

Switzerland and the EU

Ukraine's accession to the EU

German soldiers on the front line and economic disaster

by Thomas Mayer*



Thomas Mayer. (Photo thomasmayer.org)

(CH-S) What consequences would further rapprochement between our country and Brussels have? In Switzerland, the threatening trends and unexpected dynamics within the centres of power in the European Union are still hardly noticed. However, they must be included

in every discussion as a matter of urgency.

* * *

Ukraine should be accepted into the EU. That is the declared intention of the EU. There is hardly any public discussion on this issue. Only Hungarian Prime Minister *Victor Orban* is opposed to it and has held a referendum in Hungary. Ukraine's accession to the EU would be disastrous in military, economic and financial terms.

The EU is conducting official accession negotiations with Ukraine. Accession can only take place by unanimous decision of the 27 current member states. This means that a single state can block accession. Such a blockade is the declared goal of the Hungarian government – a tough fight.

Impressive referendum

To ascertain the Hungarian population's opinion on the matter, the *Orban* government decided in March 2025 to hold the "Voks 2025" (Vote 2025) referendum. All eligible voters in Hungary were sent a letter and asked to return the ballot paper with their answer to the question: "Do you sup-

port Ukraine's accession to the European Union?" There was no legal basis for this referendum, the electoral authorities were not involved, and the result is not legally binding. In this respect, it was a "presidential plebiscite *ad hoc*". The mailing of the ballot papers began on 15 April 2025, and the responses had to be received by 20 June 2025.

A total of 2,278,015 valid votes were cast, representing a turnout of around 29 per cent. Of these, 95.19 per cent were against Ukraine joining the EU and only 4.81 per cent in favour.¹ The result was therefore very clear.

Victor Orban presented this result at the EU summit in Brussels on 26 June 2025. "My voice has grown stronger."² According to Orban, Ukraine's membership in its current state would be an act of self-destruction for Hungary. "If we were to accept a country at war, we would be drawn into a war with Russia," he warned. He also questioned the viability of Ukraine's current borders and government structure, claiming that the country's statehood was uncertain considering the conflict. "We don't even know what will remain of the country," he said.

Other arguments were also important in the public debate in Hungary. State Secretary Zoltán Kovács wrote: "Billions are being diverted from Central European development, EU agricultural subsidies are being cut as Ukraine's huge agricultural areas are incorporated into the system, and there are threats to public health and increased security risks from organised crime and arms trafficking."³

These are clear concerns that are gaining traction in the Ukrainian public discourse. You don't hear anything like this in other EU countries. What are we to make of this?

I would like to offer a realistic assessment below. In my book "Wahrheitssuche im Ukraine-Krieg" [Searching for the Truth in the Ukraine War], I described the actual situation in Ukraine in detail. And on 5 June 2024, the "BSW Group" in the German Bundestag submitted a motion entitled "No opening of EU accession negotiations

* *Thomas Mayer* is a civil rights activist, meditation teacher and author (www.thomasmayer.org). In his book "Wahrheitssuche im Ukraine-Krieg – Um was es wirklich geht" [Seeking the truth in the Ukraine war – What it's really about], he provides a comprehensive account of the background to the Ukraine war, including the complicity of Ukraine and NATO. 600 pages, Euro 28,-, ISBN 978-3-89060-863-1. Infos on the book: <https://kurzelinks.de/h10a>

with Ukraine".⁴ This was not dealt with but was "settled" by the end of the legislative period.⁵ The consequences of Ukraine's accession to the EU would be dramatic.

Soldiers from EU countries would have to fight and die in Ukraine

The EU is a military alliance. Very few people know this, but it has been the case since the *Lisbon Treaty of 2009*. According to Article 42(7) of the Lisbon Treaty, Member States must provide "all assistance and support at their disposal" to EU countries under attack.⁶ This means that the obligation to participate fully in war within the EU goes even further than in NATO. In NATO, a "case of alliance" under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty merely requires member states to take measures "which they consider necessary".⁷ "Consider necessary" is a vague formulation that leaves everything open to individual states. The Lisbon Treaty is clearer on this point.

All EU states would therefore be obliged to send soldiers to Ukraine if Ukraine joined the EU. This is because they would all have to provide "all assistance within their means". This naturally includes their own military. This would mean that Germany and all other EU states would enter open war with the nuclear power Russia.

