European Commission - Press release

EU adopts 21st package of sanctions against Russia

Brussels, 23 July 2026

Today, the European Commission welcomes the adoption by EU Member States of the 21st package of sanctions against Russia. The package further restricts Russia's ability to fund its illegal war and to carry out attacks on Ukrainian civilians and civilian infrastructure. Russia's economy is slowing sharply, and EU sanctions have effectively cut Russia off from the global financial system. Russia's budget is under growing pressure, with more than two-thirds of the liquid assets of its sovereign wealth fund depleted since the start of the war.

The measures focus on the sectors with the greatest impact: energy; financial services, including crypto; trade; and the Russian military-industrial complex. In addition, Member States reached an agreement that paves the way for a ban on the entry of Russian combatants into the European Union following the adoption of necessary implementing measures and a decision by the Council.

The **21st package** contains the following key elements:

ENERGY MEASURES

- **Oil price cap adjustments:** The EU has decided to suspend the adaptation of the price cap agreed in the 18th sanctions package for a full year until, July 2027. This will keep strong downward pressure on Russian crude exports to ensure that Russia does not benefit from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. There remains the possibility to review the price cap earlier in case of exceptional market developments.
- **Infrastructure ban:** The EU continues to target critical infrastructure that bolsters Russia's military and economic war machine. First, a number of Russian ports and airports are designated under the transaction ban. In addition, the ban is expanded to cover refineries that process Russian oil, with one refinery, the Kulevi refinery, listed. This listing will enter into force with a six-month delay to give the refinery time to diversify away from Russian crude oil. Following an assessment by the Commission, the Council will then decide whether it is still necessary to list the refinery.
- **Resale of liquified natural gas (LNG) tankers:** The package introduces a notification obligation for LNG tanker sales to third countries. Following a Commission assessment in three months, the Council must decide whether a full ban on tanker sales to Russia should be introduced.
- **LNG transfers to third countries and purchases linked to the transfers:** a temporary exemption valid for one year, subject to renewal, is introduced to ensure legal certainty. The exemption is subject to strict reporting and volume requirements. **LNG terminal services ban:** The package clarifies that the LNG terminal services ban introduced in the 20th sanctions package covers not only Russian and EU operators but also non-Russian, third-country operators that are controlled by Russian companies.
- **Shadow fleet:** 41 more vessels on top of the 632 already sanctioned that will be subject to a port access ban and a ban on receiving services. The criteria for vessels listings are expanded to target for the first time ships that provide services to these vessels. Five bunkering vessels that have regularly refuelled already-designated tankers are also designated.
- **Oil traders:** the package broadens the list of oil traders subject to a transaction ban, given their role as intermediaries for Russian oil trade in frustration of EU sanctions.

FINANCIAL MEASURES

Today, the EU is substantially strengthening the EU sanctions framework with new financial and crypto restrictions, in particular:

- **Banking:** the package expands both the list of third-country banks and the list of Russian banks subject to a transaction ban. **More than 100 Russian banks** in total are now subject to these bans. This measure goes beyond regular listings in that it also includes a prohibition on use of financial messaging services, creating a significant hit to Russia's ability to move its money around to support its illegal war.
- **Crypto services:** the package creates a dedicated third-country ban for crypto-asset services, which will act as a deterrent for third countries hosting crypto platforms that facilitate sanctions circumvention.
- **Crypto platforms:** the package imposes a transaction ban on additional third-country crypto platforms and crypto-linked firms.
- **Russian nationals on boards of crypto services companies:** the package Extends the prohibition for Russian nationals to own, control, or serve on the boards of any company offering crypto assets services.

VISA RESTRICTIONS

- The package introduces the basis for a comprehensive visa ban for combatants and ex-combatants of the Russian armed forces and other proxy groups that participate in the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine, confirming Member States' political and legal commitment to tackling this threat. The Council will decide when the ban enters into force, after the necessary implementing measures are in place. The Commission will revert on the implementation preparation for the visa ban in three months.

LEGAL PROTECTION OF EU OPERATORS

- The new package adds **milestone measures for the legal protection for EU operators** against abusive lawsuits that are used as retaliation for EU sanctions. The measures include the possibility for EU firms to sue their non-Russian contractual parties in the EU to recover damages. EU Courts can order injunctions to deter the enforcement in non-EU countries of unlawful Russian judgments. It requires Member States not to recognise or enforce Russian decisions linked to sanctions.

TRADE MEASURES

The package expands new **export and imports restrictions and bans** to further disrupt and weaken Russia's military-industrial complex. These include:

- **New export bans and restrictions:** the package includes items and technologies that will further disrupt the battlefield effort and weaken Russia's military-industrial complex. These restrictions include certain **metal powders and alloys** used in Russia's aerospace sector and for drone production, and restrictions on related **technologies** (e.g., jamming equipment).
- **New import bans**: the package includes bans on a number of goods, including locking in diversification processes concluded in the area of metal ore imports (EU imports worth EUR 60 million in 2025, EUR 285 million pre-invasion).

