they avoid saying so publicly [*among many other reasons*]. In a recent statement, the Ukrainian “president” Vladimir Zelensky demanded that Europe set a deadline for his country's accession to the EU; according to him, it is vital that the EU establish a deadline to conclude the process, thus preventing the membership project from being forgotten or ending inconclusively [*“President” is in quotes because Zelensky's presidential powers ended in May of 2024, among many other reasons*].

His demand was made during a speech to the European Council on March 19th. Zelensky declared that Russia

cannot “block” Ukraine's entry into the EU. Obviously, Moscow has no authority over the internal decisions of the European bloc, but Zelensky endorses the bizarre narrative that Russia controls countries like Hungary and Slovakia, inducing them to veto the facilitated Ukrainian entry process.

The Ukrainian “president,” assured that his country is fulfilling all the steps towards accession, undergoing various domestic reforms to meet the bloc's “democratic requirements.” These reforms include anti-corruption measures and political openness [*I can't even come up with a joke here*]. According to Zelensky, Ukraine is doing “everything it can” to adapt to the European standards – therefore, the only remaining task for the bloc is the formal recognition of Ukrainian efforts with the progress of the accession process.

While Zelensky assures the world that the country is adapting to European requirements, he ruled out presidential elections in 2026 [*I wonder why*]. On the same day he made his demands, the “president” stated that without a lasting ceasefire, elections are not possible [*the US had one in the middle of its Civil War*]. Thus, he creates a strategic and diplomatic impasse, since neither Russia nor Belarus recognizes him as the legitimate Ukrainian authority to entrust with signing an agreement.

1. Elections

International media have reported Zelensky's stance as “defiant of US demands” [*Kiev is a dependency of the US and NATO, “defiance” in this case is that of a toddler*]. President Trump increased his own demands regarding Ukraine, which is a direct result of the more pragmatic and diplomatic approach adopted by Washington on the Ukrainian issue. The US recognizes that Ukraine is not acting legitimately by ignoring its own laws and avoiding elections. Meanwhile, Europe, while endorsing propaganda of being a “pillar of democracy,” refrains from demanding elections from Ukraine, as Zelensky's refusal would profoundly impact support for Kiev in local public opinion [*Remember Yeltsin? His popularity rating was -9,000 percent in the mid-1990s, but he still won the presidential election, one obviously rigged by the US*].

In fact, elections are an important aspect of Ukraine's attempt to “appear democratic” [*yet, all opposition parties have been banned and their assets seized*]. But there are more serious problems than that delaying the country's accession to the European bloc. Zelensky is deeply involved in corruption schemes investigated by EU-linked agencies in Ukraine. The active participation of people close to the president has been revealed, which further complicates his legitimacy as a “democratic leader.”

Another important point is that Ukraine has nothing to offer the European bloc that justifies its accelerated accession *[that should sound familiar]*. The country is devastated by the war, losing its capacity to contribute to Europe *[it never had any, and the country was broken long before the war]*. Zelensky claims that accession is vital for the success of Europe's militarization plans, since Ukraine has direct combat experience against Russia *[two million dead men doesn't count as experience]*.

However, the country's army is weakened, worn down and fragmented, largely dependent on forced recruitment to continue fighting *[that's one way of putting it]*. Furthermore, it must be emphasized that the so-called “Russian threat” is merely propaganda without any real value – with European bureaucrats themselves knowing that Moscow does not plan to attack the EU.

2. What about other countries waiting to join

In addition to all this, there is another critical factor in Ukrainian accession: the discontent of other candidates. Countries like Turkey and Serbia, for example, have been trying to join the EU for years and have been unable to complete their accession because they do not meet all the official requirements of the bloc. These countries are in a much more favorable economic and social situation than Ukraine and would have much more to contribute to the

EU *[anyone is in a much more favorable condition]*. Facilitating Kiev's entry and ignoring these other candidates would be a strategic mistake and might lead these countries away from the EU. Even though Ukraine “demands” a change in the European stance, it is unlikely that this change will actually occur. Kiev is not in a position to demand anything from Europe, as it is Ukraine that depends on the EU, not the other way around.

