

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 Council adopted its fourth package of economic and individual sanctions in respect of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, including sanctions on an additional 15 individuals and 9 entities.
- The Prime Ministers of Poland, Czech Republic and Slovenia visited Kiev on 15 March to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal.
- The Russian Foreign Ministry announced it is imposing sanctions on 12 current and former US government officials, including US President Joseph Biden.

EU measures

EU Council decisions

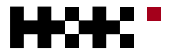
Following up on the informal meeting of EU heads of state and government held on 10-11 March and the confirmation by the EU permanent representatives ("COREPER II"), the Council [adopted](#) on 15 March its fourth package of economic and individual sanctions in respect of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. The Council decided in particular to: (1) **prohibit all transactions with certain state-owned enterprises**; (2) prohibit the provision of any **credit rating services** to any Russian person or entity; (3) **expand the list of persons** connected to Russia's defence and industrial base, on whom **tighter export restrictions** are imposed; (4) **prohibit new investments in the Russian energy sector**, as well as to introduce an **export restriction** on equipment, technology and services for the energy industry; and (5) introduce further **trade restrictions** concerning **iron and steel**, as well as luxury goods.

Furthermore, the Council decided to [impose](#) restrictive measure on an additional 15 individuals and 9 entities. The listed individuals include **key oligarchs, lobbyists and propagandists** pushing the Kremlin's narrative on the situation in Ukraine, as well as **key companies in the aviation, military and dual use, shipbuilding and machine building sectors**.

Separately, the Council [gave](#) a green light to the Commission to join, on behalf of the EU, a **plurilateral statement** with other members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine with the support of Belarus. The EU suggests that, alongside the other signatories to this statement, it confirms its "readiness" to take action at securing essential security interests. This could lead to the suspension of most-favoured-nation treatment to products and services of the Russian Federation. Furthermore, in light of Belarus' material support to the actions of the Russian Federation, the EU considers that its WTO accession process is to be suspended

Developments in EU Institutions

On 15 March, the EU's Economy and Finance ministers (ECOFIN) [discussed](#) the economic and financial consequences of the sanctions imposed on Russia, including the current state of play of implementation and the impact of those sanctions on the Russian banking system. The French president of the ECOFIN Council, Bruno



Le Maire, declared: “The sanctions make sure that Putin’s regime is now starting to pay the price for its military aggression. We stand ready to adopt complementary sanctions whenever necessary.”

Today, it was announced that President Joe Biden will attend the NATO summit and a special European Council meeting in Brussels next week.

EU Member States

Prime Ministers Mateusz Morawiecki (Poland), Petr Fiala (Czech Republic) and Janez Janša (Slovenia) travelled to **Kiev** on 15 March to meet directly with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal. “The purpose of the visit is to confirm the unequivocal support of the entire EU for the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine and to present a broad package of support for the Ukrainian state and society,” according to a [statement](#) issued by Prime Minister Morawiecki’s office. The statement adds that the three will be visiting as “representatives of the European Council”. The visit has been announced to international organisations, including the United Nations.

On 14 March, **German** Chancellor Olaf Scholz, was in Antalya to meet **Turkish** President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, during which they spoke of bilateral trade but also the key role Turkey plays in security in view of the Ukraine-Russia conflict. A [statement](#) issued by the Turkish Presidency said that “time will tell” if Turkey would continue to procure weapons from Russia and that Turkey has “to maintain our friendship with both Mr. Zelensky and Mr. Putin.” The statement went on to say that Turkey has applied sanctions “within the United Nations rules” and that the country has “maintained our support for Ukraine despite Russia.” Turkey said it would continue to support humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

A meeting was also held between **Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis** and **President Erdoğan** on 13 March. They discussed their “special responsibility in the European Security architecture” which they said was “changing with Russia’s attack on Ukraine” and agreed to improve ties. Both countries are nominally allies through NATO however there have been tensions over Turkish claims to sovereignty in the East Aegean Sea.

