Caught up in conflict yet again, Europe weeps its future

The Russia-Ukraine crisis has presented EU decision-makers with a pile of policy challenges

By XING YI in London

As the US and its allies supply more weapons to Ukraine, peace activists have vowed their objections and are organizing demonstrations across Europe to call for a halt to the escalation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Stop the War Coalition, an advocacy group that campaigns against war, also called on governments to stop committing crimes against humanity.

On Monday, the coalition said US weapons sales to Europe rose by 46 percent last year from $34.8 billion in 2021. Germany was one of the biggest US customers in Europe, ordering US defense jets and munitions and equipment worth $8.4 billion in July.

The conflict has prompted the EU to increase its defense budgets, Ding said. "For quite a while the EU will guarantee military and social stability, whereas no one can guarantee the economic recovery," he said.

EU autonomy setback

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Macron has described NATO as "a team built," but last year Poland and Sweden submitted applications to join the alliance. Rocked by Putin's invasion of Ukraine, some European countries now want to increase their defense budgets, Ding said.

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