

Russia's War Against Ukraine: European Union Responses and U.S.-EU Relations

Updated January 9, 2024

The 27-member European Union (EU) has implemented a range of policy responses to Russia's war against Ukraine. [EU actions](#) and [coordination with the United States](#) are of interest to Congress given the [EU's role](#) as an important [U.S. partner](#). (Also see CRS In Focus IF12277, *Russia's War on Ukraine: U.S. Policy and the Role of Congress*.)

Key EU Responses

Sanctions

Since February 2022, the EU has imposed [12 packages](#) of sanctions—or *restrictive measures*—intended to cripple Russia's ability to finance the war against Ukraine, enact costs on Russia's elites, and diminish Russia's economic base. Imposing sanctions requires unanimity among EU members.

To date, [EU sanctions](#) on Russia's government and financial, business, defense, technology, and media sectors include

- [Freezing the assets](#) of 331 entities (including key banks) and 1,612 individuals (primarily Russian officials and elites), to whom travel bans also apply.
- Restricting transactions with [Russia's central bank](#) and blocking access to its reserve holdings.
- Imposing debt and equity restrictions on certain banks and companies.
- Banning transactions with certain Russian state-owned [military-industrial enterprises](#).
- Disconnecting 10 leading Russian financial institutions—including [Sberbank](#), Russia's largest bank—from [SWIFT](#) (the world's dominant international financial messaging system).
- Broadening export controls on dual-use goods and technologies.
- Banning certain exports in the aviation, maritime, and technology sectors (e.g., semiconductors) and the export of [drone engines](#) and [luxury goods](#) to Russia.

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IN11897

- Prohibiting imports of [steel](#), [spirits](#), [seafood](#), [gold](#), [diamonds](#), and [other products](#) from Russia.
- Closing EU airspace, seaports, and roads to Russian operators.
- Suspending broadcasting activities of 13 Russian [media outlets](#) (including subsidiaries).

[EU energy dependence on Russia](#) has made [targeting](#) its energy sector [challenging](#). The EU has not prohibited Russian natural gas imports but sanctions include

- Prohibiting most imports of Russian [crude oil and petroleum products](#) (applying to [around 90%](#) of Russian oil imports), with an exemption for crude oil delivered by pipeline.
- Banning EU companies from providing [oil transport services](#), except for [Russian crude oil](#) and [petroleum products](#) sold to non-EU countries at or below agreed price caps (established in [cooperation](#) with the [Group of Seven \[G7\] price cap coalition](#) and aimed at reducing Russia's oil revenues while keeping global energy markets stable).
- Banning EU exports of [oil refining technologies](#).
- Prohibiting [Russian coal imports](#).

The EU also has approved an [anti-circumvention tool](#) to combat [sanctions evasion](#) in other countries. In December 2023, the EU agreed to measures [tightening implementation](#) of the oil price cap.

EU Assistance to Ukraine

According to [EU data as of December 2023](#), EU and member state support to Ukraine totals nearly €68 billion in military, financial, humanitarian, and emergency assistance and reaches almost €85 billion when EU funding to help Ukrainian refugees is included. (U.S. dollar figures are slightly higher at the current €1:\$1.09 exchange rate.)

Military Assistance. Through its [European Peace Facility \(EPF\)](#), the EU has committed €5.6 billion to date in military assistance financing for Ukraine, including €3.1 billion for lethal equipment, €380 million for nonlethal supplies, and [€2 billion](#) to provide Ukraine with 1 million rounds of ammunition (either from member state stocks or through joint procurement, but some [production challenges](#) exist). Member states may be reimbursed from the EPF for assistance provided. The EU also has established a [training mission for Ukraine's armed forces](#). The EU estimates that members' bilateral military support to Ukraine is more than €21 billion.

Financial and Other Aid. The EU, its member states, and European financial institutions have [collectively committed €40.6 billion](#) in financial, humanitarian, and emergency assistance for Ukraine, including

- €11.6 billion provided or guaranteed by the EU budget in 2022.
- €18 billion in EU [financial assistance](#) for 2023 (in the form of [favorable loans](#)).
- €9.5 billion from member states.

The EU also coordinates the delivery of [in-kind emergency supplies](#) to Ukraine. An EU [temporary protection mechanism](#) provides Ukrainian nationals who have fled with immediate residency rights and access to benefits throughout the bloc (up to [€17 billion](#) in EU funding helps support Ukrainians in member states). The EU is considering up to [€50 billion](#) in [financial assistance](#) and [€20 billion](#) in [military aid](#) to Ukraine for the 2023-2027 period and [possibilities](#) for [using frozen Russian assets](#) to support Ukraine's reconstruction.

Addressing Energy Dependence

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the EU pledged to phase out all Russian fossil fuel imports—including natural gas—before 2030. By the end of 2022, pipeline gas from Russia accounted for roughly 8% of EU gas imports (down from 40% in early 2022), although this decrease reflects in part Russia's decision to reduce deliveries. EU imports of Russian liquefied natural gas (LNG) increased somewhat during the same period. In 2023, EU statistics indicate further decreases in Russia's share of EU coal, oil, and pipeline gas imports and a marginal decline from 2022 levels in Russia's share of EU LNG imports.

U.S.-EU Cooperation and Congressional Interests

The U.S. government and the EU have worked together closely in responding to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Cooperation has included devising and enforcing sanctions, suspending Russia's preferential trade treatment under World Trade Organization rules, formulating the G7 oil price cap, and ensuring accountability for war crimes. The Biden Administration also committed to help the EU reduce its dependency on Russian gas, in part by boosting LNG shipments to the EU.

Strains on EU solidarity, including a dispute over EU imports of Ukrainian grain and the delay in approving new EU funding, could pose challenges to future cooperation on Ukraine, as could possible U.S. "donor fatigue" and political divisions. The EU regards U.S. military and financial support for Ukraine as "indispensable." Some in Congress may be interested in monitoring the extent of EU assistance and other aspects of U.S.-EU relations affected by the war in Ukraine:

- **Security and Defense.** The war has prompted debate on improving EU military capabilities and strengthening the NATO-EU partnership.
- **Energy and Climate.** Russia's actions could accelerate the EU's energy transition and U.S.-EU energy cooperation, despite some tensions over U.S. "green" subsidies.
- **EU Enlargement.** Traditionally, bipartisan support has existed in Congress for EU enlargement. The EU declared Ukraine an official candidate for membership in June 2022 (eight other countries, including Moldova and Georgia, also are official candidates). Joining the EU typically takes many years.

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