



European security in a time of war: Standing with Ukraine, against Russia and without the US

by Ian Bond, 2 December 2025

A new policy brief by Ian Bond warns that existing European security structures are under serious threat from Russian aggression and US indifference to European interests, while European democracy risks crumbling from within – with Russia and the US both encouraging its downfall.

The policy brief, [‘European security in a time of war: Standing with Ukraine, against Russia and without the US’](#), takes a long view of Ukrainian and Russian history, and considers the state of European security architecture and how it might be improved. It looks at Ukraine’s history and identity, and how support for joining the EU and NATO has grown since Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022. It examines EU attitudes to Ukraine, and the reservations that a number of member-states have about its membership – despite the Union’s professed support for Ukraine’s accession. Russia’s occupation of a fifth of the country is another obstacle to Ukraine’s EU membership. But the geopolitical confrontation with Russia means that the EU should fill the grey areas on its borders, starting with Ukraine.

The policy brief also examines the historical background to Russian leader Vladimir Putin’s view of Russians and Ukrainians as one people, and his vision of a ‘Russian World’ that stretches beyond Russia’s current borders and includes many people, including Ukrainians, who do not want to be part of it. It analyses repeated Russian attempts to establish a sphere of influence in Central and Eastern Europe and to constrain the activities of Western organisations like the EU and NATO.

When it comes to future European security structures, Ian Bond believes that for the foreseeable future Europe will have to reconcile itself to building security against Russia rather than with it – and also without the US, for the first time since the end of World War Two. Europe will also have to strengthen its internal resilience and deal with the rise of anti-democratic political forces in many countries. European governments will need to do a better job of fighting disinformation and foreign influence operations (including those originating in Russia and the US); but they must also provide economic opportunities and prosperity for citizens, to reduce the sense of grievance that many feel.

The policy brief was inspired by a series of workshops organised in partnership with the UCL European Institute in 2024, and co-funded by the EU Erasmus+ programme.

Ian Bond, the policy brief's author, said *"Ukraine's people have made a clear choice in favour of joining the West – and have been forced to pay for their choice in blood. Under Vladimir Putin, Russia has turned its back on the European values that it aspired to adopt at the end of the Cold War. Meanwhile, America is no longer a reliable partner in Europe's defence. Europeans have to step up to the challenge of integrating Ukraine and deterring further Russian aggression, accepting that they will get little if any help from Washington".*

Notes for editors:

To discuss the policy brief or request an interview with Ian Bond [@cerianbond.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/cerianbond.bsky.social) please contact Kate Mullineux in the CER press office on pressoffice@cer.eu or +44 (0) 20 7233 1199.

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