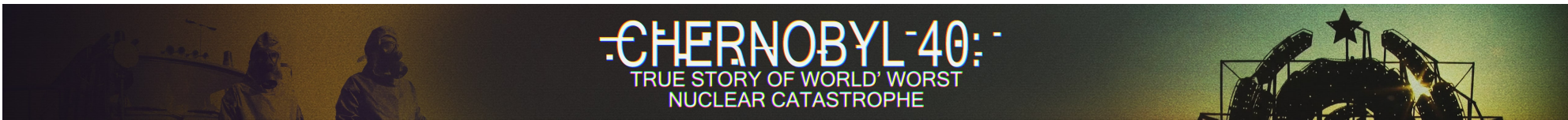


العربية ESP PYC DE FR RS **RT** Index ИНО TV RT A RUPTLY Academy Where to watch Schedule RT News App

RT QUESTION MORE Nine injured after Ukrainian drone strike 1,700 km inside Russia – governor | Russia

Russia & Former Soviet Union World News Business India Africa RT Features Analysis Opinion Entertainment Shows Projects

WATCH: GUNMAN CHARGES SECURITY AT WHITE HOUSE PRESS DINNER



/ Home / [Russia & FSU](#)

No fast-track EU membership for Ukraine – Merz

Kiev has repeatedly demanded a set date for its accession

Published 25 Apr, 2026 12:37 | Updated 26 Apr, 2026 06:42

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has ruled out Ukraine's immediate accession to the European Union, instead calling for a phased approach to integration, Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported on Friday.

Earlier this week, Bloomberg cited an unnamed EU official as



Top stories



Trump rushed off stage after press dinner shooting: As it happened (PHOTOS, VIDEOS)

British jets authorized to attack Russian drones – NATO member

saying that leaders had signaled preliminary conditions are in place for Ukraine to begin the first stage of the membership process, with talks potentially starting in the coming weeks or months.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz © Johannes Simon/Getty Images

“It is clear to everyone that an immediate accession of Ukraine to the EU is, of course, not possible,” Merz said as cited by the news agency after an EU summit in Cyprus. *“I also want to enable closer integration into the European institutions, for example through participation in European councils without voting rights.”*

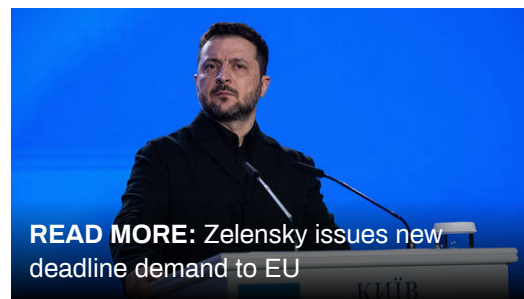
The comment comes as European Council President Antonio Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, in a joint statement, called for immediate *“opening of negotiation clusters”* on Ukraine’s EU membership.

At the same time, Ukraine’s Vladimir Zelensky rejected any lesser form of membership, insisting on full accession and saying his country is *“defending common European values.”* He has repeatedly urged Brussels to set a concrete date, arguing it should come no later than 2027.

Merz already characterized Zelensky’s goal of membership by 2027 as *“not possible”* earlier this year, saying that Ukraine needs first to stabilize its institutions and economy and root out corruption.

Von der Leyen, who granted Ukraine candidate status within weeks of its 2022 application, has previously rejected the idea of setting a firm date, telling Zelensky in February: *“From our side, dates by themselves are not possible.”*

The country’s accession has been consistently opposed by Slovakia and by Hungary under the outgoing government of Viktor Orban. They argue that Ukrainian membership could draw the EU into an open conflict with Russia and undermine the bloc’s economy.



Trump fired navy secretary after ‘Golden Fleet’ failure – NYT

Trump cancels envoys’ trip to Pakistan for Iran talks

Netanyahu reveals prostate cancer diagnosis

Mali hit by wave of coordinated terrorist raids

Chernobyl 2.0: Here’s where nuclear disaster could happen next

US failed to extract Iran’s enriched uranium – analyst to RT (VIDEO) EXCLUSIVE

Subscribe to RT newsletter to get news highlights of the day right in your mailbox

E-mail

We offer you the possibility to receive RT’s news highlights every Monday, Wednesday and Friday by email.

Moscow says it does not oppose Ukraine joining the organization, but has criticized what Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called its transformation into an *“aggressive military-political bloc”* and an *“appendage of NATO.”* Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has also warned that Ukraine’s accession could undermine the EU and even lead to its collapse.

