

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 Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the EU Member States (“COREPER II”) approved the fourth package of sanctions announced last Friday by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, as well as issued statements concerning suspension of Russia’s Most Favoured Status under the WTO.
- Russia has banned access to Instagram in the country at 00:00 on 14 March.
- Japan’s financial regulator – the Financial Services Agency – has requested that crypto-exchanges suspend cryptocurrency transactions with Russian and Belarusian individuals and organisations on Japan’s sanctions list (the action follows a 11 March joint statement made by the EU and G7 that committed to not permitting Russia to leverage digital assets in order to circumvent sanctions).

EU measures

EU Council decisions

The Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the EU Member States (“COREPER II”) [approved](#) the fourth package of sanctions announced on 11 March by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. It has also approved a statement to the WTO concerning both the suspension of Russia’s Most Favoured Nation status due to its aggression against Ukraine as well as suspension of the examination of Belarus’s application to the WTO. The sanctions are expected to be announced as of tomorrow and published in the Official Journal of the EU, after which they come into force.

Developments in EU Institutions

The **European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA)** [announced](#) on 14 March that it is monitoring the impact of the war in Ukraine on Europe’s financial markets and institutions and will use its supervisory and coordinating tools to ensure the orderly functioning of the financial markets, financial stability and investor protection. It will liaise with the EU National Competent Authorities (NCAs) on the impact of sanctions in critical areas, including credit rating agencies as well as the safety of clearinghouses and their members. It further provided that it will support the European Commission in issuing guidance on “sanctions compliance” for financial markets participants.

EU Member States

The Netherlands, alongside **Australia**, on 14 March initiated proceedings in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 in 2014. A [statement](#) by the Australian government said that the war in Ukraine “underscores the need to continue our enduring efforts to hold Russia to account for its blatant violation of international law and the UN Charter, including threats to Ukraine’s sovereignty and airspace.” The Dutch government, however, said that the decision to initiate [proceedings was independent](#) of the current crisis in Ukraine.

In **Germany**, on 11 March the regional parliament of Mecklenburg-Western Pommerania, where Nord Stream II was to be based, [voted against](#) providing EUR 20 million in aid to Ukraine citing legal and administrative barriers. CDU general secretary Paul Ziemak [described](#) the vote as “a shame” and accused those who voted against, notably the SPD and Die Linke, of “refusing to use the Russian lobbying money they got for humanitarian purposes”.

Germany is also scheduled to buy additional F-35 fighter jets from the USA, Christine Lambrecht, the German Defense Minister [confirmed](#) on 14 March. The minister, who didn’t specify how many jets Germany would buy, added that the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) it has been developing with France and Spain would also be



continued. Lambrecht was keen to stress that this did not impact FCAS as the additional US-built fighter jets may have caused concern with EU partners who are currently in the process of developing the next generation Eurofighter.

Ireland may revisit its long-held policy of defense neutrality in a referendum, but for now focus must remain on Ukraine [according](#) to its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney. “If there needs to be a referendum...then, of course, we will plan for that, but that isn’t the issue on the table right now”, he told broadcaster RTÉ on 13 March.

Finnish Minister for Economics, Mika Lintilä, [has said on Finnish TV](#) on 12 March that Finns will have to pay more for goods in what he described as “Putin prices” and warned of food shortages. “The price of food will increase. An extra challenge is that the state of agriculture is already critical. Needed is a quick support package. The genuine concern is that food production in Finland and in the rest of Europe will face an enormous challenge,” he added.

International measures

United States

On 11 March the US Department of Treasury [imposed](#) further sanctions on Russian billionaire Viktor Vekselberg, three family members of President Putin’s spokesperson and legislators over Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Those targeted by the new sanctions also include 10 people on the board of VTB Bank and 12 members of the Duma, Russia’s lower house of parliament, Four Novikombank board members (including chair Elena Georgieva), as well as ABR Management and four of its board members (including Bank Rossiya chair Dmitri Lebedev and Vice Governor of Saint Petersburg Vladimir Knyagin). The US Treasury said these sanctions hold those to account who were directly responsible for Russia’s illegitimate and unlawful recognition and facilitating the shameful pretext used by Putin to justify the unprovoked war against Ukraine.