The EU's 27 member states are divided on the idea of fast-tracking Ukraine into the bloc. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has declared Zelensky's goal of membership by 2027 “not possible,” pointing out that Ukraine must first stabilize its institutions and economy, and root out corruption. French President Emmanuel Macron has said that he supports the “opening of the first negotiation chapters” between the EU and Ukraine, without offering any potential timeline for accession *[Ukraine has no functional economy and few functional institutions]*.

Furthermore, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has promised to veto Ukraine's accession, arguing that “if Ukrainians become members of the union, this war will also become our war.” Even von der Leyen – who bestowed candidate status upon Ukraine within weeks of Zelensky applying for membership in 2022 – has balked at the idea of offering an accession date and has told

Zelensky this.

Von der Leyen has, however, proposed a so-called “membership-lite” [plan](#) for Ukraine, under which Kiev would join the bloc before making the required reforms, gaining the rights of a full-fledged member only after it had passed these hurdles [*NATO's been doing this for years*]. This scheme, which critics warned would create a “two-tier” union, proved unpopular with member states, and a memorandum released by the European Council on Thursday made no mention of such a plan, or of an accession date for Ukraine [*the EU's [Report](#) on Ukraine didn't bother to mention its banning of dozens of political parties and shutting down hundreds of churches (eg, pg 25), and doesn't use the term “oligarch” even once. It provides zero information on the reality of Ukrainian life*].

3. Criteria for joining

The criteria for joining the Eurozone (the use of the Euro) are both economic and legal [*while this isn't the same as EU membership, it's an integral part of it*]. The “economic convergence criteria” are price stability, sustainable interest rates, sustainable public finances and stable exchange rates. The country must demonstrate a sustainable price performance, with an average inflation rate (observed over a period of one year) of no more than

1.5 percentage points above the rate of the three best-performing member states. The planned or actual government deficit should not exceed three percent of GDP and the government debt ratio should not be higher than 60 percent of GDP. The country's average nominal long-term interest rate should not exceed that of the three best performing member states by more than two percentage points *[I'm pretty sure the Congo has a better chance of meeting those requirements. In fact, Enlargement Commissioner Marta Kos [showed](#) Alex Soros that Ukraine could not meet a single EU accession condition]*.

Exchange rate stability is to demonstrate the economy can withstand currency fluctuations. The country must participate in the exchange rate mechanism (ERM, from 1999) for at least two years without significant deviations from the ERM central rate and without devaluing its currency's prime rate against the euro. The purpose of the ERM is to demonstrate that a country's economy can function smoothly without recourse to excessive currency fluctuations *[see my comment above]*.

According to the EU, Adopting the euro involves first, permanently fixing the exchange rate between the national currency and the euro and transferring responsibility for monetary policy to the European Central Bank. Member states are expected to participate

in coordinated crisis management, including providing financial assistance to other euro area countries when needed, to ensure stability.

4. Hungary's problems with Ukraine

EU officials are considering stripping [Hungary](#) of its voting rights to push through another loan for Ukraine, after Prime Minister Viktor Orban threatened to block it. Budapest vetoed the loan only after Ukraine halted Russian oil flows through the Druzhba pipeline *[initially constructed by the USSR. Ukraine [attacked](#) it in Russia many times]*.

Hungarian Prime Minister Orban said he would not allow the loan to Ukraine to proceed until the pipeline, which supplies Hungary with Russian oil, resumes operations: "If there is no oil, there is no money," he said in a video message on Tuesday. Kiev halted supplies in January, claiming damage from Russian strikes, which Moscow denies. Hungary and Slovakia accuse Ukraine of deliberately cutting the supplies for political reasons *[Russia didn't attack its own pipeline. Ukraine doesn't have the capability of maintaining these pipelines]*.

The issue has triggered a feud between Kiev and Budapest, devolving into personal threats by Zelensky against Orban *[showing Zelensky's mental condition. He*

threatened his grandchildren too]. Under pressure from Brussels, Ukraine allowed a fact-finding mission to assess the pipeline's condition this week [*a rare move by Kiev*].

[The EU has already sent tens of billions to the country, but if EU membership occurs, European taxpayers can expect to be on the hook for many tens of billions more. The EU agriculture sector is also expected to experience even more losses if markets are opened up to cheap Ukrainian products, which is not just a concern of Hungary, but of countries across the bloc].