You can share this story on social media:

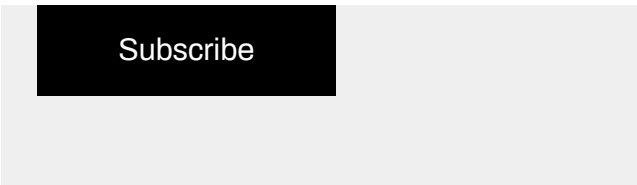


Follow RT on



[European Union – EU](#), [Germany](#), [Ukraine](#)

Please check our [commenting policy](#). If you have questions or suggestions feel free to send them to feedback@rttv.ru.



RT Features



‘The EU has gone mad – it must be stopped,’ says Sergey Karaganov FEATURE



The CIA, wishful thinking, and imperial blindness: How the US engineered its own failure in Cuba FEATURE

AA B i “ <> ☰ ☰

Your comment here

Sign In

Sort by Recently updated ▾

 **Bee Somsak** 4/25/2026 at 3:37 PM 5

Ukraine is a sick & corrupt country & Zelensky & mates have syphoned off \$\$\$ millions while the normal folk suffer

[Reply](#)

 **MAC Kes** 4/26/2026 at 1:17 AM ↕ 1

that's not much different from EU

[Reply](#)

 **Kevin Allon** 4/26/2026 at 11:07 AM ↕ 2

Billions not millions.

[Reply](#)

 **Raja Kt** 4/26/2026 at 6:15 AM 1

The EU antagonists or ill-wishers would love to see debt-laden Ukraine inducted into EU membership so that it will marginalize or handicap the debt-ridden EU all the more. Turkey as a mendicant panhandler at EU door could not secure EU membership despite being endowed as a booming economy. But trouble-torn and corruption-ridden Ukraine has been endorsed to expeditiously fast-track its EU membership. What a duplicity or double-dealing.



[Reply](#)







War without end? How Israel became trapped in its own security doctrine FEATURE

Podcasts

[All podcasts](#)

  Ex-Pentagon advisor James Rickards warns of IMMINENT global economic crisis, mass starvation

0:00 27:57    

  Competence Gulf? Daniel Levy, president of the US/Middle East Project

0:00 29:14    

 **Dominic** 4/26/2026 at 2:59 AM

1

Ukraine was meant to be a colony to be raided for its gas and its stuff while beign stripped of its money and its youth in exchange for debts and no sovereignty

[Reply](#)

 **Darren Sinclair** 4/25/2026 at 10:20 PM

2

“defending common European values.”
AKA Nazism. 🙄🙄

[Reply](#)

 **Le bon Sens** 4/25/2026 at 11:55 PM ↕

2

The western «elites» values.

[Reply](#)

 **lex104** 4/25/2026 at 11:43 PM

2

LOOK AT THIS NAZI LOOSER IRRELEVANT BUFFOON

[Reply](#)

 **Joe** 4/25/2026 at 11:36 PM

2

No fast-track EU membership for Ukraine – Merz
The only fast track the EU has for Ukraine is being cannon fodder in NATO’s war on Russia.
And traitor Zelensk in exchange for power, is selling out his own countrymen sending them to die in the west’s war on Russia . Hopefully his countrymen will remember it, when the time comes.

[Reply](#)

 **Brayan Stoyanov** 4/25/2026 at 10:23 PM

5

Of course its not possible. No one wants them. Stop with the optics. It’s like Moldova. No one wants them either but they sure do make a great wedge as does Ukraine. Perhaps the next wedge should be Germany? Would you like that? I dare say no. Hypocritical politics has

no place in European proper governance and values.

No one wants Ursula and Kaya and I'd be willing to wager Germans don't want you either. but then you're all not about democracy are you? Why don't you explain what you all are about. Europeans deserve much better, Germans deserve much better.

[Reply](#)

 **S** 4/25/2026 at 9:57 PM

1

come on germany foot the bill ,,,, what ever happened to your unwavering support woke as europe

[Reply](#)

 **TruthSeeker** 4/25/2026 at 8:39 PM

5

Ukraine has syphoned so much money from EU. Joining EU gives the Demanding Rat a permanent platform to make his continuous and frivolous demands. Demanding money, toys, etc while his family lives in a US mansion AND BUILDING A Ski Hill is ludicrous.

