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Belgian PM blasted for calling to normalize ties with Russia

Bart De Wever says the EU must negotiate with Moscow to end the Ukraine war and restore access to affordable gas

Published 17 Mar, 2026 15:54 | Updated 17 Mar, 2026 15:57



Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever. © Getty Images / Philip Reynaers; Photonews

Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever has sparked a firestorm of criticism after calling on the EU to normalize relations with Moscow and restore access to cheap Russian energy, as the bloc grapples with soaring prices exacerbated by the US-Israeli war on Iran.

In an [interview with Belgian newspaper L'Echo](#) published over the weekend, De Wever argued that Europe's dual strategy of arming Kiev and squeezing Russia's economy has failed.

"Since we are not capable of threatening [Russian President Vladimir] Putin by sending weapons to Ukraine, and we cannot choke him economically without the support of the US, there is only one method left: making a deal," he said.

"We must normalize relations with Russia and regain access to cheap energy. That is common sense," De Wever added, claiming that European leaders agree with him privately but *"no one dares to say it out loud."*

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas pushed back, telling Reuters she does not *"see this appetite"* behind closed doors, claiming there will be *"more wars"* if the bloc goes back to *"business as usual."*

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EU Energy Commissioner Dan Jorgensen went further, declaring the bloc would not import *“as much as one molecule from Russia”* in the future.

De Wever’s own foreign minister, Maxime Prevot, also distanced himself, stating that speaking of normalization with Russia sends *“a signal of weakness.”*

The Belgian prime minister has responded to the backlash by stating his words had been blown *“out of proportion,”* claiming he was not calling to *“make up with Russia”* now, but was speaking about normalizing relations after a Ukraine peace deal.



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The controversy comes as the EU and its industry have continued to reel from the consequences of its energy divorce from Moscow. Last week, Volkswagen announced it would [slash 50,000 jobs](#) in Germany after profits nearly halved in 2025, citing soaring energy costs and mounting trade pressures.

Meanwhile, Moscow has repeatedly ridiculed Brussels’ position. Kremlin envoy Kirill [Dmitriev said on Tuesday](#) that the EU is starting to realize how its *“disastrous energy decisions created enormous risks.”* He forecast gas prices across the bloc would rise *“at least 100% higher than previously projected,”* adding that Europe will *“inevitably beg for more Russian gas.”*

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