

INTERNATIONAL WEEKLY

№1 01.02.2023-15.02.2023

Topics:

- Ukraine – European Union
- Foreign and Defense Policy of Ukraine
- The course of the Russian-Ukrainian war



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(01.02 – 15.02.2023)

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The publication "International Weekly" is the project of the Foreign Policy Research Institute with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Project Office Ukraine & Belarus. The publication presents only the authors' research. They do not necessarily reflect the position of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom.

- *THEME ANALYSIS: The Ukraine-EU summit: has it become a breakthrough on the way to full membership?*



*Photo: Volodymyr Zelenskyi and Ursula von der Leyen
Source: Office of the President of Ukraine*

On February 3, 2023, the 24th summit between Ukraine and the European Union took place. The previous summit was held in October 2021 in Kyiv. It was planned that the 2022 summit would be conducted in December, it was originally supposed to be in Brussels, but the parties agreed to move the event to the capital of Ukraine. President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, High Representative of the EU Josep Borrell, President of the European Council Charles Michel and 14 European Commissioners visited Kyiv.

The main topics for discussion were:

- 1) Ukraine's European path and the accession process;
- 2) the EU's response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine;
- 3) Ukraine's initiatives for just peace and accountability;
- 4) cooperation on issues of reconstruction and relief and in the areas of energy and connectivity;
- 5) global food security.

According to the results of the Summit, the EU announced the allocation of the first billion euros for the restoration of the destruction caused by Russia's war against Ukraine under the

"Fast Recovery" plan. The leaders supported the development of the International Center for the Investigation of Crimes of Aggression in Ukraine (ICPA) and the preservation and storage of evidence for future trials in The Hague. The EU also supported the Ukrainian "Peace Formula", an initiative of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, which should form the basis of a just end to the war. The European Union is ready to work on the implementation of all ten of its points and on holding a Peace summit.

The joint statement adopted at the summit is quite ambitious. In the document, the European Union confirmed that the future of Ukraine and its citizens lies in the European Union and expressed its readiness to support Ukraine as long as necessary. The EU recognized the significant efforts that Ukraine has demonstrated in recent months in achieving the goals underlying its candidate status, and welcomed Ukraine's reform efforts. Progress in reforming is not abstract, it is specifically analyzed in the document that the representatives of the European Union handed over to the Ukrainian authorities.

Before the Summit, Ukraine received the "Commission Analytical report on Ukraine's alignment with the EU acquis." This report helps to assess how much the candidate country has approached the EU. In total, for 32 chapters, Ukraine got 69 points, that is, the average score is 2.16. Compared to other "Associated Trio" states, this is the best result. Georgia received 67 points, while Moldova - only 55. For four out of 32 chapters, Ukraine received a high score - *four*, that is, confirmation of "good compliance". This applies to the chapters "customs union", "energy", "foreign policy" and "security policy". In another five areas, Ukraine received a "three", which is generally a good rating for a novice candidate. At the same time, there are eight areas in which Ukraine was given the lowest score (that is, those where Ukraine almost did not adapt EU law), and 15 areas where the transformation was rated as a "two", that is, only partial implementation of European norms was demonstrated.¹

The successful implementation of reforms will further determine the country's prospects for joining the European Union. *A decision on the opening of negotiations on Ukraine's accession may be made as early as this autumn.* However, the question still remains whether the EU will make such a decision. The leaders of the EU countries still emphasize the need for internal transformations in Ukraine. First of all, regarding **anti-corruption reforms and in the judicial sphere.**

In January, a large-scale anti-corruption campaign was conducted in Ukraine against top officials involved in corruption. This strengthened the position of the country's leadership on the eve of the summit, because concrete results of the work of the system of anti-corruption bodies in Ukraine were demonstrated to Ukrainian partners. In addition, on January 12 this year 8 members of the Supreme Council of Justice were appointed, after which a new head of this body was elected. The Verkhovna Rada has also already registered the Law on Amendments to the Criminal Code on Strengthening the Independence of the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office.

