

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 a wide range of policy responses to Russia's war against Ukraine, launched in 2022. [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

The EU has imposed [several rounds](#) 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 171 entities (including key banks) and 1,386 individuals (primarily Russian officials and elites), to whom travel bans also apply.
- Imposing debt and equity restrictions on certain banks and companies.
- Restricting transactions with [Russia's central bank](#) and blocking access to its reserve holdings.
- 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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- Prohibiting imports of [steel](#) and other raw materials, [spirits](#), [seafood](#), and [gold](#) from Russia.
- Closing EU airspace, seaports, and roads to Russian aircraft, ships, and freight operators, respectively.
- Suspending the broadcasting activities of nine Russian state-owned [media outlets](#).

[EU energy dependence on Russia](#) has made [targeting](#) its energy sector [challenging](#), but the EU has approved progressively tougher sanctions, including

- Prohibiting most imports of Russian [crude oil and petroleum products](#), with an exemption for crude oil delivered by pipeline. The EU expects these sanctions, which began taking effect in December 2022, to apply to [around 90%](#) of Russian oil imports.
- [Banning oil transport services](#). An [exemption](#) finalized in December 2022 allows EU companies to provide such services for [Russian crude oil](#) sold to non-EU countries at or below a price cap of \$60 a barrel. In February 2023, the EU set price caps for [Russian petroleum products](#). EU caps are established in [cooperation](#) with the [Group of Seven \(G7\) price cap coalition](#) (aimed at reducing Russia's oil revenues while keeping global energy markets stable).
- Banning EU exports of [oil refining technologies](#).
- Prohibiting [Russian coal imports](#).

Although the EU has not prohibited Russian natural gas imports, it is working to end its reliance on Russian energy (see below). The EU is planning [additional sanctions](#) on Russia and considering using [frozen Russian assets](#) to support Ukraine. (Also see CRS Insight IN11869, *Russia's War Against Ukraine: Overview of U.S. Sanctions and Other Responses*.)

Military Assistance

Through its [European Peace Facility \(EPF\)](#), the EU has committed [€3.6 billion](#) to date in military assistance financing for Ukraine, including for lethal equipment (€3.1 billion) and nonlethal supplies (€380 million). Member states may be reimbursed from the EPF for assistance provided since the start of 2022. The EU also has established a [training mission for Ukraine's armed forces](#). The EU estimates that members' [bilateral military support](#) to Ukraine is over €8 billion (similar to estimates by [outside experts](#)).

Financial and Other Aid

As of [February 2023](#), the EU, its member states, and European financial institutions have [collectively mobilized €37.8 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](#)); and
- €7.8 billion from member states.

The EU also coordinates the delivery of [in-kind emergency supplies](#) to Ukraine. A [temporary protection mechanism](#) provides Ukrainian nationals who have fled with immediate residency rights and access to benefits throughout the EU. (Also see CRS Insight IN11882, *Humanitarian and Refugee Crisis in Ukraine*.)

Addressing Energy Dependence

Russia's war in Ukraine has heightened long-standing concerns about EU dependence on Russian energy imports, particularly natural gas. Russia [substantially reduced](#) gas pipeline [deliveries](#) to the EU in 2022. By the end of 2022, pipeline gas from Russia accounted for [roughly 9%](#) of EU gas imports ([down from 40%](#) in early 2022), although EU imports of Russian liquefied natural gas (LNG) [increased](#) somewhat during the same period. The EU has pledged to phase out Russian [fossil fuel imports](#) before 2030.

U.S.-EU Cooperation and Congressional Interests

The United States and the EU have cooperated closely in responding to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Many [sanctions](#) are identical or substantively similar. The two partners have worked together to establish a [task force](#) on sanctions enforcement, to [suspend Russia's preferential trade treatment](#) under World Trade Organization rules, and to [formulate the G7 price cap on Russian oil exports](#). The United States also has [committed](#) to help the EU reduce its [dependency](#) on Russian gas, in part by boosting LNG shipments to the EU.

Although U.S.-EU unity on Ukraine [remains strong](#), energy costs and [economic difficulties](#) could put [pressure](#) on EU policies in the longer term—potentially affecting sanctions on Russia, increasing calls for negotiations, or impeding EU financial support to Ukraine. EU [financial aid disbursements](#) faced [some delays](#) in 2022, but disbursements have [accelerated](#) and appear [on schedule](#) in 2023. Some in Congress may be [interested](#) in monitoring the extent of EU assistance to Ukraine and U.S.-EU coordination.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine also has implications for several EU initiatives of possible interest to Congress:

- **Security and Defense.** The war has [prompted](#) debate on EU efforts to improve its military capabilities and could [strengthen](#) the [NATO-EU partnership](#).
- **Energy and Climate Policies.** Russia's actions could accelerate the EU's energy transition, [bolster](#) the [European Green Deal](#), and present opportunities for U.S.-EU clean energy cooperation. The EU worries, however, that [new U.S. subsidies for green technologies](#) could divert trade and investment [away](#) from the EU. A [U.S.-EU task force](#) is seeking to [address EU concerns](#).
- **EU Enlargement.** Traditionally, strong bipartisan support has existed in Congress for [EU enlargement](#). The EU declared [Ukraine](#) and [Moldova](#) official candidates for membership in June 2022 (six other countries are recognized as official candidates also). Joining the EU typically takes many years.

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