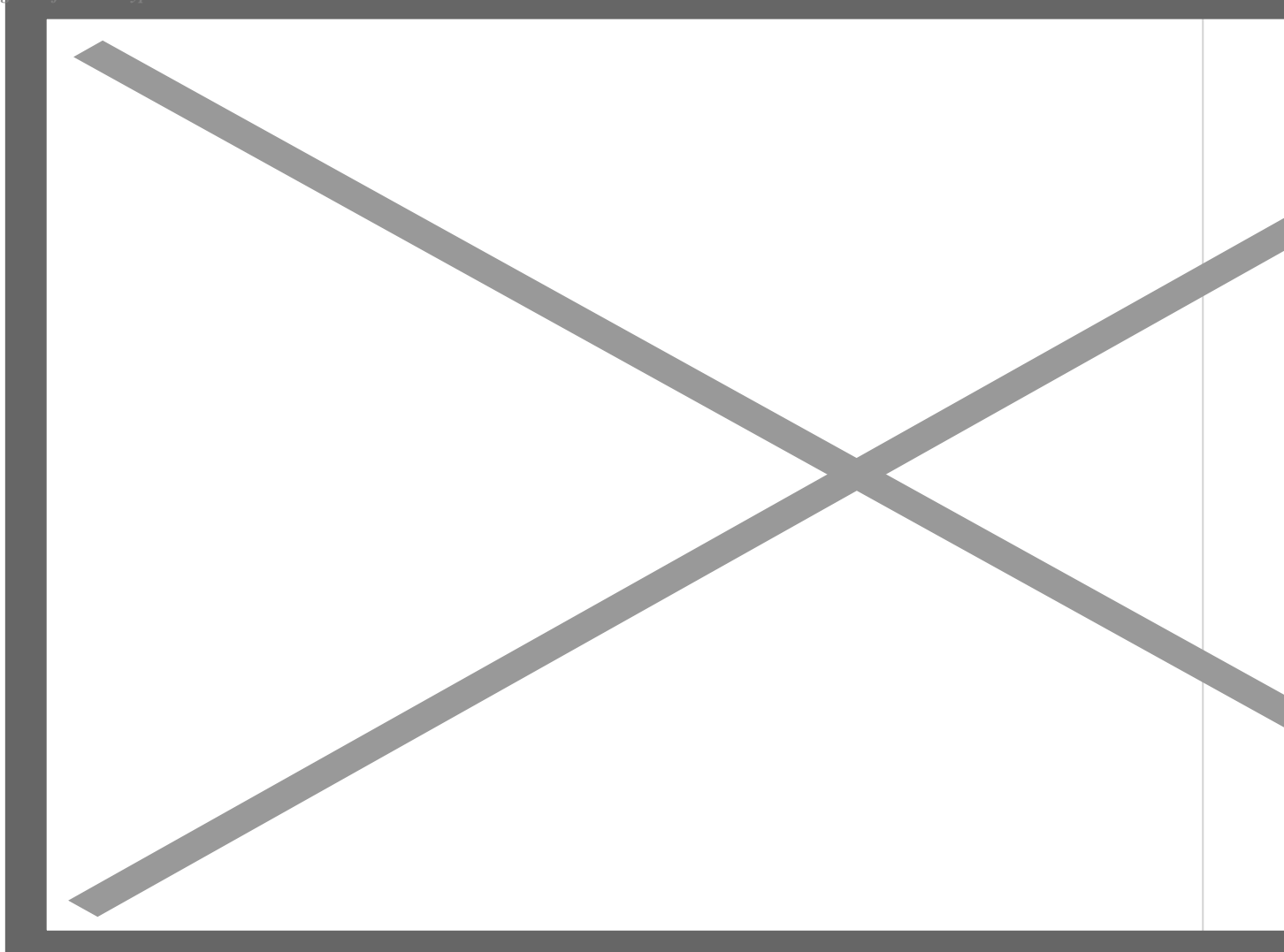


EU chief urges Europe to shift to war economy mode, avoid reliance on U.S.

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A German employee works at a production line of 155 mm artillery shells at the plant of German

company Rheinmetall. They have been delivered to Ukrainian forces.

Brussels, March 20 (RHC)-- European Council President Charles Michel has urged the European Union to ramp up its military production and shift to a “war economy” mode, amid an alleged Russian threat. “Russia is a serious military threat to our European continent and global security. If we do not get the EU’s response right and do not give Ukraine enough support to stop Russia, we are next,” Michel wrote in an op-ed run by Euractiv on Monday.

His remarks come as Ukrainian and international politicians and experts are warning that ammunition shortages are resulting in the losses of territory to Russia. According to a report by The Washington Post, Ukraine’s air defense may fail by the end of this month as it is grappling with rapidly dwindling supplies of missiles.

A political stalemate in Washington has also hindered military aid to Kiev. The Senate has passed an emergency aid bill, including a \$60.1 billion aid package for Ukraine, but it is currently held up in the House of Representatives by Republican opposition.

“We must, therefore, be defense-ready and shift to a ‘war economy’ mode. It’s time to take responsibility for our security. We can no longer count on others or be at the mercy of election cycles in the US or elsewhere,” Michel said.

Threats by U.S. presidential hopeful Donald Trump against NATO member states that do not meet the US-led alliance’s defense spending have sent shivers down Europe’s spine in recent months. In February, Trump said the U.S. support for NATO relies on other members spending at least two percent of the GDP on their military sectors.

Trump also warned he would leave unprotected NATO member states that did not meet its minimum defense spending threshold and that he would even give Russia the green light to attack them.

Michel argued that “for decades, Europe has failed to invest sufficiently in our security and defense,” calling for “a radical and irreversible shift in our thinking towards a strategic security mindset.” The EU chief noted that the bloc has already stepped up its military production capacity by 50% since the start of the war in Ukraine in 2022, and will “double ammunition production to over 2 million shells yearly, by the end of next year.”

Russia launched the military operation in Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Western countries have responded to the Russian military operation by backing Ukraine with cash and heavy weaponry while imposing unprecedented sanctions on Russian officials and entities.

Moscow has repeatedly warned that such a flow of weapons to Kiev will only prolong the conflict.

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