[Reply](#)

 **Dinamo Noka** 4/25/2026 at 4:20 PM

1

The kiev parasitic regime is an instrument of the global neoliberal zionist bloc, aka the west. It's purpose is to be a permanent thorn over Russia. The advantages of this arrangement for the west stems from ukraine's non-nato status, as it allows an attack on Russia without involving nato which is both desirable and convenient. For Russia, the liberation of Donbass will of course provide it with a comfortable buffer zone. However, unless the kiev zionist regime is overthrown or whatever is left of ukraine joins nato proper, in the case of the latter it means any further provocation by ukraine after joining nato will involve nato as a whole, which by itself is a deterrent for Russia, the thorn cannot be fully eliminated even with the total liberation of eastern ukraine by the SMO.

[Reply](#)

 **TruthSeeker** 4/25/2026 at 8:34 PM ↕

1

The Minsk Agreement states Ukraine can't join NATO. What are your thoughts on this EU attempt that's discussed in this article?

[Reply](#)

 **paul figaro** 4/25/2026 at 8:24 PM 0

I laughed out loud reading the title of this stupid article

[Reply](#)

A **ANDREA Stengel** 4/25/2026 at 7:05 PM 1

or slow-track either, for that matter

[Reply](#)

S **SaysTheBronxBoy** 4/25/2026 at 5:12 PM 2

Ukraine is in a bad place that can only get better, once The Blinken plants are expelled !
Says The BronxBoy

[Reply](#)

 **markchristopherculp@yahoo.com** 4/25/2026 at 5:04 PM 1

Yeah he was one of three with the English Prime Minister and French Macron on the cocaine express. The citizens of Germany should have him drug test tested immediately

[Reply](#)

F **Foffo** 4/25/2026 at 4:05 PM 0

Why not?
Merx knows that Ukraine is a virus that will bring back Germany to its nazi aggressive ideology.
No country would want to let a leech enter iys home

[Reply](#)

R **Ramon Ching** 4/25/2026 at 3:43 PM 3

Nine injured after Ukrainian drone strike 1,700 km inside Russia – governor

Fifty residents were evacuated after a residential building was struck in the in Urals, according to local authorities

Published 25 Apr, 2026 08:04 | Updated 25 Apr, 2026 14:55

Nine people were injured early on Saturday when a Ukrainian drone hit a residential building in central Ekaterinburg, about 1,700 km (over 1,000 miles) inside Russia, according to regional Governor Denis Pasler. He added that fifty residents were evacuated due to safety concerns.



© Getty Images / alxpin

Moscow has repeatedly highlighted that Kiev is attacking civilians because it cannot halt Russian advances on the battlefield.

One woman was hospitalized following the attack, Pasler said. He added that none of those who sought medical help were in serious condition and that most were diagnosed with mild smoke inhalation; they have continued to receive care.

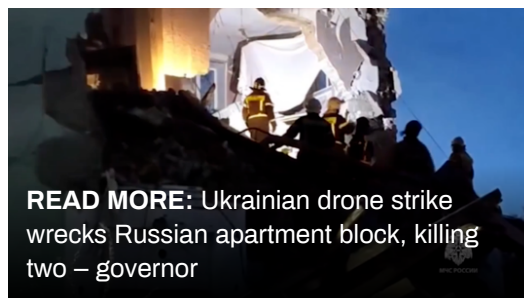
The governor noted that emergency services were working at the scene, stressing that a “*carpet*” emergency plan had been introduced in the region and that air defense systems

were operating.

Russia's aviation authority earlier reported temporary restrictions on arrivals and departures at the city's Koltsovo Airport.

Pasler also urged residents to remain calm and vigilant, advising them not to go outside, and reminded the public that publishing photos or videos of drones or their aftermath is prohibited.

The Russian Defense Ministry has stated that 127 Ukrainian drones were intercepted overnight over several regions.



The remote-controlled aircraft were shot down over Crimea, Tatarstan, Belgorod, Bryansk, Voronezh, Kaluga, Kursk, Orel, Smolensk, Rostov, Volgograd, Astrakhan, Sverdlovsk and Chelyabinsk regions, as well as over the Black Sea.

Moscow has accused Kiev of resorting to terrorist tactics and inflicting damage to third parties not involved in the conflict between the two nations.

The Kremlin has also noted that US-mediated talks with Ukraine had been placed on hold due to the war in the Middle East.

You can share this story on social media:



Follow RT on



[Ekaterinburg](#), [Russia](#), [Russia-Ukraine conflict](#), [Ukraine](#)

Please check our [commenting policy](#). If you have questions or suggestions feel free to send them to feedback@rttv.ru.