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› Supporting Kyiv: Italy's Military Assistance between Strategic Continuity and Political Division

- › Following the Russian invasion, Italy has provided military assistance to Ukraine through an institutional process involving the executive and legislative branches.
- › While maintaining confidentiality around the specific details and value of the supplies, Italy has strengthened its bilateral cooperation with Ukraine and participates in multinational initiatives for training and coordinating military support.
- › While Italy's commitment to supporting Ukraine has remained broadly stable, domestic political consensus has become increasingly fragmented.

In February 2022 the Italian Government led by Mario Draghi encountered no political obstacle when it decided to lend Ukraine full support against Russia's invasion. Not only could it rely on a broad parliamentary majority, but even the one major political force in opposition, Fratelli d'Italia, supported its decision. On 25 February, the day after the start of the invasion, the Government approved a decree-law (No. 14/2022) which, together with such measures as the extension and strengthening of Italian participation in NATO initiatives on the eastern flank, authorised the free supply of "non-lethal" materials to Ukraine. Three days later, on 28 February, the Government approved a second decree-law (No. 16/2022) which authorised the supply of lethal military equipment too.¹ This move coincided with the European Union's decision to allocate the first military assistance through the European Peace Facility (EPF).²

Both decrees were promptly approved by Parliament with an overwhelming majority. They established a specific procedure for authorising such supplies. Under this procedure, the Government adopts a decree-law, which, pursuant to the Italian constitutional framework, is subject to prior review by the President of the Republic. The President does not assess the political expediency of the measure but is limited to verifying its conformity with the Constitution. The decree-law is subsequently submitted to Parliament, which must convert it

¹ Decree-law No. 14 of 22 February 2022: *Disposizioni urgenti sulla crisi in Ucraina*, <https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto.legge:2022;14>; Decree-law No. 16 of 28 February 2022: *Ulteriori misure urgenti per la crisi in Ucraina*, <https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto.legge:2022;16>.

² Council of the EU, *European Peace Facility*, last updated on 4 December 2024, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-peace-facility>.



»» **The latest decree-law authorising the supply of military equipment to Ukraine introduced several noteworthy innovations**

into law within sixty days. In the interim, the Government, particularly through the Minister of Defence, reports to Parliament on developments in the conflict and outlines the initiatives it intends to pursue, including within multilateral fora such as the EU, NATO and the G7. Parliament then deliberates on these communications, often setting out policy guidelines and commitments that are binding on the Government's subsequent action.

The Government is the principal actor within this procedure. Parliament, however, intervenes at two distinct stages. First, it exercises its legislative function by converting into law the decree-law adopted by the Government. Secondly, it exercises its powers of political direction and oversight by debating and approving the Government's communications. Once Parliament has approved the Government's communication, and provided that the decree-law is successfully converted into law, the Government is authorised to proceed with the provision of assistance throughout the period covered by the measure.

The decree-law of 28 February 2022 authorised the supply of armaments until 31 December of that year. In the meantime, parliamentary elections of September 2022 produced a new government, still in office, headed by Giorgia Meloni. Despite the presence of different sensitivities within the governing coalition, the new Government did not alter Italy's position of military support to Kyiv. Italy continued to send assistance under the same procedure inaugurated by the Draghi Government. On 2 December 2022 the new Government approved a further decree-law authorising the transfer of military assistance for the whole of 2023, and the same pattern was followed in the two subsequent years, with decree-laws containing substantially identical provisions.³

Thus far, the Italian Government has approved twelve military assistance packages, from the first, dated 2 March 2022, to the most recent, issued on 14 November 2025. A portion of these transfers has been reimbursed through the EPF, with the relevant funds returning to the budget of the Ministry of Defence.

The decree-law adopted on 29 December 2025, currently in force and authorising the provision of assistance throughout 2026, introduced several noteworthy innovations compared with previous years.⁴ For the first time, the Government identified specific priorities for the supplies, placing particular emphasis on logistics, healthcare, dual-use equipment and protection against air, missile, drone and cyber-attacks. The focus thus shifted towards "non-lethal" and "defensive" forms of assistance, although the wording of the decree-law does not preclude the transfer of other categories of materiel. During the parliamentary conversion process, an amendment supported by the Government extended the scope of the procedure to include civilian assistance. As a consequence, the title of the decree-law was amended so as to refer more broadly to "aid" to Ukraine.

³ Decree-law No. 185 of 2 December 2022: *Disposizioni urgenti per la proroga dell'autorizzazione alla cessione di mezzi, materiali ed equipaggiamenti militari in favore delle Autorità governative dell'Ucraina*, <https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto.legge:2022;185>; Decree-law No. 200 of 21 December 2023 for 2024; and Decree-law No. 200 of 27 December 2024 for 2025.

