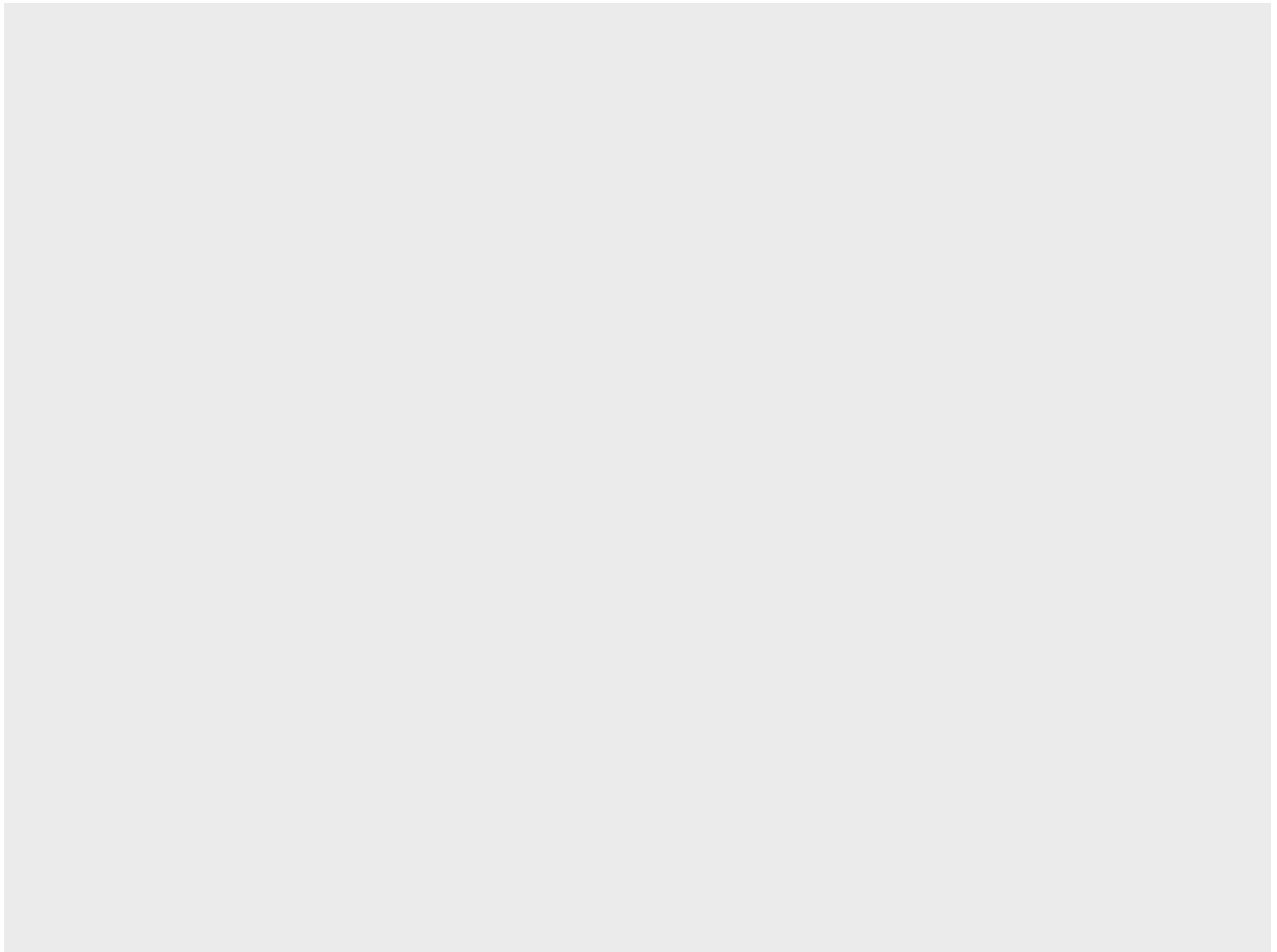# NATO and EU Agree to Stand United against "Aggressive" Russia

**NATO foreign ministers** have vowed that the Western alliance will continue to adapt in the face of "rising threats and systemic competition," and underlined that "**Russia**'s aggressive actions constitute a threat to Euro-Atlantic security.""Assertive and authoritarian powers, and non-state actors, challenge the rules-based international order, including through hybrid and cyber threats, the malicious use of new technologies, as well as other asymmetric threats," the ministers said in a **joint statement** issued on March 23 after a first day of talks in Brussels.

Earlier in the day, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who is attending the two-day **NATO** gathering – the first face-to-face meeting of **foreign ministers** at

the Western security alliance since 2019 — said China's military rise and **Russia**'s attempts to destabilize the West were threats that required **NATO** to come together.

Leonid Slutsky, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the State Duma, the lower house of **Russia**'s parliament, called "**NATO**'s statements on a threat and **aggression** emanating from **Russia**" as "yet another mantra to justify the alliance's existence."

In their statement, the **NATO** ministers reaffirmed "the enduring transatlantic bond between Europe and North America, with **NATO** at its heart" — after four years of doubt and concern among some allies under the previous U.S. administration of President Donald Trump, who often criticized some allies for failing to pay their fair share of the defense burden.

The ministers also committed to Article 5 of **NATO**'s founding treaty, under which an attack against one ally shall be considered an attack against them all.

Noting that members of the 30-nation alliance "are making good progress on fairer trans-Atlantic burden sharing," the **NATO** ministers welcomed "the efforts made by all Allies in Europe and North America that contribute to our indivisible security."

On his first trip to Brussels, where he is also scheduled to hold talks with European Union leaders as part of U.S. President Joe Biden's efforts to repair transatlantic ties, Blinken vowed Washington would work to rebuild and strengthen NATO.

"The United States wants to rebuild our partnerships, first and foremost with our **NATO** allies, we want to revitalize the alliance," he told reporters as he met **NATO** Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian welcomed Blinken's statements, saying that **NATO** had "rediscovered" itself.

"There will be no European defense without **NATO**, and there will be no efficient and relevant **NATO** without Europeans," he said at **NATO** headquarters.

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