

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.

- On 2 March, the Council introduced further restrictive measures, including a decision [restricting](#) seven Russian banks from the SWIFT communication system and a decision [suspending](#) the broadcasting activities of Sputnik and RT/Russia Today in the EU. The Council also [imposed](#) further restrictive measures on 22 Belarus officials, as well as further restrictions in the trade of goods from Belarus.
- The Commission [proposed](#) to activate the Temporary Protection Directive to offer quick and effective assistance to people fleeing the war in Ukraine, as well as operational guidelines intended to help member states' border guards in managing arrivals at the borders with Ukraine.
- Ireland and Poland are pushing the EU to stop purchasing Russian gas.
- The United States will close off its airspace to all Russian flights. Canada also imposed further restrictions, namely targeting members of the Russian elite, as well as excluding several Russian banks from the SWIFT communication system.

EU measures

EU Council decisions

On 2 March, the Council [decided](#) to restrict seven Russian banks (Bank Otkritie, Novikombank, Promsvyazbank, Rossiya Bank, Sovcombank, Vnesheconombank/VEB, and VTB Bank) from the **SWIFT communication system**. This will also apply to any legal person, entity or body established in Russia whose proprietary rights are directly or indirectly owned for more than 50% by the above-mentioned banks. Furthermore, the Council decided to prohibit investments and other projects co-financed by the **Russian Direct Investment Fund**, as well as to prohibit any selling, supply, transfer or export of **euro denominated banknotes** to Russia.

On 2 March, the Council [adopted](#) a decision suspending the broadcasting activities of Russian state-owned outlets Sputnik and RT/Russia Today in the EU until the aggression to Ukraine is put to an end and until the Russian Federation and its associated outlets **cease to conduct disinformation actions** against the EU and its member states.

On 2 March, the Council [decided](#) to impose targeted restrictive measures on **22 high ranked members of Belarusian** military personnel in view of their role in the decision making and strategic planning processes that led to the Belarusian involvement in the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Restrictive measures now apply to a total of **702 individuals and 53 entities**. The Council today introduced further restrictions in the **trade of goods** used for the production or manufacturing goods, including tobacco, mineral fuels, iron, steel and rubber products, as well as dual-use goods and technology.

All the relevant acts have been [published](#) in the Official Journal of the EU.

Developments in EU institutions

On 2 March, the Commission proposed to activate the [Temporary Protection Directive](#) to offer quick and effective assistance to people fleeing the war in Ukraine. Under this proposal, those fleeing the war will be granted **temporary protection** in the EU, meaning that they will be given a residence permit, and they will have access to education and to the labour market.

At the same time, the Commission also proposed [operational guidelines](#) intended to help member states' border guards in **managing arrivals** at the borders with Ukraine efficiently, while maintaining a high level of security.

It is for the Council to adopt the Temporary Protection proposal. The Council already expressed broad support for both measures at the extraordinary meeting of Sunday 27 February and has committed to discussing the two documents at the Justice and Home Affairs Council on Thursday, 3 March.

EU Member States

Ireland's Minister for Environment, Eamon Ryan, [said](#) ahead of an EU Council Meeting on 28 February that the best way to combat Russian aggression was to stop buying their gas.

Poland's Minister for Energy, Anna Moskwa, made similar [comments](#) where she called for the “derussification” of the EU's energy supplies. She also said that Poland would be [donating](#) fire-fighting equipment to the value of Eur 6,3 million to Ukraine.

Polish President, Andrzej Duda on 1 March, [ruled out](#) sending Polish fighter jets to Ukraine to support its resistance from Russia, claiming it would drag NATO into the conflict.

Slovakia's Minister of Defense Jaroslav And, [said](#) on 1 March, that there was a theoretical chance Slovakia could donate its fighter jets to Ukraine, but that it depended on the Poles' ability to protect Slovak airspace. He added that there was too much uncertainty as to what situation Ukraine would be in by the time Slovakia could make such a decision.

