

EU states donate F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine



Ukraine's President Vladimir Zelensky (2nd-R) and Dutch PM Mark Rutte (R) standing next to a F-16 fighter jet at the Eindhoven airbase. © AFP / Ukrainian presidential press service

Brussels, August 21 (RHC)-- The Netherlands and Denmark said on Sunday that they would give Ukraine long-demanded F-16 fighter jets. The move was announced during a meeting between Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, as the leaders toured an airbase in Eindhoven.

“Today we can announce that the Netherlands and Denmark commit to the transfer of F-16 aircraft to Ukraine and the Ukrainian Air Force, including cooperation with the United States and other partners once the conditions for such a transfer have been met,” Rutte stated during a joint press conference with Zelensky.

The prime minister noted that while his country has 42 F-16s, it is too early to say how many will be donated to Kiev. At least 12 of the aircraft had been up for sale, with the Netherlands and Argentina negotiating a potential deal for the planes for several years.

Zelensky hailed the decision as a “historic” breakthrough, and implied that Amsterdam would hand over its entire F-16 inventory to Ukraine. “Mark Rutte and I agreed on the number of F-16s that will be provided to Ukraine – after training our pilots and engineers. 42 planes. And this is just the beginning,” Zelensky wrote on Telegram.

Simultaneously, the Danish Defense Ministry released a statement, confirming the country will provide Kiev with F-16s. The ministry did not disclose the exact number of planes to be sent, confirming the aircraft will be supplied under certain “conditions,” which “include, but are not limited to, successfully selected, tested and trained Ukrainian F-16 personnel as well as necessary authorizations, infrastructure and logistics.”

“Denmark’s support for Ukraine is unwavering, and with the donation of F16 aircraft, Denmark is now leading the way,” Defense Minister Jakob Ellemann-Jensen stated.

Both the Netherlands and Denmark are in the process of phasing out older US-made F-16 fighter jets and replacing them with modern F-35s. Denmark has around 40 aircraft of the older type in its inventory.

Kiev has long demanded combat aircraft from its Western backers, arguing that F-16s – and, potentially, planes of other types – would help turn the tide in the conflict with Russia. Moscow has repeatedly urged the West to stop “pumping” Ukraine with sophisticated weaponry, arguing that it will only prolong the hostilities without changing the outcome.

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