

EU Ready to Provide \$15B in Financial Aid to Ukraine

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The European Union is ready to provide 11 billion euros (\$15 billion) of financial support to Ukraine over the next couple of years via a series of loans and grants, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said Wednesday.

The assistance would be delivered in coordination with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank, and is in part contingent on Ukraine signing a deal with the International Monetary Fund.

"The package combined could bring an overall support of at least 11 billion euros over the next couple of years, from the EU budget and EU-based international financial institutions," Barroso told a news conference.

The announcement comes a day after the U.S. offered \$1 billion in loan guarantees and said it would send technical experts to Ukraine to advise its Central Bank and Finance Ministry

on how to tackle economic difficulties.

Ukraine is on the verge of bankruptcy because of economic mismanagement, high energy costs and currency turmoil fueled by a conflict with Russia since the ouster of Moscow-backed President Viktor Yanukovich in February.

The West has stepped up efforts in recent days to persuade Moscow to pull its forces from the Ukrainian Crimea peninsula, which they seized after the fall of Yanukovych, and avert the risk of war.

The EU also plans to bring forward trade benefits that Ukraine would have received had it signed an association agreement with the EU last year, and will work on providing energy to Ukraine via "reverse flows" of gas from the EU.

Kiev's new rulers have said they need \$35 billion over the next two years. But its shorter-term requirements are much less and are estimated to be around \$4 billion, according to some EU officials.

European leaders will hold an emergency summit Thursday in Brussels to discuss what steps to take next on Russia, having threatened sanctions if Moscow does not reverse course in Ukraine.

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