The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Zelensky Criticizes ‘Fragmented’ Europe’s Inaction on Defense at Davos

By Moscow Times Reporter

January 22, 2026



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and U.S. President Donald Trump meet at the World Economic Forum. **president.gov.ua**

DAVOS, Switzerland — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky criticized Kyiv’s European allies for what he called their inaction in Davos on Thursday as diplomatic efforts to end Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine dragged on ahead of its fourth anniversary.

Addressing the World Economic Forum, Zelensky described his meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump as “very good” but lamented a lack of progress to end the war, comparing the Davos congress and other high-level meetings to the film “Groundhog Day.”

In rare criticism of Ukraine’s closest backers, Zelensky accused the continent’s leaders of failing to take decisive action, pleaded for Europe to do more for its own defense and challenged it to do more to stop Russian oil.

“Just last year, here in Davos, I ended my speech with the words Europe needs to know how to defend itself,” said Zelensky, wearing a black jacket and black dress shirt. “A year has passed, and nothing has changed.”

“Europe can and must be a global force” but remains a “fragmented kaleidoscope of small and middle powers,” he said.

Zelensky spoke as U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner were set to meet Putin in Moscow for peace discussions later Thursday.

“This is like the last mile, which is difficult,” Zelensky said of the U.S.-Ukrainian efforts to iron out a peace framework. “Russia has to be ready for compromises.”

Related article: Putin Thanks Trump for ‘Board of Peace’ Invite Ahead of Ukraine Talks

He said an agreement on security guarantees for Ukraine had been reached with the U.S. but not yet signed, but did not offer any other details of the ongoing negotiations.

Zelensky also suggested that Ukrainian, Russian and U.S. officials would hold their first trilateral talks in the UAE in the coming days.

Zelensky said both Ukraine and Russia had been invited to Trump’s “Board of Peace,” with the U.S. leader holding a signing ceremony for the initiative at Davos earlier Thursday.

He also said the world had not done enough to help the Iranian people amid a violent crackdown on protests in the Islamic Republic that has seen thousands killed.

Trump’s threats to annex or buy Greenland and impose punitive tariffs on European countries who oppose him had loomed over Davos this week, overshadowing the Ukraine war.

It had been unclear if Zelensky would appear at the event at all in the wake of a Russian air attack that cut electricity to over 1 million people in Kyiv. Reports in recent days said he had canceled his appearance, instead choosing to remain in Ukraine to deal with the crisis.

But he appeared at the gathering in the Swiss Alpine town after Trump said Wednesday that he planned to meet with him the following day.

When asked what observers could do to assist Ukraine, Zelensky pleaded to the gathering of global business and government leaders to invest, do business in and create jobs in the country, despite the perceived risks.

“If you believe in our life after the war… you can invest now,” he said.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/01/22/zelensky-criticizes-fragmented-europes-inaction-on-defense-at-davos-a91757