

Beat: Politics

## Spain leads a project for the export of cereals from Ukraine

By landway

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**USPA NEWS** - The United Nations estimates that around 180 million people in 41 countries could suffer from the food crisis aggravated by the war in Ukraine. For this reason, the President of the Spanish Government, Pedro Sánchez, defended this Friday in Brussels the urgency of removing the Ukrainian cereal harvests, blocked by Russia, which are estimated at more than 20 million tons.

To this end, Sánchez announced that Spain is leading a public-private project that will allow some 8,000 tons of cereals to be removed from Ukraine in the next three months, which will be stored in various silos in Spanish Mediterranean harbours. The project, which will begin in mid-July in the pilot phase, has the collaboration of Poland, Luxembourg and France. During his speech, Sánchez referred to the disinformation campaign promoted by Russia and recalled that European sanctions do not affect Ukrainian or Russian food exports in any way.

Gathered in the Belgian capital for two days, the 27 member countries of the European Union have defined the 'Wider Europe' project, which aims to establish how relations between European countries can be: the members of the EU, the candidates to be and non-members but, according to Pedro Sánchez, without it being an alternative to membership. The leaders also discussed the results of the 'Conference on the Future of Europe,' a process in which European citizens have collaborated to present proposals for the future.

The European Council, in a meeting described by Sánchez as "historic," agreed to grant the status of candidate for the European Union to Ukraine and Moldova. The President of the Spanish Government stressed: "These steps forward show that we are facing a decisive moment in the process of European construction, in which it is important to highlight the attraction that our project continues to have for many countries; and all European States have to contribute to forging a more cohesive and fair Union."

Pedro Sánchez began the day in Brussels on Thursday with the EU-Western Balkans Summit, in which the 27 have revitalized the enlargement process, have strengthened relations with these countries and have encouraged them to accelerate the pending reforms for their integration into the EU; an integration that has the support of Spain. After this meeting, already in the European Council, the 27 took up the issue again and the Spanish Prime Minister defended the need to open negotiations as soon as possible with Albania and North Macedonia, and to grant candidate status to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The leaders also recognized the European perspective of Georgia, which has also applied for membership. The President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, participated by videoconference to thank his country for political support and to explain the development of the Russian invasion after 121 days of war. The 27 agreed to continue to provide the necessary support to Ukraine in this "war of aggression" in the economic, military, social, financial and humanitarian fields. In this regard, they reiterated their condemnation of the attacks against civilians, blamed Russia for the food security crisis created, and called for it to stop attacking agricultural facilities and to unblock the Black Sea ports to allow the departure of cereals from Ukraine.

"During the Council we have shown the necessary unity in the face of Putin's invasion. A unity that I am sure the allies will show at the NATO Summit in Madrid next week," said the President of the Spanish Government.

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United Press Association, Inc.  
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168  
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA  
(702) 943.0321 Local  
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile  
[info@unitedpressassociation.org](mailto:info@unitedpressassociation.org)  
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