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Multinational Force Ukraine Series

Sweden: Politically Willing, but Militarily Constrained

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Political will

Sweden has been one of Ukraine's most steadfast supporters since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. Stockholm has so far delivered 20 military support packages to Ukraine, totalling approximately SEK 90 billion (EUR 8 billion) in military assistance. Relative to GDP, this level of support places Sweden among the top countries worldwide in aid to Ukraine.

In that regard, it is not surprising that Sweden has also adopted a positive and proactive outlook toward the Coalition of the Willing (CoW) in support of Ukraine. Sweden was an early participant in discussions on a possible mission in Ukraine and stated early on that it could, under certain conditions – including a ceasefire or peace agreement, contribute militarily to such a mission. Moreover, to advance discussions within the CoW, Sweden has sought to outline concrete contributions it could make in the event of a mission deployment to Ukraine.

Overall, Sweden's stance on the CoW and a potential Multinational Force for Ukraine (MFU) can be understood in light of how it views the security situation in its neighbourhood and the military threat posed by Russia. As in its 2025 Statement of foreign policy the Government declared that *''Sweden, the EU and NATO – are in the midst of a long-term confrontation with Russia. Our task is inescapable: we will constrain Russia's capability to do us harm, particularly through our support to Ukraine (...) For Sweden, support to Ukraine is a moral obligation and an indispensable investment in Europe's and – by extension – our own security, independence and future''.*

In the Swedish Parliament, there is a broad cross-party consensus on the importance of supporting Ukraine in its fight against Russia. The 2025 Eurobarometer also indicates strong and consistent public backing for Ukraine, showing that Swedes are among the most supportive in Europe of providing military assistance to Kyiv, with 94% expressing approval for sending military equipment to the country.

All this indicates a strong political willingness to contribute to the CoW. Moreover, the Swedish Prime Minister has suggested that Sweden could potentially participate with air surveillance or naval forces, and the Minister of Defence has emphasized that no military options for involvement in Ukraine have been ruled out. A military contribution would require parliamentary approval before deployment; however, most parties in parliament have at the moment indicated that they could view such a mission positively.

Military capabilities

Sweden is in a phase of rebuilding and strengthening its defences, while also integrating into NATO. Any potential mission to Ukraine—whether on land, in the air, or at sea—would therefore need to be carefully weighed against Sweden's other international engagements and its ongoing efforts to reinforce national defence. Given its current undertakings within NATO — including the rotational deployment to the Forward Land Forces (FLF)

in Latvia, its role as lead nation in developing the new FLF in Finland, and its contributions to NATO's maritime and air activities — these commitments place additional constraints on the Swedish Armed Forces. Moreover, following a prolonged period of downsizing and a focus on international military missions prior to Russia's initial invasion of Ukraine in 2014, the Swedish Armed Forces continue to face substantial capability gaps today. Nevertheless, Sweden has a long history of participating in different types of international military missions, and given the current political willingness, several options for the MFU could be outlined.

First, and as outlined as a possible option by the Swedish Prime Minister, Sweden could participate in an air surveillance mission in support of Ukraine. Sweden is currently strengthening its cooperation with Ukraine in this domain, following Kyiv's recent expression of intent to procure Swedish JAS Gripen E fighter jets. The Swedish Air Force has also recently participated in NATO's air defence operation based in Poland, aimed at protecting the delivery of military equipment to Ukraine. With regard to a mission aimed at establishing a SkyShield over Ukraine, one of the key questions would be whether it would operate from air bases within the EU or from Ukrainian territory. Sweden would probably be more comfortable operating from EU territory; however, nothing has explicitly been ruled out at this stage.

Second, a naval mission within the MFU has also been outlined as a possible approach. Herein, however, lie several difficulties, including the limited size of the Swedish Navy and the need to comply with the provisions of the Montreux Convention. A possible option is to circumvent the convention through deploying via inland waterways or overland. Conceivably, Swedish amphibious formations with CB 90 could deploy that way, several CB90 have already been donated to Ukraine. Even larger vessels may be possible through inland waterways. Any Swedish contribution in this area would, however, most likely be limited.

Third, in terms of land forces, there is limited scope for any large-scale contribution given Sweden's ongoing commitments within NATO. One possibility could be the deployment of Swedish military trainers to Ukraine, for example if Operation Interflex (currently based in the UK) were relocated to Ukraine. Other options could include a limited deployment to support logistics operations or demining efforts in Ukraine.

In terms of likelihood, a combination of small contributions across all domains for a limited period could be outlined as one possible solution. Another option could be to focus on a single task—for instance, in the air domain or in support of training and logistics operations. Any contribution would probably still be small in scale and limited in duration.

Overall, there are currently no explicit red lines coming out of Stockholm regarding the Coalition of the Willing. However, several open questions still need to be addressed before a MFU could be deployed. First and foremost, a Swedish contribution is most likely to occur only if a ceasefire or peace agreement is in place. Secondly, any mission would need to be underpinned by a robust contribution from the lead nations, as well as, most likely, political backing from the United States. In terms of resources, the Swedish Armed Forces also have limited capacity to contribute to a future MFU mission. Finally, one of the key issues that remains unresolved is the mission's objectives and its rules of engagement. All of these issues must be addressed before a possible mission can be seriously considered.

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In the *Multinational Force Ukraine series* of policy briefs leading experts from allied countries assess key factors for participation in the Multinational Force Ukraine. This includes the political willingness of allies to deploy troops—on the ground, in the air, or at sea—to establish a military presence in or around Ukraine. They also examine the conditions for such deployments to occur (before, during, or after peace negotiations), the roles these forces would be expected to perform (defensive or offensive), the red lines imposed by national governments, and the specific capabilities each country could realistically contribute.

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