¹ Україна-лідерка та Україна-двієчниця: як Брюссель оцінює готовність Києва до вступу в ЄС, 07.02.2023,
URL: <https://www.euointegration.com.ua/articles/2023/02/7/7155643/>

Thus, the leadership of Ukraine demonstrates that the current government listens to European partners and is really trying to do everything possible to open accession negotiations. At the same time, it is worth noting that not all European countries are currently inclined to a positive decision for Ukraine after the upcoming evaluation of the fulfillment of EU requirements in the fall. There are still European partners for whom Ukraine's accession to the EU is a procedural issue that should be resolved after the country reaches the Copenhagen criteria.

Ukraine continues to move closer to the EU and improve its legislative and economic standards, however, *the issue of joining the European Union remains open and has no a determined date or deadline*. The leadership of Ukraine, in particular, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, expects that the EU will demonstrate political will and eventually a decision on the opening of accession negotiations will be made already this year. The President of Ukraine officially expressed such expectations in February during his address to the citizens. This position is supported by Eastern European states such as Poland and the Baltic states. However, with traditional skeptics such as France, Austria, Denmark, the situation is still difficult and they are to be convinced. According to Denys Shmygal, after the opening of accession negotiations, Ukraine expects to become a full EU member in 2 years.²

As a result of the visit of representatives of the European Union to Kyiv and the Ukraine-EU summit, Ukraine has received diplomatic and political support amidst the war with Russia. The EU confirmed its participation in the implementation of the "Peace Formula" initiative. Also, representatives of the European Union expressed their intention to continue military support. Ukraine has not received assurances about the supply of long-range weapons and aircraft, but this issue remains on the agenda of bilateral cooperation with member countries. **The issue of Ukraine's accession to the EU is not so clear-cut. Within the EU, there is still no unanimous position on the expediency of opening negotiations already this year.** Ukraine, of course, will continue to convince its partners that in modern conditions such decisions require political will. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the past and leave Ukraine outside Europe. At the same time, **the willingness of European bureaucrats to abandon traditional approaches will largely depend on the effectiveness of internal transformations within Ukraine.** At the beginning of the year, official Kyiv demonstrated its readiness and desire to fulfill EU requirements. The sustainability of this process may become one of the main factors in the positive decision of the European Union to start negotiations on Ukraine's accession this fall.

² Розраховуємо пройти шлях переговорів про вступ у ЄС менше ніж за 2 роки, — Денис Шмигаль, 13.01.2023,
URL: <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/rozrakhovuiemo-proity-shliakh-perehovoriv-pro-vstup-u-ies-menshe-nizh-za-2-roky-denys-shmyhal>

- *THEME ANALYSIS: February diplomatic tour of President V. Zelenskyy to European capitals has accelerated military assistance to Ukraine*



*Photo: Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Emmanuel Macron and Olaf Scholz
Source: Office of the President of Ukraine*

At the beginning of the year, partner countries announced the provision of a significant amount of weapons: Marder, Stryker, Bradley AFVs. This technique will best help Ukraine destroy endless waves of Russian infantry offensives in the East. However, **Ukraine needs tanks and aircraft for offensive actions.** For more effective defense and offensive, Ukraine also needs long-range missiles. The taboo on the transfer of tanks was de facto lifted by Emmanuel Macron with the transfer of the AMX-10, and finally confirmed by Rishi Sunak - with the announcement of the provision of "Challenger" tanks. After that, decisions were made regarding the German "Leopard" and American "Abrams" tanks.

Great Britain agreed to train Ukrainian pilots and this is already an important decision, because having trained pilots, Ukraine will have a serious additional argument regarding the urgency of transferring aviation. However, this is not enough. Great Britain will train Ukrainian pilots on Typhoon aircraft. According to The Wall Street Journal, Great Britain can provide Ukraine in the best case with only about 30 Tranche 1 Eurofighter Typhoon fighters.

¹The best option would be to train Ukrainian pilots on F-16 aircraft, the most common fourth-generation fighters. More than 4,600 such planes were created, which would make it easier to form a coalition of states that could transfer this equipment. However, the US still refuses to take this step, and NATO allies are waiting for the decision of the White House. So far, the agreement of Great Britain has not affected the USA and other partners as hoped in Kyiv, however, Ukrainian diplomacy continues to work in this direction and eventually Ukraine should receive planes, because the prospect of effective offensive actions and the lives of Ukrainian defenders depend on this decision.