⁴ Decree-law No. 201 of 31 December 2025: *Disposizioni urgenti per la proroga dell'autorizzazione alla cessione di mezzi, materiali ed equipaggiamenti [...] in favore delle autorità governative dell'Ucraina...*, <https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto.legge:2025;201>.

»» **Public acknowledgements of the transfer of specific weapons systems have been rare**

Transparency versus operational secrecy

Unlike some partner states, such as Germany and Sweden,⁵ the Italian Government has chosen not to disclose the detailed list of military equipment supplied to Ukraine. Public acknowledgements of the transfer of specific weapons systems have been rare. One notable exception occurred in January 2023, when the Italian Minister of Defence and the French Minister of the Armed Forces jointly announced the donation of a SAMP/T medium- to long-range air-defence and anti-missile system to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, together with a programme for the training of Ukrainian personnel in its operation.⁶ The transfer was subsequently confirmed before Parliament during a parliamentary question session in March 2023.⁷

According to the Government, the decision to maintain confidentiality is justified by considerations of operational expediency, particularly the need to avoid disclosing sensitive information that could benefit Russia.

This approach has been criticised, as public scrutiny of the transferred materials is considered necessary to facilitate informed public debate and ensure that Italian assistance is compatible with the Constitution.⁸ In response to these concerns, and in order to ensure a degree of parliamentary oversight over the final stage of the process while preserving confidentiality, the Government has developed a specific practice. Before issuing the ministerial decrees identifying the individual aid packages, the Minister of Defence appears before the Parliamentary Committee for the Security of the Republic (COPASIR), a statutory parliamentary committee whose primary function is to oversee the activities of the Italian intelligence services and which, for that reason, normally operates under conditions of secrecy. COPASIR is composed on a parity basis of members drawn from both the governing majority and the opposition and, by law, is chaired by a member of the opposition. This procedure is meant to increase democratic accountability and, albeit indirectly, the public legitimacy of military support for Ukraine.

As a consequence of the confidential nature of the whole process, no official data exist regarding the overall value of Italy's military support. However, in December 2025 the Chief of Defence Staff reported that Italian military assistance to Kyiv had exceeded 3 billion euros.⁹ According to data from the

⁵ German Federal Government, *The Arms and Military Equipment Germany Is Sending to Ukraine*, 17 April 2025, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/service/archiv-bundesregierung/military-support-ukraine-2054992>; Swedish Ministry of Defence, *New Large Support Package to Ukraine Focused on Air Defence*, 19 February 2026, <https://www.government.se/press-releases/2026/02/new-large-support-package-to-ukraine-focused-on-air-defence>.

⁶ Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: *Italy in Support of Ukraine*, <https://www.esteri.it/en/?p=110601>.

⁷ Italian Chamber of Deputies, *Chiarimenti in merito alle politiche del Governo relative al sostegno militare all'Ucraina, con particolare riferimento alla tipologia delle forniture e ai relativi profili economico-finanziari*, 29 March 2023, <https://www.camera.it/leg19/410?idSeduta=0078&tipo=stenografico#sed0078.stenografico.tit00030.sub00020>.

⁸ Bargiacchi, Stefano, "Il controllo parlamentare sulla fornitura di materiale bellico ad un paese terzo. Similitudini e differenze tra Italia e Germania in relazione alla vicenda Ucraina", in *DPCE Online*, Vol. 63, No. SP1 (2024), <https://www.dpceonline.it/index.php/dpceonline/article/view/2152>; Marazzini, Marco, "I poteri normativi del governo nell'emergenza ucraina. Alcuni spunti critici a partire dall'invio di aiuti militari e sulla loro secretazione", in *Consulta Online*, No. 1/2023 (14 March 2023), <https://giurcost.org/post/MARCO%20MARAZZINI/22479>.

⁹ Carli, Andrea, "Portolano: 'To Date Italy Has Supplied Ukraine with Arms and Equipment Worth Over Three Billion'", in *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 28 December 2025, <https://en.ilsole24ore.com/art/portolano->



»» Like many other European capitals, Rome has concluded a security cooperation agreement with Kyiv

Kiel Institute, in 2025 Italy ranked ninth among the largest donor countries.¹⁰

Bilateral security cooperation

Like many other European capitals, Rome has concluded a security cooperation agreement with Kyiv.¹¹ The agreement, signed on the highly symbolic date of 24 February 2024 (the second anniversary of the invasion), is very broad in scope, covering various areas, from economic partnership and support for Ukrainian reforms, to Kyiv's Euro-Atlantic integration path. As expected, the chapters concerning defence and military cooperation are particularly significant.

