

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 EU is currently waiting to see the impact of its restrictive measures towards Russia before imposing any more
- Certain third countries – including North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Ukraine – have aligned themselves with the EU Council's restrictive measures towards Russia
- French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire announced that the EU is planning to take additional measures regarding crypto assets amidst growing concerns that they could be employed to circumvent financial sanctions imposed on Russia
- Various European ports, container terminals and shipping companies have decided not to accept or handle any cargo to and from Russia at the moment

EU measures

Developments in EU institutions

On 2 March, during a press conference following the Economic and Financial Council (ECOFIN), French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire [announced](#) that the EU is planning to take additional measures regarding **crypto assets** over growing concerns that they could be employed to circumvent financial sanctions imposed on Russia. More details are expected in upcoming days/weeks.

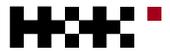
On 3 March, the Council [released](#) a declaration by the EU High Representative Josep Borrell on behalf of the EU on **the alignment of certain third countries** concerning restrictive measures towards Russia. The declaration states that the candidate countries to join the EU North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine itself align themselves with the adopted Council decisions. They will ensure that their national policies conform to the Council Decisions.

On 3 March, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen [said](#) the EU would take **additional steps against Moscow if the situation in Ukraine further deteriorates** and is preparing for the impact of Russian retaliation. *“In particular, we are working to diversify the EU’s energy supplies and doubling down on renewables,”* she [added](#).

On 3 March, speaking with the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) in the European Parliament, European Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson [announced](#) full political support to the **early synchronisation of the Ukrainian and Moldovan electricity grid** with Continental Europe, which was originally supposed to take place in 2023. Commissioner Simson also announced that the European Network of Transmission System Operators (ENTSO-E) has set up a task force to assess these risks and identify necessary measures. Furthermore, Simson noted that the European Commission will present its **Joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy** on 8 March, to address the issue of supply shock.

EU Member States

On 2 March, the [Port of Rotterdam](#) in the **Netherlands** released a statement that because of uncertainty created by sanctions on Russia (what exactly is covered by the sanctions, how quickly will Customs release containers for export, how is the conflict developing, how big are the payment risks etc.) various container terminals and shipping companies have decided not to accept or handle any containers with the destination Russia at the moment.



The [Port of Hamburg](#) in **Germany** made a similar statement on 3 March, noting some terminals and shipping companies are not handling containers to and from Russia.

On 28 February, alongside announcing the EU ban on Russian aircrafts in the EU airspace, **Spain** [said](#) that they had submitted a proposal to the EU to propose similar measures for maritime transport. While the European Parliament (EP) made a similar call in their [resolution against Russian aggression](#), the EP resolution is non-binding and there have not yet been any additional sanctions announced that cover maritime transport.

On 3 March, **France** [announced](#) that it had seized the yacht belonging to Igor Setchine, director of Rosneft, for his links to the Putin regime.

On 3 March, the Prime Minister of **Poland**, Mateusz Morawiecki, described the exemption of Sberbank and Gazprombank from EU sanctions as “[unacceptable](#).” He said that Poland demands sanctions to fully encompass all Russian entities via which the war is financed.

Thirty-nine countries, including all twenty-seven member states of the EU, have [called](#) on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate alleged Russian war crimes in Ukraine. The ICC confirmed on 28 February that an investigation had begun.

Estonia [confirmed](#) on 3 March that they too will support EU accession status for Ukraine. The government also [decreed](#) that no Estonians would be permitted to participate in the armed forces of Belarus or Russia. Estonia is home to a large minority of ethnic Russian speakers.

The **Swedish** government has on 2 March [urged](#) Swedish universities and research funders to suspend collaborations with government institutions in Russia and Belarus and has [announced](#) that it would be sending medical supplies to Ukraine.

