

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 unanimously adopted an implementing decision introducing temporary protection due to the mass influx of persons fleeing Ukraine.
- The Commission adopted a decision to boost assistance to Ukraine with emergency logistical hubs and rescEU aid.
- The Commission has decided to suspend the cooperation with Russian entities in research, science and innovation.
- The Russian State Duma has passed a new law that criminalises the distribution of “fake news” about the Russian military.

EU measures

EU Council decisions

On 4 March, the Council unanimously agreed on an implementing decision introducing **temporary protection** due to the mass influx of persons fleeing Ukraine. It involves an emergency mechanism which aims to alleviate pressure on national asylum systems and to allow displaced persons to enjoy harmonised rights across the EU. These rights include residence, access to the labour market and housing, medical assistance, and access to education for children. This follows a Justice and Home Affairs [\(JHA\) Council](#) held on 3 and 4 March.

Developments in EU institutions

On 4 March, the Commission [adopted](#) a decision to channel humanitarian and civil protection support to Ukraine and neighbouring countries. Further assistance will be deployed in Ukraine via the [rescEU](#) medical stockpiles based in Germany, Hungary and the Netherlands. Furthermore, as announced by President von der Leyen, the Commission has established **civil protection logistical hubs** in Poland, with others being set up in Romania and Slovakia, to distribute required aid to Ukraine as quickly as possible.

The Commission has also [rolled out](#) a **whistleblower tool** to facilitate the reporting of sanctions violations. This is a secure [online platform](#), which whistleblowers from around the world can use to anonymously report past, current, or planned EU sanctions violations.

The Commission [decided](#) to suspend **research and innovation cooperation** under the [Horizon Europe Programme](#) with Russia. Furthermore, the Commission decided to also suspend payments to Russian entities under existing contracts. An assessment regarding cooperation in the research and innovation fields with Belarus is ongoing and expected in the upcoming days.

EU Member States

Speaking to the BBC on 4 March, the **Latvian** Foreign Affairs Minister Edgars Rinkēvič said that NATO should “[consider all options](#)” to combat Russian aggression in Ukraine. He however stopped short of saying there would be a case for direct military intervention.

Emmanuel Macron has [announced](#) on 4 March that he is to run for **French** Presidency in April. In his announcement, he said that France would have to become less dependent on gas and oil.

In a TV interview on 3 March, **German** Chancellor Olaf Scholz [called](#) on his predecessor Gerhard Schröder to resign from his posts in Russian state-owned companies such as Gazprom and Rosneft. Schröder has been the subject of intense criticism in his native Germany due to his apparent friendship with Russian President Vladimir Putin.



International measures

NATO

On 4 March, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg [welcomed](#) US Secretary of State Antony Blinken at the NATO headquarters for NATO's foreign ministers meeting. Secretary General Stoltenberg condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and attacks on civilians and reiterated that NATO is a defensive alliance, not part of the conflict and does not seek war with Russia.

Stoltenberg also [declined](#) the possibility of sending NATO warplanes to impose a no-fly zone over Ukraine as doing so will bring the allies into a direct conflict with Russia.

United Kingdom

On 3 March, the UK [sanctioned](#) Russian billionaires Alisher Usmanov and Igor Shuvalov imposing a full assets freeze and travel ban on them. The UK has also set up an 'Oligarch Taskforce' to identify assets of designated Russians for further sanctions. The UK will continue to design and impose sanctions on the Russian economy on a scale that Russia has never seen, said Foreign Secretary Liz Truss.

Japan

At the Quad Leaders' meeting between Australia, Japan, India and the US on 3 March, Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio [condemned](#) Russia and said Russia's invasion of Ukraine is an attempt to unilaterally change the status quo by force which goes against international law. Fumio expressed willingness to continue aligning with the international community in support of Ukraine.

US

On 4 March, the US Commerce Department [sanctioned](#) Russia's oil refineries and 91 entities that directly or indirectly support Russian military. The Commerce Department said the world stands behind the people of Ukraine in their fight against Russian aggression.

On 3 March, the US Department of the Treasury [announced](#) restrictions on selected oligarchs and their family members by freezing their assets for directly or indirectly aiding the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Treasury also banned Russian outlets for spreading disinformation about the war.

On 2 March, the US Treasury also [issued](#) public guidelines to close potential loopholes that the Russian Central Bank could use to avoid sanctions.

Canada

On 3 March, Canada [revoked](#) the most favoured nation status of Russia and Belarus as trading partners. In parallel, it announced the expansion of the Canadian military's training and capacity building mission in Ukraine, \$620 million in loans and nearly \$10 million worth of military equipment and weapons.

Switzerland

On 4 March, Switzerland [approved](#) and implemented sanctions it had imposed on Russia in the past days. Following the decision, it is prohibited to export dual-use technology to Russia, dealings with the Russian Central Bank and purchasing securities or financial assets in Russia. Furthermore, Switzerland will take assets of the designated Russians under its control.

United Nations

On 4 March, the UN Human Rights Council [voted](#) on a resolution to set up an independent investigation commission on alleged human rights violations by Russia in Ukraine. Of the 47 members, 32 voted for the resolution and two – Russia and Eritrea – opposed it. China abstained and said it opposes the setting up of the investigation commission.

World Trade Organization

On 4 March, Russia was suspended from a World Trade Organization coordinating group for developed countries. In a letter [shared](#) by the UK's ambassador to the WTO, US and EU representatives say it is "no longer appropriate" for Russia to participate and it is "therefore suspended."

Russian retaliatory measures

On 4 March, the Russian State Duma [passed](#) a new law that **criminalises the distribution of “fake news”** about the Russian military, with those convicted facing up to 15 years in prison. State Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said the legislation could enter into force as early as Saturday and would prohibit information that "discredits the use of the Russian Armed Forces."

Upcoming meetings

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

- Parliamentary Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) will meet.
 - Exchange of views with Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans on the effects of the war in Ukraine on climate policies and on the European Green Deal
 - Kick-off (+/- 19:15 local time, Strasbourg)
 - End of meeting (+/- 20:45 local time, Strasbourg)
 - Meeting will be livestreamed (watch [here](#))

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

- Plenary session:
 - MEPs will debate with Prime Minister of Estonia, Kaja Kallas, about the EU's role in a changing world and the security situation of Europe following the Russian aggression and invasion of Ukraine.
 - Kick-off (+/- 10:30 local time, Strasbourg)
 - End of meeting (TBC, Strasbourg)
 - The Plenary will be livestreamed [here](#)