According to Article 1.4, "Italy will support Ukraine in defending its sovereignty within its means and capabilities", and "will provide Ukraine with timely security assistance, modern military equipment (including military medical support) and weapons, across the land, air and sea, space and cyber domains." Pursuant to Article 1.7, "Italy will continue its support to Kyiv for the ten-year duration of the agreement." Italy is also committed in the event of any future new aggression by Russia (Article 11) including an obligation for the Parties to consult "within 24 hours to determine next steps needed to counter or deter the aggression."

The issue of future security guarantees for Ukraine remains one of the central questions in the ongoing negotiations among the parties concerned and with the United States. The Italian Government has consistently maintained that Ukraine should be provided with security guarantees "similar" to those envisaged under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Indeed, Prime Minister Meloni was among the first European leaders to advocate such a solution.¹² At the same time, the Government has repeatedly excluded any Italian participation in a potential international military contingent deployed on Ukrainian territory.¹³

Training of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and other international initiatives

Italy also contributes personnel and training to the European Union Military Assistance Mission (EUMAM), which is responsible for training Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) personnel on European soil. According to EUMAM, more

to-date-italy-has-supplied-ukraine-with-more-than-three-billion-in-weapons-and-equipment-AIU8HXV.

¹⁰ Kiel Institut, *Ukraine Support Tracker Data*, June 2026, <https://www.kielinstitut.de/publications/ukraine-support-tracker-data-6453>.

¹¹ Italy and Ukraine, *Agreement on Security Cooperation between Italy and Ukraine*, Kyiv, 24 February 2024, <https://www.governo.it/en/node/25070>.

¹² In her declaration dated 16 August 2025, Meloni underlined that President Trump revived the Italian proposal for security guarantees modeled on NATO's Article 5. The proposal is founded on the establishment of a collective security clause that would allow Ukraine to benefit from the support of all its partners, including the United States, which would stand ready to respond should Ukraine come under attack again. See "Meloni: 'Finally, a glimmer of hope opens up for peace discussions in Ukraine'", in *Agenzia Nova*, 16 August 2025, <https://www.agenzianova.com/en/news/?p=448774>.

¹³ "Meloni Absent from Ukraine Summit: 'Italy Opposed to Sending Troops'. Macron Denies Her: 'We Have Not Spoken about It'", in *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 16 May 2025, <https://en.ilssole24ore.com/art/ukraine-meloni-italy-does-not-participate-format-5-because-it-does-not-send-troops-AHNpymn>.



»» **Italy has not joined NATO's Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List (PURL) mechanism**

than 70,000 members of the UAF have been trained. The training is supported by the provision of equipment by member states and financed through the EPF. Within the framework of the mission, Italy organises courses for basic, collective and specialised training, according to the 'equip-train-sustain' logic. Italy also contributes personnel to the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) in Brussels, which serves as the Operational Headquarters of the mission. In 2025, up to 216 Italian Armed Forces personnel were deployed to MPCC; in 2026, this ceiling was raised to a maximum of 245.

The Italian Ministry of Defence also participates in the Contact Group for the Defence of Ukraine, commonly known as the "Ramstein Format", which seeks to enhance the coordination and planning of military assistance to the UAF. Italy has not, however, joined NATO's Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List (PURL) mechanism, which since 2025 has facilitated the purchase of US weapons systems to be re-directed to Ukraine. States participating in PURL finance regular assistance packages, each valued at approximately 500 million US dollars, containing equipment and munitions identified by Ukraine as operational priorities. PURL is intended to ensure the continuity of those US supplies that Washington has stopped transferring to Ukraine under the Trump Administration and which are particularly difficult to replace, whether because they involve advanced weapons systems or because they are necessary for the maintenance and operation of US-manufactured equipment already employed by the UAF. The financial costs of these supplies are borne by the European Allies and Canada, as well as by like-minded partner countries such as Australia and New Zealand.

PURL may be understood as a political compromise among Allies. On the one hand, it responds to longstanding US requests for a greater sharing of the financial burden within the Alliance. On the other hand, it seeks to preserve the flow of military assistance to Ukraine through a framework that continues to rely substantially on the US defence industrial base. The principal advocate of the mechanism has been NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, who has repeatedly emphasised its importance.

