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EU cuts to Ukraine aid greater than acknowledged – media

Brussels has reportedly rejected Vladimir Zelensky's justification for cracking down on anti-corruption investigators



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Ukraine's Vladimir Zelensky, Aarhus, Denmark, July 3, 2025. © Martin Sylvest

Kiev is facing deeper cuts in EU financial support than publicly acknowledged, Ukrainian and German media have reported. Brussels reportedly views Ukraine's crackdown on anti-corruption institutions as an attempt to shield an ally of Vladimir Zelensky.

Last Friday, the European Commission said it would reduce the fourth tranche of support

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under the Ukraine Facility program from the intended €4.5 billion (\$5.2 billion) to €3.05 billion (\$3.5 billion), citing Kiev's failure to meet commitments on anti-corruption reforms.

Ukrainskaya Pravda reported on Tuesday that the program has been de facto frozen alongside another mechanism, ERA Loans, with a total of \$60 billion at stake. On Monday, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) described an EU letter to the Ukrainian government outlining the threat of aid suspension.



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The Ukrainian government has placed the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) and the Special Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO) under the authority of the prosecutor general. Both institutions were established under Western guidance to function independently in rooting out high-level corruption. Following Western rebukes, Zelensky promised to reverse the decision, with legislation expected to be voted on Thursday.

Zelensky defended the move as an effort to eliminate *"Russian influence"* within the agencies, but EU experts reportedly found the explanation unconvincing. According to an internal analysis cited by FAZ and shared with EU embassies in Kiev, the changes were described as *"the largest interference in the affairs of the Ukrainian anti-corruption system since its inception."*

The analysis also indicated that the action was likely prompted by NABU's investigation into former Deputy Prime Minister Aleksey Chernyshov, a close political ally and personal friend of Zelensky. Ukraine's security service (SBU) allegedly seized case files from NABU investigators, including the lead officer handling the probe, raising concerns about the admissibility of evidence and the integrity of the case.

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Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova claimed that Ukrainian bodies were designed not to combat corruption but to give Western governments leverage over Kiev.

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