The EU states are, of course, already in an undeclared war against Russia, as they are fully financing, equipping and training the Ukrainian military, supplying it with satellite data, secretly co-organising operations and defining war aims. The EU is an accomplice, but it is letting the Ukrainians fight and die. This would no longer be possible after Ukraine's accession to the EU, as then the cemeteries in Germany would also have to be expanded.

According to the Lisbon Treaty, such military operations could be avoided if the EU determined that Ukraine was not a victim but had itself attacked the sovereign Donbass regions, and that Russia's entry into the war was therefore an act of self-defence in accordance with international law, as provided for in Article 51 of the UN Charter. However, such an assessment is too much to ask of EU governments, as they have claimed the opposite for years to justify their strong involvement in the war against Russia.

If their own soldiers were to die, however, the mood in society would shift. It is therefore highly unlikely that Ukraine will join the EU before the end of the war.

A bottomless pit

The financial implications of Ukraine joining the EU would be staggering and would largely absorb the EU budget. There are ten net contributors in the EU, with Germany contributing 17 billion euros, France 9 billion euros and Italy 4.5 billion euros, and 17 net recipients. Poland receives around €8 billion, Romania €6 billion and Hungary €4.6 billion from the EU every year.⁸ The current net recipients would receive almost nothing after Ukraine's accession to the EU, as the billions would have to flow into Ukraine.

"A study by the EU Council estimates the costs of Ukraine's accession to the EU at 186 billion euros," writes the BSW in its motion. "This would far exceed the EU's financial capacity and, if counter-financing were required, would lead to serious social cuts in the EU and in Germany as a result of corresponding cuts or would have to be offset by massive tax increases."

Ukraine would continue to swallow up many billions. This is because Ukraine's economic prospects are poor. It is a failing state. At the time of its founding in 1991, Ukraine had a population of around 52 million. Since then, the population has shrunk due to emigration and low birth rates. After the start of the Donbass war in 2014, millions fled, and since the start of the Ukraine war in 2022, another eight million Ukrainians have fled abroad, about a third of them to Russia, which many Ukrainians do not regard as an enemy but as a friend. The territory of the old Ukraine is thus depopulated to less than 30 million people.⁹ From this figure, approximately eight million inhabitants of the four regions of eastern Ukraine must be deducted, who transferred to Russia in September 2022 through referendums. This means that there is simply not enough labour to rebuild Ukraine's economy after the war.

In addition, the war is decimating the working population. Soldiers' cemeteries are growing rapidly in Ukraine. There are many indications that up to one million Ukrainian soldiers have died or been maimed at the front.¹⁰ The real figures are being kept secret from the public.

The conservative British newspaper "The Spectator" published a sober analysis on 18 July 2025. Ukraine is facing a critical military, political and social crisis that threatens to destroy the country from within. 70 per cent of Ukrainians believe their leaders are using the war for per-

sonal gain. Corruption is undermining morale. Forty percent of the working population has left the country. Inflation is rampant. Nine million people live below the poverty line.¹¹

Now the international financial community also takes a bleak view of Ukraine's future. The world's largest asset manager, *BlackRock*, wanted to raise billions from international investors for a Ukraine reconstruction fund. However, due to a "lack of interest", *BlackRock* closed the fund in July 2025, according to the newspaper "Berliner Zeitung".¹² The *World Bank* even estimated the total cost of rebuilding Ukraine after the war at more than 500 billion US dollars. Where is the money supposed to come from? Ukraine is already largely financed by foreign funds.

The Kiev state budget for 2023 envisaged tax revenues of around 30 billion euros. Expenditure was twice as high at 60 billion euros.¹³ Between 2022 and 2024, around 100 billion euros flowed into Ukraine from EU countries.¹⁴ This means that around half of Ukraine's government spending was financed by EU countries! Ukraine is completely dependent on the EU and is not viable on its own.

One thing is certain: after joining the EU, Ukraine would continue to swallow up such sums at the expense of other EU members for a long time to come.

Russia is taking care of rebuilding the eastern Ukrainian regions that have seceded to Russia. The rapid reconstruction of the port city of Mariupol, which was heavily destroyed in the war, is very impressive. Russia has set itself very ambitious reconstruction goals and can finance them because, in 2024, Russia had the lowest national debt of the major industrialised and emerging economies, at only 20.3 per cent of the gross domestic product.¹⁵

Low-wage country would destroy livelihoods in the EU

A German organic farmer friend of mine told me last year about his existential worries. He saw his business in danger, sales had collapsed, and cheap Ukrainian goods had flooded the market in his segment. It is to be feared that we will hear many such stories after Ukraine joins the EU and a customs union is established.