The situation with tanks also remains ambiguous. According to The Times, only a quarter of the approximately 320 promised tanks will be delivered to Ukraine in April. The terms of delivery and the real amount of equipment that the partners are ready to send to Ukraine in the coming months remain unclear. For example, it will not be a surprise if it turns out that of about 50 spare Leopard tanks of the Spanish armed forces, only 5 will be operational. *The Russian-Ukrainian war allows NATO countries to rearm* and there is no doubt that at the end of the Russian invasion, the North Atlantic Alliance will be technologically superior to the Russian Federation. **However, Ukraine is currently paying with lives of its citizens, protecting the eastern flank of Europe from Russian expansion. And the equipment that is in service with European countries is now needed precisely in Ukraine.** At the same time, last year's needs for 300 tanks, which Valery Zaluzhnyy defined in his article, are no longer relevant, because the Russians have strengthened their positions, mobilized the military and prepared more equipment. Realizing that phone conversations and public appeals will not speed up these much-needed weapons, in February Volodymyr Zelenskyy decided to personally meet with the leaders of European states in order to convince their partners to increase, and most importantly, speed up the transfer of weapons necessary for the offensive.

The President's trip was caused primarily by the difficult situation at the front and the urgency to change the dynamics of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Therefore, the main topics of such an emergency round of discussions became military aid. If Russia is not defeated in Ukraine, the state of European security, as it was before February 24, 2022, will remain a thing of the past. The more opportunities are given to the Russian Federation to adapt to the war and deplete the economic resources of NATO countries, the greater the probability that the security order on the continent will not be restored, economic development will slow down and then the confrontation with the axis of authoritarian states will become even more difficult. In order to convey this signal to the main Western European states, at the beginning of February, the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy traveled abroad, where he met with the leaders of Great Britain, France and Germany. He began his tour with a visit to London, where he met with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, spoke before the British Parliament and held a meeting with King Charles III. As a result of the meeting between the President of

¹ How Many Eurofighter Typhoon Aircraft the UK Can Provide to Ukraine, And Will This Number Be Enough, 09.02.2023,
URL: https://en.defence-ua.com/news/how_many_eurofighter_typhoon_aircraft_the_uk_can_provide_to_ukraine_and_will_this_number_be_enough-5697.html

Ukraine and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, the "Declaration of Unity" was signed - a political document in which official London confirmed its intention to continue supporting Ukraine against the background of Russian aggression. Great Britain has already provided Ukraine with 2.3 billion in military support during the invasion. This is more than France and Germany have provided. Britain's position on Russia's war against Ukraine was clear and understandable even before February 24, when NLAW anti-tank missile systems and other weapons were delivered to Kyiv on the eve of the Russian invasion. While the leaders of Germany and France consistently keep leaving room for different interpretations of their position.

Understanding this, Volodymyr Zelenskyy arranged talks with Emmanuel Macron and Olaf Scholz, which took place in the evening of the same day, immediately after the events at the Foggy Albion. At a joint press conference before the negotiations, Emmanuel Macron said that it is necessary to ensure the victory of Ukraine, for this Paris intends to adapt and increase military aid, continue supplies in accordance with the needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Olaf Scholz, in turn, used more restrained rhetoric and declared that Russia should not win. Taking into account the fact that Russia's goal is the destruction of Ukrainian statehood, the occupation of only a part of the Ukrainian territory is already a loss for the Russian Federation, and therefore, the ambitions of the Federal Republic of Germany, in the words of Scholz, are not high enough.

