

Kiev Needs EU Aid 'Yesterday' Ukrainian Prime Minister Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk attends a news conference in Kiev.

BRUSSELS — Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk appealed to the European Union for urgent financial aid on Monday, saying the government was doing all it could to fix a shattered economy but needed help.

A year of revolution and war with pro-Russian separatists has pushed Ukraine's hryvnia currency to record lows and crippled the economy, which was already near bankruptcy after years of corruption and economic mismanagement.

Asked when Ukraine needed new financial assistance, Yatseniuk told reporters in Brussels: "Let me put it in a nutshell — yesterday." The EU, which last year offered a \$15 billion package of loans and grants to Ukraine, is demanding far-reaching economic reforms in return.

Brussels has refused to organize a donors' conference to help Ukraine until Kiev produces a detailed blueprint for the country's economic development.

Yatseniuk said Ukraine was doing all it could.

Ukraine has lost 20 percent of its economy due to Russia's annexation of Crimea and the pro-Russian separatist uprising in the east, the Ukrainian currency has fallen sharply, and yet the government has raised more money in taxes, he said.

"We will do everything that was promised ... but to overcome this period Ukraine needs to get some kind of cushion and this cushion is a new package of financial aid," he said after talks with EU officials in Brussels.

"It is difficult for us to fight with a nuclear state which is armed to the teeth," he added, alluding to Russia.

EU Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn said the EU would continue to provide "an unprecedented level of financial support" to Ukraine but this hinged on reforms.

Hahn said the EU and Ukraine had agreed on a "road map" of reforms, which was a precondition for organizing the donors' conference, but still needed to work out the details of deadlines and milestones for specific steps. However, he expected the conference to be held early next year.

Speaking alongside Hahn, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said the EU could adopt new restrictions on European investment in Crimea in time for an EU summit starting on Thursday.

President Petro Poroshenko held out the prospect last month that Ukraine could hold a referendum in several years' time on joining NATO, drawing a warning from Moscow that this would increase regional tensions.

Speaking at NATO headquarters, where he held talks with Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, Yatseniuk said he personally would be happy to join NATO as quickly as possible but he was not sure all NATO allies would be happy with this.

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