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Poland, Baltics Urge EU to Strengthen Eastern Borders

By AFP

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Polish soldiers patrol the border with Belarus. **Zuma / TASS**

Poland and the Baltic states are urging the EU to strengthen its eastern borders, warning in a joint letter to Brussels of a "looming threat" from Russia and Belarus.

The four EU member countries are trenchant critics of Moscow, which they accuse of orchestrating hybrid attacks including "intimidation, instrumentalization of migrants, sabotage, disinformation, foreign information manipulation and interference."

In their joint letter, seen by AFP on Thursday, the leaders of Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania urged the bloc to "spend more and coordinate on defense initiatives within the EU and with NATO."

"Building a defense infrastructure system along the EU external border with Russia and Belarus will address the dire and urgent need to secure the EU from military and hybrid

threats," they said.

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Poland and the Baltic states have already begun fortifying their frontiers with Russia and Belarus. Warsaw has earmarked more than 2.3 billion euros ($2.5 billion) for defense measures along the border.

The countries' joint letter, sent to coincide with the start of a two-day EU summit in Brussels, urged the bloc to support border protection "both politically and financially."

Likewise, they warned that the EU was the target of "an unprecedented range of hybrid attacks perpetrated by Russia and its proxies," including its ally, Belarus.

Poland last month accused Russia of flying thousands of would-be asylum seekers to Moscow and then attempting to send them into the EU across its eastern borders.

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