On 12 March President Biden praised the [resolve](#) of the Ukrainian people and military saying they are defending their country with an iron will and announced \$200 million military assistance and pledged to continue to provide humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Biden also reiterated that the US and the international community is one voice and determined to hold Putin accountable.

On 14 March National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan [said](#) in his CNN interview that China might have known “something” about Putin’s military adventure in Ukraine but not to the full extent. He added that China will face severe consequences if it provides any kind of aid to Russia.

United Kingdom

on 14 March Boris Johnson [announced](#) that his government will donate 500 mobile generators to Ukraine to maintain the supply of electricity to essential facilities such as hospitals, shelters and water treatment plants that have lost power. The UK government has also set up a new Ukraine electricity network support taskforce, including many of the leading power suppliers. They will provide the generators from their stocks, with many expected to be delivered via neighbouring countries. In total, they should provide enough power for 20,000 homes or equivalent buildings. Johnson said Ukrainian people are suffering every day from Putin’s grave mistake and that the UK will continue to support Ukraine’s struggle against the illegal invasion through economic, diplomatic and humanitarian measures.

Australia

On 14 March Australia [imposed](#) new sanctions on 33 Russian oligarchs and business people, including Chelsea Football Club owner Roman Abramovich and Gazprom CEO Alexey Miller, Dmitri Lebedev Chairman of Rossiya, Sergey Chemezov Chair of Rostec, Nikolay Tokarev CEO of Transneft, Igor Shuvalov Chairman Vnesheconombank (VEB.RF) and Kirill Dmitriev CEO of Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) and their close family members because of their close relationships with President Putin. Australia says it supports recent sanctions by the Western allies and that it will continue working with its partners to inflict more pain on Russia.

On 14 March Australia (and the Netherlands) also [launched](#) a legal case against Russia at the International Civil Aviation Organization seeking to hold Moscow accountable for its alleged role in the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 in 2014. Australia says Russia’s unprovoked war demands coherent efforts to hold Russia to

account for its blatant violation of international law and the UN Charter, including threats to Ukraine's sovereignty and airspace.

Japan

On 14 March Japan's financial services regulator – the Financial Services Agency (FSA) – [urged](#) local crypto exchanges not to process transactions involving crypto-assets subject to asset-freeze sanctions against Russia and Belarus over the war in Ukraine. The FSA said it will strengthen measures against the transfer of funds using crypto assets that would violate the sanctions and it will continue working with allies and international partners to ensure the effectiveness of the sanctions.

Russian retaliation measures

Russia has banned Instagram in the country from 14 March, according to a [statement](#) on the website of Russia's communications agency (Roskomnadzor). The statement, which was released on Friday (11 March), reads: "Roskomnadzor decided to complete the procedure for imposing restrictions on access to Instagram at 00:00 on March 14, providing users with an additional 48 hours of transition period."

Upcoming meetings

15 March – [European Parliament](#) (agenda can be found [here](#))

- Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs will discuss the situation following Russia's aggression and invasion of Ukraine. They will have an exchange of views with EEAS and the Commission on international implications and consequences for the affected population
 - Kick-off (09:00 local time, Brussels)
 - End of meeting (18:45 local time, Brussels)
 - This meeting will be livestreamed [here](#)

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

- The Economic and Financial Affairs Council will meet to take stock of the economic and financial aspects of the sanctions imposed following Russia's aggression in Ukraine.
 - Kick-off (09:30 local time, Brussels)
 - End of meeting (TBC)
 - The press conference will be livestreamed [here](#)

16 March – [NATO](#) (announcement on 4 March press conference can be found [here](#))

- Extraordinary meeting with the Ministers of Defense from every NATO member state.
 - Kick-off (15:00 local time, Brussels)
 - End of meeting (TBC)
 - This meeting will be livestreamed [here](#)

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
- The Agriculture and Fisheries Council will meet and will be discussing the market situation in light of the conflict in Ukraine.

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)