With **Bulgaria, Poland, and Slovakia** (for now) ruling themselves out, it remains unclear as to whether the EU will be able to deliver on High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Borrell's Sunday announcement that they would be providing fighter jets to Ukraine.

Portugal can accommodate 1,245 people displaced from Ukraine, the minister of the presidency, Mariana Vieira da Silva, [said](#) on 2 March.

Lithuania will take in “as many Ukrainians as needed” according to its Interior Minister, Agnė Bilotaitė in a [press](#) conference on 2 March. “We will create all the conditions for refugees to receive documents to live and work in Lithuania and other social and medical services necessary for them”, she said.

Spain is to deploy extra troops in Latvia to secure all European borders close to the Russian frontiers, Defence Minister Margarita Robles [said](#) on 1 March.

Romania wants to increase defense spending to 2.5% President Klaus Iohannis [said](#) on 01 March.

International measures

NATO

On 1 March, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg [visited](#) a frontline battle group of allies in Estonia together with Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the Chair of the NATO Military Committee Admiral Rob Bauer and the Supreme Allied Commander Europe General Tod Wolters. General Stoltenberg said the NATO forces will defend every inch of the NATO member countries and called on President Putin to pull out all his forces from Ukraine and give a chance to diplomacy.

United Kingdom

At the virtual meeting of G7 finance ministers on 1 March, the UK said members of the G7 group must go “fast and further” in supporting Ukraine and [adopt](#) a coordinated approach to implement the sanctions imposed on Russia. The allies will work together to lock out Russia from the global economy and financial system in the name of freedom and democracy, said the UK finance minister Rishi Sunak at the meeting.

Japan

On 1 March, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida [issued](#) a statement saying that Russia should be severely condemned and that the international community should come together in imposing harsh sanctions on Russia.



Kishida further said Japan will continue to cooperate with the international community to press Russia to stop the war in Ukraine.

US

In his State of the Union Speech on 1 March President Biden [said](#) the US will **close off its airspace** to all Russian flights to further isolate Moscow. Biden stressed that allies would continue supporting Ukraine but will not directly be involved in the conflict. The President further said he has coordinated with 30 countries around the world to release 60 million barrels of oil from reserves to press down the rising fuel prices because of sanctions on Russia.

Canada

On 24 February, in response to Russia's recognition of Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions Canada [imposed](#) sanctions on 382 members of the Russian Parliament and 32 entities. The sanctions implies that all Canadian citizens and entities in Canada and outside are prohibited from dealings with the designated individuals and entities.

On 28 February Canada further [imposed](#) economic sanctions on 18 members of the Russian Security Council including President Putin, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Minister of Defence Sergei Shoigu, Minister of Justice Konstantin Chuychenko, and Finance Minister Anton Siluanov for being directly involved in invading Ukraine.

On 26 February, Canada [agreed](#) with its allies to remove selected Russian banks from the SWIFT messaging system.

Switzerland

On 2 March, the Investment Committee of the Federal Pension Fund PUBLICA said it fully supports EU sanctions on Moscow. Therefore, it will [stop](#) purchasing securities in Russia and cancel the existing investment agreements. PUBLICA which is an independent public fund holds shares and bonds in Russia worth nearly 170 million Swiss Francs.

Upcoming meetings

3-4 March 2022 – [EU Justice & Home Affairs Council](#) (agenda can be found [here](#))

- Meeting between EU home affairs ministers who will focus on the influx of refugees from Ukraine and increased security at the Schengen area's external borders, as well as migration and asylum rules
 - Kick-off (+/- 11:25 local time, Brussels): exchange of views on the situation in Ukraine
 - End of meeting (+/- 16.00 local time, Brussels): press conference in [live streaming](#)

4 March – [Extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council](#) (agenda can be found [here](#))

- Meeting between EU Foreign Affairs High Representative Josep Borrell, Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Minister Dmytro Kuleba, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg
 - Kick-off (+/- 15:00 local time, Brussels): exchange of views on Russia's aggression towards Ukraine (including an informal exchange with the US Secretary of State, Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister and NATO's Secretary General)
 - End of meeting (TBC): expected press release (which will be published [here](#))