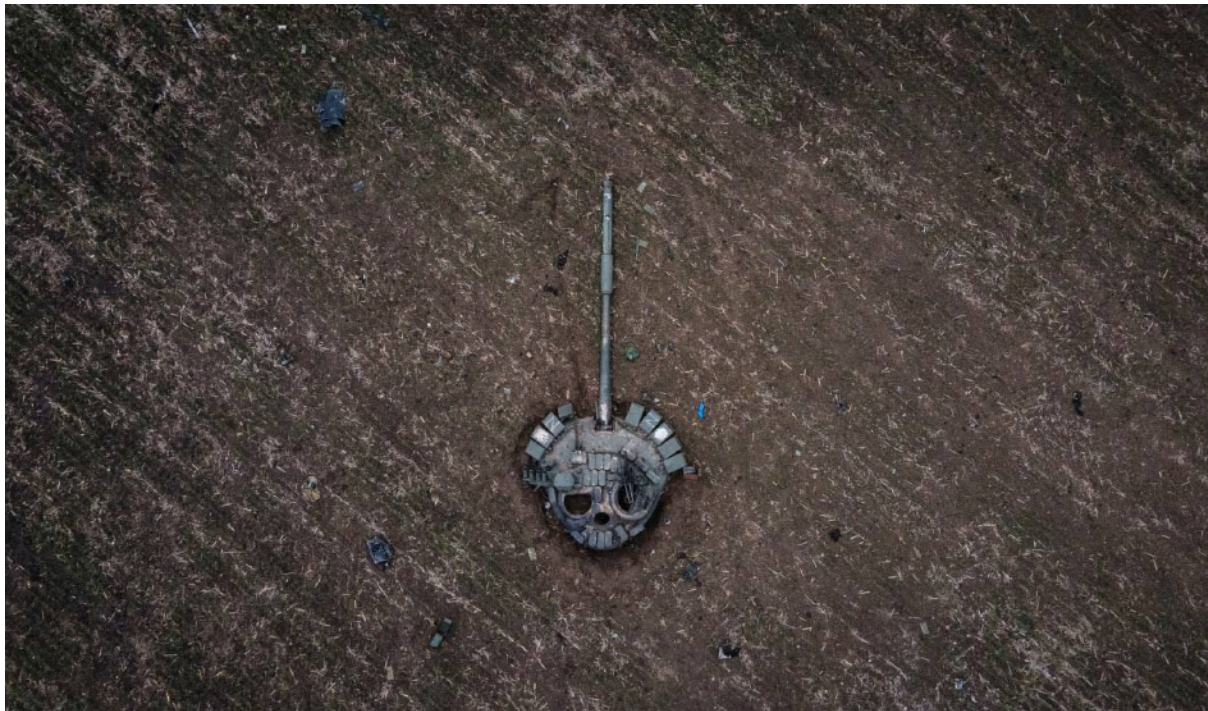
It is significant that later in February, Olaf Scholz at the Munich Security Conference stated the importance of continuing aid to Ukraine, but added stressing the risk of escalation. Important decisions are difficult for the chancellor of Germany, and the fear of a direct confrontation with the Russian Federation is still felt in the context of support of Ukraine. Even in the matter of creating a tank coalition, Germany, the country producing the Leopard tanks, did not show leadership.

However, by artificially restraining the increase in the amount of aid to Ukraine, and therefore its ability to resist Russian troops and return territories, the partner countries create another **risk - not to defeat Russia. Ukraine's victory is not guaranteed yet and the war may drag on.** If the Russian-Ukrainian war continues after 2024 or 2025, European societies may forget about the way of life they had before. The EU states will not be able to remain safe while there is a war in the geographical center of Europe. Even the establishment of a cease-fire regime will not guarantee an improvement in the general situation, because for Ukraine it would mean the loss of territory, citizens, their rights, lack of foreign investment, being in a gray zone. **Russia will be able to use the temporary ceasefire to restore forces and launch a new offensive under better conditions.** Such a prospect does not satisfy either Ukraine or the EU and its leaders: France and Germany.

Emmanuel Macron still hopes to bring Russia back into the European security system. It is worth considering the traditional French anti-Americanism and the desire for greater European autonomy. Although the idea of an autonomous Europe is generally positive, the desire to involve Russia in ensuring the implementation of this concept should not hinder the desire of partners to help Ukraine defeat the Russian Federation. In addition, the very concept of a "sovereign" Europe is impossible in conditions where France's main partner in Europe,

Germany, avoids leadership in Europe, in particular with regard to supporting Ukraine, and tries to act after the US. The main goal of the USA and the EU should not be to save Putin's face, to avoid escalation, or to avoid the collapse of the Russian Federation, but to ensure the victory of Ukraine. In Western expert circles, a discussion about the future in which Russia will disintegrate is gradually emerging. The presence of a clear vision of such a development of events would have a positive impact on EU and US policy, as in this case the leaders of Ukraine's partner countries would not have fear due to the unpredictability of the world's largest nuclear power.