On 2 March, **Sweden** and **Finland** have taken part in a [joint military training operation](#) in light of recent Russian aggression. Meanwhile, the President of Finland, Sauli Niinistö, has on 3 March [called](#) on Finns to “keep a cool head” with regard to the country’s changing security situation resulting from the war in Ukraine.

In a video address to the nation on 2 March, **French** President, Emmanuel Macron [announced](#) that he would gather the EU heads of state and government in Versailles on 10 and 11 March to discuss building a real “European defence.” In the same speech he denounced Russian President Putin for choosing war.

International measures

NATO

On 2 March, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and Prime Minister of Iceland Katrín Jakobsdóttir [met](#) in Brussels in support of Ukraine. Both leaders expressed willingness to support efforts of Western allies to enhance pressure on Moscow by imposing sanctions.

On 2 March, NATO also [activated](#) the NATO Response Force for the first time in its history by deploying 5,000 French troops in Romania to reinforce the defence posture of the alliance in Eastern Europe. Stoltenberg welcomed the deployment and said “*our commitment to Article 5, our collective defence clause, is iron-clad. We will protect and defend every inch of NATO territory.*”

United Kingdom

On 1 and 2 March, the UK introduced a list of measures against Russia that include an export, supply and transfer ban on critical technology to Russia. The ban also includes the provision of technical, financial and brokering services related to critical technology.

The UK further imposed restrictions on export, supply and transfer of dual-use technology that can benefit Russian military, as well as sanctions on purchasing securities or financial assets in Russia, granting or entering business dealings with the designated individuals and entities ([here](#) and [here](#)).

Russian shipping in UK waters was also restricted on [1 March](#), prohibiting all Russian ships and other ships specified by the Secretary of State from entering UK ports, except for in the case of emergency. This includes ships owned, controlled, chartered or operated by a person/entity “connected with Russia.”



On 2 March, with the support of 37 countries, the UK [launched](#) an application in the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate Russian war crimes in Ukraine. The UK says Russia's indiscriminate use of force against civilians mounts to war crimes and that an investigation by the ICC is urgently needed. The UK stands ready to provide the necessary technical assistance and work closely with its allies to ensure Russian leaders and officers behind the killing of civilians are brought to justice.

Japan

On 1 March, Japan [updated](#) Russia's sanction regime that includes: prohibition on transactions with the central bank of Russia; freezing assets of designated individuals and entities; an export ban on goods that could benefit Russian military, and joining the allies in removing Russia from SWIFT international payment systems.

Japan also imposed sanctions on President of Belarus Lukashenko and his associates, along with severe export control measures against the country.

In addition, Japan restricted export to and import from Donetsk and Luhansk, imposed a travel ban on individuals from these two regions as well as announced to freeze their assets.

US

On 2 March, following the Emergency Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Russia's aggression in Ukraine, President Biden [said](#) Putin is attacking global peace and security by attacking Ukraine. If the world does not stand against Putin, he will inflict further pain on the world.

Canada

On 2 March, Canada imposed sanctions on 10 individuals from the Russian-owned Rosneft and Gazprom energy companies. Canada said it will [coordinate](#) with its international partners and allies to impose further sanctions on Russia if it does not end its military operation in Ukraine.

United Nations

The special session of the UN General Assembly was [convened](#) to demand Russia withdraw all its military assets immediately and unconditionally from Ukraine's internationally recognised borders. A group of 147 countries voted in favour of the resolution, 5 against (North Korea, Belarus, Eritrea, Russia and Syria) and 35 abstained.

Upcoming meetings

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 (+/- 15:40 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](#))

4 March – Justice and Home Affairs Council (agenda can be found [here](#))

- Meeting between EU Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs
 - Kick-off (+/- 08:30 local time, Brussels): exchange of views with the Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and working lunch on the situation in Ukraine
 - End of meeting (+/- 16:00 local time, Brussels): a press conference is expected (which will be livestreamed [here](#))

4 March – Russia's State Duma plenary session: further counteractions are expected to be agreed.