

Ukraine-Russia

Factual update on international response

This document intends to provide an overview of official EU and international government measures taken in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Among a lot of commentary and speculation on the crisis, this report focuses on official sources. H+K Brussels will share daily updates as long as the situation demands it.

- The European Parliament adopted a legislative initiative report to limit wealthy Russians with ties to the government from accessing ‘golden passports.’
- The European Central Bank said it will move faster on scaling back its monthly asset purchases, as it takes into account the uncertainty caused by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.
- The Russian Government has approved a list of goods and equipment that are temporarily prohibited from being exported from Russia.

EU measures

EU institutions

On 8 and 9 March, EU Ministers of Digital Affairs met in an [extraordinary Council](#) to discuss several issues linked to EU’s solidarity with Ukraine. EU Ministers called for accelerating European cooperation in the area of **cybersecurity**. Ministers also requested that Member States’ cybersecurity authorities step up their cooperation at operational level and called on the European Commission to firm up the Cyber Resilience Act announced by President von der Leyen. Additionally, they approved the creation of a cybersecurity emergency response fund.

On 9 March, the European Parliament (EP) [adopted](#) a legislative initiative report calling on the Commission to table a proposal by the end of its mandate in 2024. The commitment by the Commission, France, Germany, Italy, the UK, Canada and the US to **limit wealthy Russians with ties to the government from accessing ‘golden passports’** was raised during Monday’s debate in plenary (8 March). The text was passed with 595 to 12 and 74 abstentions.

On 10 March, the European Central Bank (ECB) [said](#) it will move faster on **scaling back its monthly asset purchases**, as it takes into account the uncertainty caused by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The ECB plans to end its asset buying in the third quarter of this year, but will revise that depending on inflation. It said the Russia-Ukraine conflict is a ‘watershed’ for Europe, as it held interest rates steady.

EU Member States

In a meeting with US Vice President Kamala Harris, **Polish** President Andrzej Duda [said](#) that Poland’s relationship with the US is “stronger than ever” and the **US** are “deploying more troops” to strengthen their presence in Europe and Poland.

Following the meeting of the EU Committee of Ministers on Wednesday 9 March in Versailles, the **Finnish** government put out a [statement](#) that condemned Russia, but also put forth the Finnish position on EU enlargement and the recovery fund. On enlargement, following requests from Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine to join the EU, Finland said it was good to “discuss” their membership but that agreed principles of the enlargement process must be adhered to. On the need to reduce energy dependency, Finland said it was important to increase the share of renewables, while on competitiveness, Finland emphasised “a strong and unified internal market.” They also noted that “the foundation of a strong economy is the responsible management of public finances and the sustainability of public finances” possibly in reference to calls to boost the recovery fund even further in light of the economic impact EU sanctions and retaliation of Russia are likely to have.

Slovakian Minister of Defence, Jaroslav Nad’, [spoke](#) to US Secretary of Defence, Lloyd James Austin III, on 9 March where it was [agreed](#) that more than 2,000 NATO soldiers would strengthen the defence of Slovakia, pending confirmation in the Slovak parliament.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on 9 March [said](#) he did not support a proposal from Poland to deliver Soviet-era MiG-29 fighter jets to Ukraine via the US Ramstein Air Base in Germany. "We have to think very carefully about what we are doing, and this certainly does not include fighter jets," the chancellor said.

International measures

United Kingdom

On 10 March the UK [announced](#) a travel ban and full assets freeze on seven Russian billionaires, including Roman Abramovich the owner of Chelsea Football Club, who are believed to be closely linked to President Putin. The UK is planning to introduce the Economic Crime Bill that would pave the way for further severe sanctions against Russia. Boris Johnson said those Russians who have helped Putin shed the blood of Ukrainians have no place in the UK. He further said that the UK will continue to support Ukraine and mount pressure on Putin's regime until it stops funding the brutal war in Ukraine.

United States

On 10 March US Vice President Kamala Harris [met](#) with Prime Minister Morawiecki in Poland. Both leaders discussed the ongoing war in Ukraine and said the NATO alliance will defend its members and their countries against any aggression. They also agreed to continue to provide economic and humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

After Russia claimed it had [uncovered](#) a US-funded bioweapons programme in Ukraine, US spokesperson Jen Psaki wrote on her Twitter that these "preposterous" claims are false, an attempt to spread disinformation and could be a pretext for using chemical weapons. Psaki stressed that the US is in full compliance with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention and has no intention to develop or use them.

China

On 10 March, Chinese spokesperson Zhao Lijian said that China [supports](#) Russian claims about the US-funded bioweapons programme in Ukraine and demanded the US provide a full account of its biological military activities at home and abroad and subject itself to multilateral verification. He said the international community has grave concerns about the US bio-military activities for a long time and it is not something the US can muddle through in few words. He further stated that US sanctions cannot solve the issue of Ukraine but will create problems and that China will maintain its dealings with Russia.

Australia

On 10 March, Australian Defence Minister Peter Dutton [said](#) that Putin's ambitions and that of his ally China are not limited to Ukraine and Taiwan, respectively. They will move beyond these two countries if we don't provide a deterrence effect and work closely with our colleagues and with our allies.

Russian retaliation measures

On 10 March, the Russian Government has [approved](#) a list of goods and equipment that are temporarily prohibited from being exported from Russia. The decision will be effective until the end of 2022. The list includes over 200 products, including technological, telecommunication and medical equipment, vehicles, agricultural machinery, electric equipment, as well as railway cars and locomotives, containers, turbines, metal and stone cutting machines, video displays, projectors, consoles and switchboards. The export of these goods has been suspended to all countries, excluding member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

On 10 March, the Russian Government has [submitted](#) a bill to the State Duma on allowing foreign pharmaceuticals easier access to the Russian market. To prevent a shortage of medicines in 2022, the Government will be authorised to decide on a simplified procedure for foreign medicines to enter the Russian market. Under this legislative proposal, the Government will decide on allowing newly registered foreign drugs to be sold in Russia in foreign packaging with a label in Russian until 31 December 2022.



Upcoming meetings

10-11 March – European Council (agenda can be found [here](#))

- Informal meeting of EU heads of state or government and will discuss the Russian aggression against Ukraine and strengthening European sovereignty.
 - Kick-off (16:00, Versailles, France)
 - End of meeting (TBC)
- The meeting will be followed by a joint press conference given by Emmanuel Macron, Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel (11 March, afternoon)

16 March – NATO (announcement can be found [here](#))

- Defense Ministerial meeting with the Ministers of Defense from every NATO Member States.
 - Kick-off (TBC, Brussels)
 - End of meeting (TBC)

21 March – Council (agenda can be found [here](#))

- Exchange of views of the EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs on Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the humanitarian aspects.
 - Kick-off (9:30 local time, Brussels)
 - End of meeting (TBC)
- This meeting will be followed by another Council meeting with the EU Ministers of Defense

24-25 March – European Council (agenda can be found [here](#))

- Meeting of EU heads of state or government.
 - Kick-off (TBC, Brussels)
 - End of meeting (TBC)