Zelenskyy trip for talks with European leaders took place against the backdrop of heavy fighting in eastern Ukraine. In the conditions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine need for more equipment to carry out a counter-offensive, Ukraine needs a clear position and political will of the leadership of the main partner countries. Olaf Scholz and Emmanuel Macron are the leaders of the largest continental powers in Europe, which provided definitely large amounts of aid to Ukraine, but they do not meet the urgent needs of the Ukrainian army. So far, there are no concrete actions that would indicate that a personal meeting with the President of Ukraine convinced the leaders of Germany and France to increase military aid. However, **the more the partners delay the supply of tanks, aircraft and long-range missiles, the more citizens Ukraine will lose, while European states will lose economically from the prolongation of the conflict, and the sooner European leaders understand this, the less their countries will suffer from the consequences of Russian aggression.**



Source: Army FM

■ *Changes at the front*

The transition of the Defense Forces of Ukraine to positional defense became the main trend of the winter military campaign of 2023. Last year, the Armed Forces of Ukraine conducted a rapid counter-offensive in the direction of Kharkiv. Ukrainian troops defeated the occupying forces, liberated a large part of Kharkiv region, part of Luhansk region and Donetsk region, and pushed the Russians back to Luhansk. Back then the military leadership of the country decided not to advance further to Svatove, probably due to the lack of reserves and heavy equipment. The Ukrainian leadership expected an increase in military aid from the United States and European countries in order to have the necessary capabilities to push the occupying forces out of Ukrainian territories. Last year, however, the necessary help from partners was not provided.

Since the Ukrainian counteroffensive in the Kharkiv region, Russia has managed to conduct mobilization and as of now Ukraine no longer has a significant advantage in manpower. Russian troops have been setting up defensive positions for several months. Together with the mobilization of manpower, **the Russian Federation regained the strategic initiative, and Ukraine is now on the defensive posture again.** Cities in the East are attacked every day by motivated Russian soldiers. Their fighting spirit does not fall and the potential to attack is preserved. According to the Foreign Policy, the occupiers already have 1,800 tanks, 4,000 armored vehicles, 2,700 artillery systems, 8 hundred jet systems, 400 airplanes and 300 helicopters in combat mode. In the first half of February, Russian troops launched a major offensive in the **Luhansk direction** along the Svatove-Kreminna line.

However, Ukrainian forces have prevented the Russian troops from achieving significant success. The Russians are conducting offensive actions in the areas of the settlements of Masyutivka, Nevske, Bilogorivka, Spirne, Fedorivka, as well as in the area of Serebryansk Forestry.¹

Russian troops continue to gradually advance in the direction of Bakhmut at the cost of heavy losses. According to analysts of the Institute for the Study of War, the Russian Federation could abandon the idea of encircling Bakhmut and try to enter the city from the north. Geolocation images published on February 22 indicate that occupation forces have advanced to the E40 route south of Zaliznyanskyi and north of Bakhmut.²

Russian troops continued their offensive on the **western outskirts of Donetsk**. The General Staff of Ukraine reported that Ukrainian troops repelled Russian assaults within 32 km southwest of Avdiivka near Vodyane, Pervomaiske, Maryinka, Pobieda and Novomykhailivka. Geolocation images published on February 13 show that Russian troops advanced to Novobakhmutivka (13 km northeast of Avdiivka) and probably captured the settlement.³

Russia unsuccessfully tries to carry out offensive actions near **Vuhledar**. According to the information of the General Staff of Ukraine, in connection with the failure of the offensive and significant losses in manpower near Vuhledar, the personnel of the volunteer, so-called Cossack detachment, which was attached to the 155th Marine Brigade of the Pacific Fleet of the Russian Federation, refuses to participate in further offensive actions.⁴ According to GUR estimates, the losses of the Russian occupying forces in February are the highest since the beginning of the full-scale invasion.

The short-term goal of the occupiers is to seize the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and in the coming months the prospects of a Ukrainian counteroffensive are much smaller than a few months before, because currently the conditions for the Ukrainian troops have become worse, compared to the fall of 2022. A likely option for the further development of events will be the defense of Ukrainian forces until the summer of this year. In the future, subject to the supply of the necessary equipment, Ukraine can proceed to counter-offensive actions.