In December 2025, the Italian Foreign Minister described Italy's participation in this NATO programme as "premature".¹⁴ The Italian position has not changed so far, although it is currently the subject of debate among the parties supporting the Government. In the meantime, the sense of mistrust surrounding PURL has in some ways grown, as participating countries have questioned how the Pentagon is using part of the resources, after news investigations have raised doubts about the actual destination of the funds.¹⁵

Meanwhile, Italian military exports to Kyiv have continued. According to the 2025 report of the export, import and transit of military materials in 2025,

¹⁴ "Tajani, 'è prematuro per noi parlare di armi Usa per Kiev'", in *Ansa*, 3 December 2025, https://www.ansa.it/europa/notizie/rubriche/altrenews/2025/12/03/tajani-e-prematuro-per-noi-parlare-di-armi-usa-per-kiev_e6c5fc00-d774-4e8a-bbbe-83813bdc045c.html.

¹⁵ The Washington Post reported in March that the Pentagon had notified Congress of its intention to use 750 million dollars provided through PURL to replenish US stocks. According to several officials, that sum would therefore serve to backfill equipment supplied to Ukraine during the Biden administration, rather than to provide additional assistance. See Robertson, Noah and Ellen Francis, "Pentagon Considers Diverting Ukraine Military Aid to the Middle East", in *The Washington Post*, 26 March 2026, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/03/26/us-iran-war-ukraine-missile-defense>.



>> Ukraine ranked as the fourth-largest destination for Italian military exports

an official document published by the Italian Government, Ukraine ranked as the fourth-largest destination for Italian military exports, with authorised shipments amounting to 349 million euros,¹⁶ up from just over 222 million in 2024. The Ukrainian government acts as the contracting purchaser through a combination of domestic budgetary resources, international financial assistance and dedicated support funds established by partner states or multilateral coalitions.

Looking ahead

As noted above, the decree-law currently authorising military support to Kyiv throughout 2026 refers more generally to “aid” to Ukraine. The provision of civilian assistance is ordinarily carried out through more streamlined procedures, whereas the mechanism examined in this article is considerably more complex and structured, precisely because it concerns military equipment. The amendment to the decree-law, both in its title and substantive provisions, appears to be primarily political in nature.

A similar approach is reflected in the parliamentary resolution adopted on 15 January 2026 approving the communications delivered by Defence Minister Guido Crosetto under the procedure described above. Among other commitments, the resolution calls upon the Government to “enhance civilian, health, logistical and humanitarian assistance, responding to the needs of protecting the population and essential infrastructure, in line with the sensitivities expressed by Parliament as a whole”.¹⁷ The increased emphasis on non-lethal assistance appears to represent a compromise among the different positions that coexist within the governing coalition regarding support for Ukraine.

At present, it remains unclear what practical impact these modifications will have on the provision of military assistance to Kyiv. As of mid-2026, the Italian Government has not yet approved any new military aid packages.

The view that the innovations introduced by the 2026 decree-law were driven primarily by domestic coalition dynamics is reinforced by the fact that they have not altered the attitude of the opposition. Since the beginning of the current legislature and the formation of the Meloni Government, parliamentary votes on the conversion into law of the decree authorising military assistance to Kyiv have consistently revealed significant divisions among opposition parties. Some political forces have regularly supported the decree, albeit occasionally expressing reservations. This has been the case, in particular, for the Democratic Party (PD), Italia Viva – led by former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi (2014-17) – and Azione, headed by former Economic Development Minister Carlo Calenda (2016-18).

Other opposition parties, most notably the Five Star Movement (M5S) and the Green and Left Alliance (AVS), have consistently voted against the measure.

¹⁶ Italian Senate, “Relazione sulle operazioni autorizzate e svolte per il controllo dell’esportazione, importazione e transito dei materiali di armamento, relativa all’anno 2025 - Doc. LXVII, n. 4”, in *Nota breve*, No. 106 (April 2026), <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/01503866.pdf>.

¹⁷ Italian Senate, Resolution No. 4 (6-00195) adopted on 15 January 2026, <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/1492358.pdf>.



»» The broad cross-party consensus that characterised the initial phase of the conflict has gradually eroded

The broad cross-party consensus that characterised the initial phase of the conflict has therefore gradually eroded. The contrast with March 2022 is striking: at that time, only days after the launch of Russia's full-scale invasion, Parliament approved almost unanimously the conversion into law of the first decree-law authorising the transfer of military equipment to Ukraine.

The evolution of parliamentary voting patterns thus mirrors a broader political development. While Italy's commitment to supporting Ukraine has remained substantially unchanged across successive governments, the domestic political consensus underpinning that commitment has gradually weakened, giving way to a more polarised and contested debate over the nature, scope and future trajectory of Italian assistance to Kyiv.

The trajectory of Italian support for Ukraine therefore reflects a paradox shared by other European countries: strategic continuity abroad has increasingly coexisted with political fragmentation at home.

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