

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](#) may be of interest to Congress given the [EU's role](#) as a [U.S. partner](#) on Ukraine. (Also see CRS In Focus IF12277, *Russia's War Against Ukraine: U.S. Policy and the Role of Congress*.)

Key EU Responses

Sanctions

Since February 2022, the EU has imposed [15 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 assets of roughly [2,400 individuals and entities](#) (travel bans also apply to designated individuals);
- Restricting transactions with [Russia's central bank](#) and blocking access to its reserve holdings;
- Expanding [lending and investment restrictions](#) on certain Russian 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 export controls on [dual-use goods and technologies](#) to Russia and [selected entities](#) in China, India, Kazakhstan, and elsewhere [supporting](#) Russia's military-industrial complex;

- 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; and
- Suspending broadcasting activities of 18 Russian [media outlets](#) (including subsidiaries).

[EU reliance on energy imports from Russia](#) (prior to 2022 in particular) has posed [challenges](#) to sanctioning Russia's energy sector. The EU has not prohibited Russian natural gas imports, but sanctions include

- Prohibiting imports of Russian [seaborne crude oil and petroleum products](#) (covering 90% of EU oil imports from Russia);
- 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](#) with the Group of Seven [G7] to [reduce](#) Russia's oil revenues while keeping global energy markets stable);
- Prohibiting transshipment of [Russian liquefied natural gas \(LNG\)](#) through EU ports, among other LNG-related measures;
- Banning EU exports of [oil-refining technologies](#); and
- Prohibiting [Russian coal imports](#).

The EU also has sought to [prevent the circumvention of sanctions](#) and the [oil price cap](#), including by [prohibiting port access and services](#) to ships in [Russia's shadow fleet](#) and other maritime vessels contributing to Russia's war effort.

EU Assistance to Ukraine

According to EU data, EU and member state support to Ukraine as of early January 2025 totaled [nearly €134 billion](#). (U.S. dollar figures are slightly higher at the current €1:\$1.03 exchange rate.)

Financial and Other Aid. Since 2022, the EU, its member states, and European financial institutions have [collectively made available €67.3 billion](#) in financial, humanitarian, and emergency aid for Ukraine, including

- €16.4 billion disbursed in 2024 (part of [€50 billion in financial assistance](#) for the 2024-2027 period, provided through a [Ukraine Facility](#) since March 2024);
- €18 billion in EU [financial assistance](#) in 2023 (as [favorable loans](#)); and
- €12.2 billion from member states.

The EU also has provided €17 billion for [Ukrainian refugees](#) within the EU and coordinates the delivery of [in-kind emergency supplies](#) to Ukraine.

Military Assistance. The EU and its member states have committed [€48.3 billion](#) in military support to Ukraine to date, consisting of

- €6.1 billion through the [European Peace Facility \(EPF\)](#), including [€3.6 billion](#) in military assistance financing and [€2 billion](#) for 1 million rounds of ammunition (either from member state stocks or through joint procurement) and
 - An estimated €42 billion in bilateral military support from member states.
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In May 2024, the EU [approved](#) using the financial proceeds generated by the [€210 billion](#) in immobilized Russian sovereign assets held in the EU to support Ukraine. The EU made the first such transfer of [€1.5 billion](#) to Ukraine in July 2024, with 90% designated for military support through the EPF and 10% for reconstruction needs. The EU also has [trained](#) 70,000 members of Ukraine’s armed forces.

Reducing 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 reflected in part [Russia’s decision to reduce deliveries](#). Imports of Russian LNG have increased since 2022, and some EU [officials](#) suggest more effort is needed to address [remaining EU energy imports from Russia](#).

U.S.-EU Cooperation and Congressional Interests

The Biden Administration and the EU worked together to respond to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. Cooperation 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 in 2022 and 2023.

In October 2024, U.S. and EU officials finalized a [G7 plan](#) for a [\\$50 billion loan to Ukraine](#), to be repaid with proceeds earned on immobilized Russian sovereign assets. In December 2024, the United States approved a [\\$20 billion](#) loan as part of this initiative. In January 2025, the EU disbursed the [first €3 billion tranche](#) of its €18.1 billion loan contribution under the G7 initiative.

Some in the 119th Congress may be interested in monitoring EU policies toward Ukraine in the context of considering whether to support further U.S. assistance to Ukraine or assessing other U.S. policies toward Ukraine and Russia, including sanctions. EU responses to Russia’s aggression in Ukraine also may have implications for other aspects of U.S.-EU relations, including the [NATO-EU partnership](#), [U.S.-EU energy cooperation](#), and further Euro-Atlantic integration. Traditionally, bipartisan support has existed in Congress for [EU enlargement](#). The EU declared [Ukraine](#) and neighboring [Moldova](#) official candidates for membership in 2022 and began accession negotiations in 2024, although joining the EU typically takes many years.

Author Information

Kristin Archick
Section Research Manager

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