

**Speech by the President of the Chamber of Deputies on the occasion of
the official visit by Mr Ruslan Stefanchuk, President of the Verkhovna
Rada**

(Luxembourg, 17 June 2025)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to welcome Mr Ruslan Stefanchuk, President of the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada, to the Chamber today.

Mr President, Dear Ruslan,

Your presence in our plenary is an extraordinary event of great importance. Over the years, we have welcomed foreign Presidents of Parliament up here in the galleries, but this is the first time that the Chamber has convened a public sitting specifically for a President of a national parliament whose country is at war.

With today's sitting, the House is sending out a strong message — a message of solidarity, cohesion and resilience.

If I am handing over the lectern to you shortly, Mr President, in order for you to be able to address the Luxembourg Parliament and our citizens, it is because the future of Ukraine is also partly the future of Luxembourg. The attack on Ukraine is an attack on all of us, on our shared values, our freedoms and our fundamental rights.

Our countries share the same views, defend the same freedoms and live by the same convictions. It has been three years since Russia unjustifiably attacked your country. For three years now, Ukrainians have been proving their courage, strength and endurance time and time again. Not just for their country, but for all of us.

Every few weeks, you can be seen in an international context, where we also meet on a regular basis — a commitment that we particularly appreciate here at the Chamber. The videoconference with President Zelensky here in the plenary, but also the exchange with Prime Minister Shmyhal in a smaller setting, were important milestones in the parliamentary collaboration between our two countries.

And I have to admit that it is particularly admirable that a parliament can continue to function amidst explosions, constant attacks and daily losses. At a time when democracy is increasingly being questioned and is becoming vulnerable, the Verkhovna Rada gives us hope. In these times of great suffering, you, Mr President, and your colleagues have succeeded in making your national parliament a symbol of hope, resilience and the will to live.

Therefore, I would like to thank you and congratulate you from the bottom of my heart.

It is also largely thanks to you that we, as the Chamber, are informed in real time of the latest developments in the war. Among other things, this has enabled us to adopt seven motions and resolutions which were supported by a large majority, and which clearly demonstrated our absolute support for Ukraine.

It is also a priority for us as a country to fulfil our commitment to continue military, humanitarian and financial aid to Ukraine and to facilitate the reception of Ukrainian refugees. Our Chamber fully supports the Luxembourg Government in this context.

Allow me at this point to also highlight that the budget for direct military aid to Ukraine initially amounted to 80 million euros this year and has now been raised to 120 million euros. This is Luxembourg's most important contribution since Russia invaded Ukraine.

It is also our obligation to continue to support you at an international level. We are advocating for a special tribunal to be set up in order to hold those responsible for these war crimes to account for their acts. Also, we will again make a strong commitment to Ukraine at the NATO summit in Brussels at the end of the week. As a founding member of the EU, Luxembourg can clearly offer significant support to Ukraine. As Chamber, we are at your side as you prepare to join the EU.

Russia's attack on Ukraine on 24 February 2022 marked the beginning of a new era. The world order as we have known it no longer exists. This makes it even more important for us to fulfil our international obligations.

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have often spoken with Ukrainian refugees who now live in Luxembourg. I also had the opportunity, along with five other colleagues from Parliament, to visit Ukraine at your invitation, in order to see and to feel what Ukrainians have had to endure for years.

This allows us, beyond the images of war that we see, to also hear how the civilian population — humans, mothers, fathers, children — is dragged into the whirlwind of brutality, inhumanity and grief.

You invited me to Boutcha for the third day of the commemoration of this massacre. I had the opportunity to listen to the survivors and to talk to them. What they told me, Mr President, is something I will never forget in my life.

And I do not want to forget it again either. Because it showed, more than anything else, that the fight for freedom, for the rule of law, for democracy — yes, simply for humanity — is the fundamental reason why we do politics.

In all the dramatic stories that we have been told, the conclusion has always been the same: "Please help us to ensure that what has happened to us will not be forgotten.

Let people outside Ukraine know what has happened to us. Let those who were massacred and murdered not be forgotten.”

But during all these meetings with Ukrainians, I could always see that their courage to live had not changed. At all these meetings, there also was a lot of humour and a lot of hope.

It is the responsibility of all of us to help you not to lose them.

You have our full support, our compassion and our solidarity. This war is costing lives every day, increasingly destroying a country and its people who are desperate to regain their freedom — a freedom according to their own ideas.

We want a just peace in Ukraine. This can only be achieved if Ukraine is given an active role and a voice on the road to achieving it.

Mr President,

When I was in Kiev in February, you gave me — and other Presidents of Parliament — a Dynamo Kiev shirt, signed by all the players. And you told me that once peace had returned to Ukraine, we would watch Dynamo’s first match in Kiev together.

I said yes, and my greatest hope is that we can fulfil this commitment as soon as possible. In a free and peaceful Ukraine.

Thank you for being here today, the floor is yours.

Conclusion

Thank you, Mr President,

Thank you, dear Ruslan,

In your speech you referred to our motto: 'We want to remain what we are.'

I want to tell you today that we also want you to remain what you are.

And with that, I now close this afternoon's session.