



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

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The 27-member European Union (EU) has implemented various 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 [13 packages](#) of sanctions—or *restrictive measures*—intended to reduce Russia's ability to finance the war against Ukraine, to enact costs on Russia's elites, and to 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 419 entities (including key banks) and 1,706 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).
- Expanding and tightening export controls on [dual-use goods and technologies](#) to Russia, and to [selected entities](#) in China, India, Kazakhstan, and elsewhere directly supporting Russia's military-industrial complex.

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- Banning certain exports in the aviation, maritime, and technology sectors (e.g., semiconductors) and the export of [drone engines](#) and [luxury goods](#) to Russia.
- 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](#) to reduce Russia's oil revenues while keeping global energy markets stable).
- Banning EU exports of [oil refining technologies](#).
- Prohibiting [Russian coal imports](#).

In December 2023, the EU [strengthened](#) a new [anti-circumvention tool](#) to combat [sanctions evasion](#) in other countries and [tightened](#) implementation of the oil price cap.

EU Assistance to Ukraine

According to EU data, EU and member state support to Ukraine [as of late March 2024](#) totaled nearly €81 billion in military, financial, humanitarian, and emergency assistance; when [€17 billion](#) in EU funding to help [Ukrainian refugees](#) in member states is added, total EU support reaches almost €98 billion. (U.S. dollar figures are slightly higher at the current €1:\$1.08 exchange rate.)

Financial and Other Aid. Since 2022, the EU, its member states, and European financial institutions have [collectively made available €47.9 billion](#) in financial, humanitarian, and emergency aid 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](#)).
- €12.2 billion from member states.

In February 2024, EU leaders approved [€50 billion in new financial assistance](#) (€33 billion in loans and €17 billion in grants) for the 2024–2027 period, provided through a new [Ukraine Facility](#) (the [first €4.5 billion](#) was disbursed in March 2024). The EU also coordinates the delivery of [in-kind emergency supplies](#) to Ukraine.

Military Assistance. Through its [European Peace Facility \(EPF\)](#), the EU has committed €11.1 billion to date in military assistance financing for Ukraine, including

- A new [€5 billion Ukraine Assistance Fund](#) (approved in March 2024).
- [€3.6 billion](#) (consisting of €3.1 billion for lethal equipment and €380 million for nonlethal supplies) between February 2022 and February 2023.
- [€2 billion](#) for 1 million rounds of ammunition (either from member state stocks or through joint procurement, but [production challenges](#) exist).

The EU also established a [training mission for Ukraine’s armed forces](#). As of March 2024, the EU [estimates](#) members’ bilateral military support to Ukraine is around €22 billion.

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. According to the EU, the share of Russia’s pipeline gas in EU imports [decreased](#) from over 40% in 2021 to about 8% in 2023, although this decrease reflects in part [Russia’s decision to reduce deliveries](#). EU statistics also [indicate](#) imports of Russian liquefied natural gas (LNG) have [increased](#) somewhat since 2022.

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.

EU policymakers [regard](#) sustained [U.S. support](#) for Ukraine as “[indispensable](#)” and are [concerned](#) about the status of continued U.S. funding for Ukraine. The EU is seeking to [boost](#) its military support for Ukraine, [including](#) by possibly using [financial proceeds](#) (of up to [€3 billion](#) per year) generated by immobilized Russian sovereign assets (of over [€200 billion](#)) held in the EU. U.S. and EU officials are engaged in [G7 discussions](#) on options for using immobilized Russian assets for Ukraine, but the EU has [legal and economic concerns](#) about [seizing](#) the underlying assets. Some in Congress may be interested in monitoring EU responses to Russia’s aggression in Ukraine and implications for other aspects of U.S.-EU relations, including

- **Security and Defense.** The war in Ukraine has [prompted](#) debate on improving EU military capabilities and strengthening the [NATO-EU partnership](#).
- **Energy and Climate.** Russia’s actions have [accelerated](#) 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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