International measures

United States

On 15 March the US Treasury Department [imposed](#) new sanctions on Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, his wife Halina and several other Russians, including Moscow district judge Natalia Mushnikova for hiding Russia’s legal liability for the death of Russian human rights activist Sergei Magnitsky. The Treasury Department said the property of the designated individuals will be seized and US citizens will not be allowed to engage in transactions with them. The US says it will continue to impose severe consequences on those who engage in corruption or are connected to human rights violations.

United Kingdom

On 15 March the UK Department for International Trade [announced](#) a ban on exporting luxury goods to Russia and imposed new tariffs on Russian imports. The targeted goods are worth £900 million and include vodka, fertilizers, steel and aluminium, which will now face an import tariff increase of 35 percent in addition to the current tariffs. The UK finance minister Rishi Sunak said the new sanctions will further isolate the Russian economy from global trade and that these tariffs build on the UK’s existing work to starve Russia’s access to international finance, sanction Putin’s inner circle and exert maximum economic pressure on his regime.

On 15 March the UK’s Foreign Secretary Liz Truss [announced](#) new sets of sanctions banning 370 wealthy Russians and their family members who have close links with President Putin. Among those are Andrey Melnichenko (who owned major fertiliser producer EuroChem Group and coal company SUEK), Pyotr Aven (an oil investor who built a European business empire with an estimated net worth of \$4.7 billion) and Russia’s defence minister Sergei Shoigu. The sanctioned oligarchs have a combined estimated worth of more than £100 billion. Secretary Truss reiterated that the UK will continue increasing pressure on Putin’s allies and cut off funding for the Russian war machine.



On 13 March, minister Sunak also [called](#) on UK firms to stop investing in Russia, as he welcomed the decisions made by some companies, such as the energy firms BP and Shell, along with the investment firms Aviva, M&G and Vanguard, to divest away from Russian assets.

Canada

On 15 March Canada [announced](#) sanctions on [15 Russians](#) in response to their role in Russia's illegal and unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine. Canada says the growing list of sanctions on Russian leadership will build pressure on President Putin to stop the war.

On 13 March in his meeting with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of Armenia, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau strongly [condemned](#) the unlawful use of force and aggression by Russia against the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of Ukraine. The leaders discussed the impacts of conflict across the region, including humanitarian and economic disruption and increased security concerns.

China

On 15 March Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi [said](#) China opposes all unilateral sanctions with no legal basis, as this goes against international law and harms people in all countries. He further said China is not a party to the Ukraine conflict and does not want to be affected by the sanctions but has the right to protect its legitimate interest.

Japan

On 15 March Japanese foreign minister Hayashi Yoshimasa said in the [regular press conference](#) that Russia's aggression infringes upon Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and is a blatant violation of international law which does not recognise a unilateral attempt to change the status quo by force. Hence it is utterly unacceptable for Japan. Yoshimasa further said that Japan has taken additional economic measures against Russian lawmakers and oligarchs and will take in Ukrainian citizens evacuated to third countries. He also emphasised that Russia is intimidating countries with nuclear weapons, therefore, the Non-Proliferation Treaty needs to be strengthened more than ever before.

Russian retaliation measures

On 15 March, the Russian Foreign Ministry [announced](#) it is imposing sanctions on 12 current and former US government officials, including President Joseph Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin. The sanctioned individuals are prohibited from entering the country and any assets they hold there are frozen, the ministry said, but the measures do not hinder high-level contacts if needed. The ministry said it intends to sanction more US officials, military leaders, lawmakers and media who are critical of the country.

Upcoming meetings

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

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

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

- Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development will have an exchange of views with Commissioner Wojciechowski about the current situation on the EU agricultural markets following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
 - Kick-off (9:00 local time, Brussels)
 - End of meeting (12:00 local time, Brussels)
 - This meeting will be livestreamed [here](#)

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

- Parliamentary Committee on Employment and Social Affairs will have an exchange of views with Nicolas Schmit (Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights) on the impact of the ongoing war in Ukraine on the labour market in the EU and possible actions to be taken.
 - Kick-off (9:15 local time, Brussels)
 - End of meeting (10:15 local time, Brussels)
 - 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. The Council will also discuss the Strategic Compass.
 - 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 Defence
- The Agriculture and Fisheries Council will meet and will be discussing the market situation in light of the conflict in Ukraine.
 - The Commission non-paper can be found [here](#)

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)