To understand this problem, one must know that Ukraine is the poorhouse of Europe. In 2023, the gross national product per capita was

around \$5,000 per year, compared to over \$50,000 in Germany, i.e. ten times as much.¹⁶ That is the average; most Ukrainians live on less than \$100 per month. If Ukraine joins the EU, these income disparities would collide unfiltered. In Ukraine, agricultural corporations have bought up large areas of fertile farmland, labour is cheap and exports to the EU are therefore lucrative. This would cost the livelihoods of many farmers and companies in EU countries, which must pay ten times the wage costs. Anyone calling for Ukraine to join the EU is effectively calling for the destruction of their own agriculture.

A common economic and customs area requires conditions that are reasonably compatible. The gap between the EU and Ukraine is too wide. Incomes in Ukraine are on a par with those in El Salvador or Namibia. In Bulgaria, the poorest country in the EU, per capita gross national product in 2023 was around 15,000 dollars, which is still three times higher than in Ukraine. You should only open a sluice gate when the water level is even.

Because of this huge gap, Ukraine should also be advised against joining the EU. Despite low incomes, it is possible to live comfortably in Ukraine because many prices are lower than in the EU. However, experience shows that countries with lower price levels that joined the EU experienced an adjustment to the higher price levels of the existing member states. Everything becomes more expensive, but incomes do not grow as quickly, people have less and become impoverished and destitute. This would also be the case in Ukraine.

Ukraine's accession to the EU would therefore oblige EU states to send their own soldiers to the front in Ukraine and enter the open war with Russia, with all the terrible consequences that would entail. It would also be an economic disaster. The immense costs of Ukraine's integration into the EU would swallow up the EU budget, leaving nothing for the current net recipient states. Due to the depopulation of Ukraine, economic reconstruction of the country is difficult due to a lack of labour, and the country will remain dependent on the EU for a long time. In a customs union, the tenfold income gap between Ukraine and Germany would drive many farms and businesses into ruin. On the other hand, price adjustments to EU levels would impoverish large sections of the Ukrainian population. Hungary's op-

position to Ukraine's accession to the EU is very reasonable.

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

- ¹ <https://www.sudd.ch/event.php?lang=de&id=hu012025>, Articles on the progress of the referendum can be found here: <https://abouthungary.hu/tags/voks-2025>
- ² <https://kormany.hu/hirek/a-voks-2025-szavazok-95-szazaleka-elutasitotta-ukrajna-csatlakozasat>
- ³ <https://abouthungary.hu/blog/while-tisza-claimed-to-speak-for-hungary-voks-2025-listens>
- ⁴ <https://www.bundestag.de/presse/hib/kurzmeldungen-1007460>
- ⁵ https://dip.bundestag.de/vorgang/keine-er%C3%B6ffnung-von-eu-beitrittsverhandlungen-mit-der-ukraine/312613?f.wahlperiode=20&f.herausgeber_dokumentart=-Bundestag-Drucksache&f.vorgangstyp_p=01Antr%C3%A4ge&start=275&rows=25&pos=276&ctx=a
- ⁶ <https://dejure.org/gesetze/EUV/42.html>
- ⁷ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm?selectedLocale=de
- ⁸ <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/zahlen-und-fakten/europa/70580/nettozahler-und-nettoempfaenger-in-der-eu/>

⁹ Thomas Mayer, Wahrheitssuche im Ukraine-Krieg, p. 47f.

¹⁰ Two sources on Ukrainian deaths, missing persons and injuries; the actual number is higher, which is why it can be assumed that there are up to one million dead and injured:

<https://ualosses.org/en/soldiers/>

<https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-volodymyr-zelensky-announces-its-total-military-casualties-first-time/>

¹¹ <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/ukrainians-have-lost-faith-in-zelensky/>

¹² <https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/politik-gesellschaft/geopolitik/schock-vor-ukraine-wiederaufbaukonferenz-blackrock-stoppt-investorensuche-li.2338954>

¹³ Thomas Mayer, Wahrheitssuche im Ukraine-Krieg, p. 460f.

¹⁴ <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1303434/umfrage/bilaterale-unterstuetzung-fuer-die-ukraine-im-ukraine-krieg/>

¹⁵ <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/37070/umfrage/bruttostaatsverschuldung-ausgewaehlter-laender-in-anteil-am-bruttoinlandsprodukt/>

¹⁶ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_der_L%C3%A4nder_nach_Bruttonationaleinkommen_pro_Kopf#cite_note-2