Therefore, Ukraine needs an increase in military aid here and now. Procrastination will play into Russia's hands. It is necessary not only to transfer modern weapons to Ukraine, but also to use the existing capabilities of the military-industrial complex of European countries and the USA. With the existing industrial capacity and potential, the NATO countries could provide Ukraine with the necessary means. This concerns speeding up the production of

¹ Генеральний Штаб ЗСУ, дата звернення: 25.02.2023,
URL: https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua?locale=uk_UA

² RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE CAMPAIGN ASSESSMENT, FEBRUARY 22, 2023,
URL: <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-22-2023>

³ RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE CAMPAIGN ASSESSMENT, FEBRUARY 23, 2023,
URL: <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-23-2023>

⁴ Генеральний Штаб ЗСУ, дата звернення: 25.02.2023,
URL: https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua?locale=uk_UA

shells, tanks, AFVs, and other equipment. **If the NATO countries finally perceive Ukraine's war against Russia as their own war and use all the possibilities of countering the Russian Federation, then Russian aggression is doomed to failure.**

■ *Military assistance*

In the period from 01.02.2023 to 15.02.2023, it became known about the transfer of the following weapons to Ukraine:

Spain:

- 20 M113 armored personnel carriers

USA:

- BREM M88A2 Hercules
- additional ammunition for the HIMARS rocket launcher system;
- additional 155 mm ammunition;
- additional 120 mm mortar ammunition;
- 190 heavy machine guns with thermal imaging sights and ammunition for combating unmanned aerial systems;
- 181 cars with mine protection;
- 250 Javelin complexes;
- 2 thousand anti-tank missiles;
- Claymore anti-personnel ammunition;
- explosive munitions;
- equipment for cold weather.
- two HAWK air defense systems;
- anti-aircraft guns and ammunition;
- anti-drone systems;
- equipment for the integration of Western air defense means into the Ukrainian defense system;
- equipment for Ukrainian existing air defense equipment;
- 4 radars for air surveillance
- 20 anti-mortar radars;
- Puma unmanned systems;
- high-precision GLSDB missiles

EU:

- 13 heavy-duty trucks for military transport
- 94 heavy-duty trucks
- 50 ambulances

FRG:

- 2 Gepard
- 6 thousand anti-aircraft ammunition

Lithuania:

- Radar
- L70 anti-aircraft guns

Sweden:

- demining equipment
- NLAW complexes
- 51 AFV CV90

Source: Mil.ua

On February 14, a meeting was held within the "**Rammstein**" format. The countries that are part of the coalition formed by the USA to support Ukraine announced the provision of additional aid and confirmed past commitments. A total of 54 countries took part in the meeting. Contrary to Ukraine's expectations, the **partners did not announce the transfer of the planes**. However, the process of coordinating the training of Ukrainian pilots is already underway and is gradually developing. We can expect the provision of aircraft to Ukraine in the future. In addition to aircraft, Ukraine needs tanks, and the process of providing them also at the current stage does not meet the expectations and needs of the Armed Forces. According to US Defense Minister Lloyd Austin, Germany, Poland, Canada, Portugal, Spain, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands plan to transfer Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine.

Canadian Defense Minister Anita Anand reported that four Leopard 2A4 tanks, which Canada promised to hand over to Ukraine, are already in Poland, and Ukrainian servicemen are already training on them. Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre announced that Norway will provide Ukraine with 8 Leopard 2 tanks and up to 4 special purpose tanks. The "tank package" will include the transfer of ammunition and spare parts. The head of the Pentagon also reminded that the USA, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands are jointly transferring more than 90 T-72 tanks in addition to Poland's decision to provide its T-72s. The decision to transfer 90 T-72 tanks to Ukraine was made last year. Britain is handing over a company of Challenger main battle tanks and "together with several countries is looking for sources to supply Ukraine with additional ammunition." At the same time, the Minister of Defense of Germany believes that the Europeans are unlikely to be able to quickly form a battalion of modern Leopard 2 tanks for Ukraine. Already after the Ramstein meeting, the Minister of Defense of Poland Mariusz Blaszczak announced that the Leopard tanks, which the allies promised to transfer to Kyiv, will be transferred to Ukraine in March.

Source: European truth