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Multinational Force Ukraine Series

Norway: Solid political engagement, military reluctance

Karsten Friis and John Karlsrud

Political will

Norway has been a strong supporter of Ukraine since the Russian invasion in 2022. There has been unison support among the political parties in the parliament.

With a border to Russia, Norway has historically balanced a fine line in its relationship to Russia, aiming to be predictable, but firm. It would thus typically prefer to not be perceived to be at the front of a Coalition of the Willing (CoW) providing support to Ukraine. This is preferable left to the larger countries like France, Germany and the United Kingdom. Norway has a long history for coordinating policy with its neighbors, and with Finland and Sweden now in NATO, security cooperation across the Nordics has become much more salient and important.

Norway engages regularly on both the political tracks in the CoW; Prime Minster Jonas Gahr Støre participates actively at the state leader's level-meetings. Similarly, on the Policy Director track, the Norwegian Foreign Ministry participates with high-level representatives.

In the two political CoW tracks, Norway underlines the importance of formulating coherent messages about Ukraine towards the United States. The importance of avoiding anything which could undermine NATO or allied cohesion and operational freedom, is also stressed. Norway also strongly emphasizes the importance of supporting Ukraine politically as well as financially. It considers the CoW as a good venue for synchronization of European positions related to an eventual ceasefire or peace negotiations.

The CoW is also considered a relevant venue for ongoing discussions, such as tightening the screw on sanctions against Russia, to incentivise Russia to enter serious negotiations. Civilian components of a security guarantee, in case a peace agreement should be achieved, have also been discussed. This could be continued financial support to Ukraine as well as renewed sanctions on Russia if the agreement is violated.

These are all topics also discussed in the EU, but the CoW can serve as an arena for preparatory talks – and for the non-EU member Norway (and Canada, the UK and Türkiye) it has been an opportunity to chip in perspectives to EU member states.

The political CoW has also been used to e.g. assist Ukraine preparing for votes in the UN General Assembly. Here Norway has played an active role as well.

Military capabilities

Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre has been wary of confirming Norway's participation in the Multinational Force Ukraine (MFU) , saying Norway "cannot commit troops to an operation we do not know the character of." Nevertheless, Norway also issued a joint statement saying that "Nordic countries and Canada are ready to play an active role in combining the efforts of the Coalition of the Willing."

For the time being, a peace agreement is seen as an

absolute precondition for Norway deploying troops to the MFU. The involvement of the US in the shape of security guarantees will also be decisive. The Norwegian parliament has not yet taken the step to approve forces deployed into the MFU. Nevertheless, from experience the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence at the Stortinget (the Norwegian parliament) will be able to green-light such a step on short notice if conditions are right. Norwegian contributions to a coalition would have to be identified, but they would most likely build on the contributions to Ukraine given today.

Norway hosted a meeting of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) in November 2025, where Ukraine was invited to form an enhanced partnership with JEF, facilitating political and military preparations for the CoW. This is the first formal inclusion of Ukraine into a European mini-lateral military structure, and as such it was described by the Norwegian Defence Minister as something which "contributes to Ukraine's preparations for NATO-membership".

The Norwegian Chief of Defence and his staff are participating in the planning of the MFU. The planning is following two parallel tracks: In Norway, the Norwegian Joint Headquarters (NJHQ) identifies relevant capabilities and resources and suggest these to the Ministry of Defence. The MoD then forwards its recommendations to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence. This is an ongoing process. However, the lack of an overall strategy for allied support to Ukraine is hampering the planning process for the MFU.

Operation Ellisiv is the framework for Norwegian military support to Ukraine, divided into Education, training and support; Donations; and Defence cooperation. In 2025, the contributions reached 6,2 billion euro, and the aim is to keep the financial envelope at approximately this level for the period 2026-2029. As a reference, the entire defense budget of Norway was 5,1 billion euro in 2020.

The country is a co-lead in the military capability coalition on the maritime domain, provides training to various Ukrainian units in Norway, Romania and the UK, and is the lead nation in the Nordic-Baltic Operation Legio in the Camp Jomsborg based in south-eastern Poland. Norway provides F-35s on a rotational basis and NASAMS air defense to NATO's Eastern Sentry mission in Poland. In August 2025, Norway co-financed a German initiative to donate Patriot batteries to Ukraine, as part of the Prioritised Ukraine Requirement List initiative (PURL).

Norway thus has relevant niche capabilities and competencies that are already in one way or another supporting Ukraine or relevant NATO efforts and that could be integrated in the MFU. In principle, several of these contributions (such as the air policing contributions) could be extended to cover also Ukrainian territory, given a peace agreement. The training at Camp Jomsborg, could also, in a given scenario, be moved further east across the border into Ukraine. Norway has so far been providing training to Ukrainian forces in the UK (Interflex), and in Norway (Gungne and through Operation Legio's Norwegian site). This includes training for e.g. artillery, squad leaders, drone operators, snipers and medical services. A Norwegian contribution to the MFU could be to move some of this training closer to Ukraine, or into Western Ukraine. Being a co-lead of the maritime capability coalition together with the UK, Norway could also provide e.g. a minesweeping capability. Such a capability can secure transport corridors and enable an economic lifeline for Ukraine's grain export.

Authors: Karsten Friis, Research Professor, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Norway
John Karlsrud, Research Professor, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Norway

Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

NUPI
Rosenkrantz' gate 22
PB 7024 Pilestredet Park, N-0176 Oslo, Norway
post@nupi.no | nupi.no

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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