ANTI-CIRCUMVENTION MEASURES

- This package adds **51 entities** to the list of entities that are part of or support Russia's military-industrial complex or enable the circumvention of EU sanctions. This includes **24 entities established in Russia** and **27 in third countries**, namely 14 in China (including 4 in Hong Kong), 4 in Türkiye, 3 in Kyrgyzstan, 2 in India, 2 in Kazakhstan, and 2 in the United Arab Emirates.

LISTINGS

Today's package contains **218** additional listings, including **48 individuals and 170 entities - the highest number since the war started.**

These individuals and entities are now subject to asset freezes and the prohibition to make funds and economic resources available to them, and – in the case of individuals – to travel bans. These listings span several areas, significantly extending action against Russia's banking sector and crypto, which has served as a driver of Russia's economy. The designations aim to constrain Russia's capacity to carry out strikes, notably through long-range drones, and keep up pressure on Russia's revenue generation, by continuing to target the oil, gold, and diamond sectors.

- **Financial sector and crypto**: The EU is listing **94 banks and major financial institutions,** as well as an **important figure in Russia's banking establishment.** The EU is adding **4** designations related to the cross-border **A7 network, including its new links to Africa.**
- **Russian military-industrial complex (RMIC):** As part of the **56** listings targeting the RMIC, **37** are directly linked to the production and supply chain of **long-range drones**.
- **Russia's shadow fleet enablers: 8** entities and **1** individual active in the shadow fleet ecosystem are designated, including companies operating on behalf of Russia's major oil companies and, for the first time, a crewing agency providing support to the shadow fleet.
- **Energy sector:** The EU is designating **18** entities and **1** individual in the oil sector, including **3** refineries in Russia, a major Belarusian oil refinery, and a company created to sell Belarusian petroleum products within Russia.
- **Gold and diamond sectors:** To target other means of revenue generation for Russia, **7** major actors in the gold sector, a leading diamond company, and several entities active in the mining and metallurgy sectors are being designated.
- **Critical infrastructure:** The EU is exerting pressure on Russia's critical infrastructure, designating a key cross-border energy supplier and a prominent figure of Russian Railways.
- **Russia's war propaganda machine: 8** individuals spreading Russia's war propaganda and contributing to its manipulative war narrative on Ukraine are designated.
- **Accountability for war crimes:** To targeting individuals responsible for atrocious crimes, a Major General and war criminal who has engaged in the torture, executions, and desecration of bodies of Ukrainian military personnel, including prisoners of war, is being designated.

With these additions, the number of individual listings related to actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine is now close to **3000.**

BELARUS

The package mirrors trade-related provisions and certain measures aimed at protecting EU operators in the Belarus sanctions regime, as per previous practice. It extends the prohibition for Belarusian nationals to own, control, or serve on the boards of any company offering crypto assets services.

It also adds **4 Belarusian** entities to the list of entities that are part of or support Belarus's or Russia's defence and security sector.

BACKGROUND

In response to the invasion of Ukraine, the EU and its Coalition partners have adopted an impressive range of sanctions on Russia, making it the most sanctioned country in the world. The continued and sustained application of sanctions is working. Each new package increases the EU's pressure on Russia to leave the battlefield and come to the negotiating table.

Sanctions are inflicting significant economic damage to Russia, forcing it to restructure its economy around military production and fundamentally reshaping its geo-economic landscape. Russia's economic capabilities have been impaired, constraining its ability to fund the war effort. Real GDP contracted by 0.2% in the first quarter of this year and forecasted GDP growth will remain at 1.3% in 2026 and 1.1% in 2027.

Sanctions on **energy** have dramatically reduced fiscal revenues for Russia. Payments from the EU to Russia for energy in 2025 were 85% below 2021 levels. Our **financial sanctions** are also making life harder for the Kremlin: bank profitability is declining and the growing issuance of Russian government bonds can only be absorbed by increasingly relying on purchases by large Russian banks. On **trade**, EU exports to Russia in 2025 were down 66% compared to 2021, and imports by 83%. Sanctions have made Russia's procurement of key technologies and products harder, more expensive, and of lower quality.

The Russian economy is in its weakest state since the start of the war. The windfall gains from higher oil prices due to the situation in the Middle East will not be sufficient to compensate for the everincreasing structural weaknesses in the Russian economy.

For more information

[Official Journal]

[More information on sanctions]

[EU Sanctions Helpdesk]

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Quote(s):

"With each round of sanctions, we squeeze Russia's economy and its capacity to prolong its illegal war. Our 21st package includes the highest number of listings in four years. We're hitting over a hundred banks and crypto operators, 40+ vessels in Russia's shadow fleet, and several oil refineries in Russia and Belarus. More than 50 military-industrial entities are included, key actors involved in the production of Russia's long-range drones. Russia will only negotiate to end its illegal war and stop killing civilians if it is pressured to do so. Sanctions add to this pressure."
Kaja Kallas, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission

"The European Union remains united in increasing the pressure on Russia. With this 21st sanctions package, we are further constraining Russia's ability to finance its illegal war, closing loopholes and strengthening enforcement. Our objective remains unchanged, to bring Russia towards meaningful negotiations and help create the conditions for a just and lasting peace for Ukraine."
Maria Luís Albuquerque, Commissioner for Financial Services and the Savings and Investments Union

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Berlaymont building illuminated in blue and yellow to mark the 4th year of the Russian invasion of Ukraine