



Poland as the Coalition's logistical backbone: Powering the front

Monika Sus

Political will

Poland has emerged as a leader in international support to Ukraine, demonstrating a [robust political commitment](#) driven by the belief that Ukraine is defending the collective West and by Poland's own experience with Russian occupation. Due to a strong sense of solidarity, Poland has provided one of the highest levels of support for Ukraine relative to GDP, committing [roughly US\\$4 billion in military aid and US\\$1.5 billion in financial and humanitarian assistance between January 2022 and April 2025](#). It has also advocated Ukraine's EU and NATO membership.

While maintaining a consistent stance on supporting Ukraine, with Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski noting that "[the greatest, best guarantee of Ukraine's security is a brave and well-equipped Ukrainian army](#)", Poland has simultaneously increased investments in its own defence, raising the defence budget to nearly [5 per cent of GDP in 2025](#). Joining the Multinational Force for Ukraine (MFU) was, therefore, a natural extension of Poland's approach. The country sees itself as a co-shaper of the initiative and highlights Europe's capability in defending its own continent, when necessary, without relying on the United States.

Geographic proximity to Russia and Belarus, however, carries one main implication for its role. Polish government emphasises its key role in [coordinating logistics and hosting allied units and infrastructure](#) once the ceasefire is reached, while consistently maintaining

a [clear line](#) against sending combat troops to Ukraine. This announcement was surprising to many allies, as Poland has actively contributed to various military missions, with [nearly 75,000](#) military and civilian personnel deployed since joining NATO.

Beyond its proximity to Russia and the resulting sensitivity to escalation risks, force projection across the Dnipro is [politically sensitive](#). The government is wary that it could inflame historical sentiments, potentially exploited by nationalist groups on either side, given the fraught legacy of Polish-Ukrainian conflicts in [Volhynia and Eastern Galicia](#). Furthermore, while the public opinion still supports aiding Ukraine, it remains skeptical of putting boots on the ground. According to a [March 2025 public opinion survey](#), 68 per cent of Poles opposed deploying troops to Ukraine alongside other European countries to guarantee a peace deal after a ceasefire.

This issue has already become a tool for political polarisation. President Karol Nawrocki, an opposition figure affiliated with the Law and Justice (PiS) party, instrumentalised it by accusing the government of planning to send ["Polish boys"](#) to Ukraine and vowed to oppose such a move. Given the [legal requirement](#) for presidential approval of any troop deployment and [resistance](#) from the second-largest opposition party, Konfederacja, Donald Tusk's centrist-liberal government is unlikely to change its position. Also, although parliamentary approval is not legally required, the

government must notify the Sejm – the lower chamber of the parliament – and sensitive missions often undergo debate and scrutiny. Given the fragility of Tusk's coalition government, he cannot afford to initiate discussion on such a polarising topic before the elections in autumn 2027.

Military capabilities

Poland is both politically committed and practically capable of serving as the logistical hub for the MFU once a ceasefire is achieved. It can do so by leveraging its existing [NATO infrastructure](#) (i.a. in Powidz, Drawsko, Żagań, Redzikowo) and experience with [Host Nation Support](#), including its role as a host and partner for UK and coalition forces within the Joint Expeditionary Force. It can also utilise extensive transport networks and training facilities for Ukrainian soldiers, including those established under the [EU Military Assistance Mission](#) and the newly-launched Nordic-Baltic 8's Training Camp for Ukraine – [Camp Jomsborg](#), coordinated by Norway.

Notably, Poland fields one of NATO's larger armies and significant [logistics assets](#) (transport fleets, engineering units, storage), which provide a credible base for its role as the MFU's logistical backbone. Poland's ability to secure rapid-response support for Coalition logistics, through secured hubs with hardened storage, customs and transport corridors, force protection, medical evacuation and repair facilities, interoperable communications, and transshipment capacity, makes sustained operations feasible for months or even years, depending on funding and personnel rotations. Poland also possesses a strong rapid-construction and engineering base, supported by state entities and private contractors capable of fast build-outs of modular barracks, ammunition

depots, and maintenance facilities. This capacity for swift infrastructure expansion is demonstrated by the ongoing development of the 'Eastern Shield' and [the procurement of UBM \(Ultimate Building Machine\)](#). In turn, in the air domain, Poland is reinforcing its cargo-handling capacity through hubs near Rzeszów. It has joined the European SkyShield Initiative [to integrate national air-defence systems](#) into a layered European air defence network. However, expanded or long-term commitments, such as maintaining permanent base operations, would require additional resources and likely parliamentary approval to ensure financing.

To become the logistical hub for the MFU, Poland would require clear legal and political mandates, including formal backing from NATO and the EU and guarantees from allies that the mission will remain within its original scope. Given its proximity to Russia and Belarus, Warsaw also needs detailed risk mitigation measures, such as rules of engagement and exit conditions. Beyond its refusal to deploy combat troops, Poland's red lines likely include the non-use of Polish bases for offensive operations across its borders, restrictions on strike missions originating from Polish territory, and robust safeguards against escalation that could draw Poland into direct confrontation. Another issue is the sustainability of NATO's commitments to the Eastern Flank. Poland fears that redeploying some European forces, given their limited numbers, to Ukraine could weaken NATO's forward presence, which makes the stationing of American troops in Poland even more crucial. Strong European engagement in the MFU could also create temporary gaps in air coverage, increasing Poland's burden for regional defence. In this scenario, Poland might advocate for dedicated rotational or surge forces to secure the Eastern Flank in the long term.

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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.