



By: TA | AP Insight

# New EU and UK sanctions against Russia



The new package of EU sanctions will hit the Russian energy and banking sectors, while the UK has imposed sanctions on Russian intelligence units. For EU member states, reaching the decision was more difficult than before.

The European Union and Britain on Friday ramped up pressure on Russia over its **war** on Ukraine, targeting Moscow's energy sector, shadow **fleet** of aging oil tankers and military intelligence service with new sanctions.

"The message is clear: Europe will not back down in its support for Ukraine. The EU will keep raising the pressure until Russia ends its war," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said after the bloc agreed its new measures, including a new oil price cap.

Kallas said it's "one of its strongest sanctions packages against Russia to date" linked to the war, now in its fourth year. It comes as European countries start to **buy** U.S. weapons for Ukraine to help the country better defend itself.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy welcomed the new measures, describing them as a "timely and necessary" step amid intensified Russian attacks.

"All infrastructure of Russia's war must be blocked," Zelenskyy said, adding that Ukraine will synchronize its sanctions with the EU and introduce its own additional measures soon.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov brushed off the EU move, saying that "we consider such unilateral restrictions unlawful."

"At the same time, we have acquired certain immunity from sanctions. We have adapted to living under sanctions," Peskov said in a conference call with reporters. "We will need to analyze the new package in order to minimize negative consequences from it."

## The U.K. has Russia's spies in its sights

The U.K., meanwhile, imposed sanctions on units of Russia's military intelligence service, GRU. Also added to the list were 18 officers the U.K. said helped to plan a bomb **attack** on a theatre in southern Ukraine in 2022 and to target the family of a former Russian spy who was later poisoned with a nerve agent.

Hundreds of civilians sheltering in the theatre in Mariupol were killed in March 2022, shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine.

## NATO condemned Russia's cyberattacks

"GRU spies are running a campaign to destabilize Europe, undermine Ukraine's sovereignty and threaten the safety of British citizens," U.K. Foreign Secretary David Lammy said.

NATO also condemned Russia's cyberattacks, saying in a statement that "we will respond to these at a time and in a manner of our choosing, in accordance with international law, and in coordination with our international partners including the EU."

## Targeting Russian energy interests

The European Commission, the EU's executive branch, had proposed to lower the oil **price** cap from \$60 to \$45, which is lower than the market price, to target Russia's vast energy revenues. The 27 member countries decided to set the price per barrel at just under \$48.

The EU had hoped to get major international powers in the Group of Seven countries involved in the price cap to broaden the impact, but the Trump administration could not be **brought** onboard.

Oil income is the **linchpin** of Russia's economy, allowing President Vladimir Putin to pour money into the armed forces without worsening inflation for everyday people and avoiding a currency **collapse**.

A new import ban was also imposed in an attempt to close a loophole allowing Russia to indirectly export crude oil via a number of non-EU countries.

### The new EU sanctions targeted Russia's banking sector

The EU also targeted the Nord Stream pipelines between Russia and Germany to prevent Putin from generating any revenue from them in future, notably by discouraging would-be investors. Russian energy giant Rosneft's refinery in India was hit as well.

The pipelines were built to carry Russian natural gas to Germany but are not in operation.

On top of that, the new EU sanctions targeted Russia's banking sector, with the aim of limiting the Kremlin's ability to raise funds or carry out financial transactions. Two Chinese banks were added to the list.

## Agreeing sanctions is getting harder

The EU has slapped several **rounds** of sanctions on Russia since Putin ordered his troops into Ukraine in February 24, 2022.

More than 2,400 officials and "entities" — often government agencies, banks, companies or organizations — have been hit with asset freezes and travel bans.

*Friedrich Merz said he had spoken to Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico "almost daily" in recent days to convince him to change his mind*

But each round of sanctions is getting harder to agree, as measures targeting Russia bite the economies of the 27 member nations. Slovakia held up the latest package over concerns about proposals to stop Russian gas supplies, which it relies on.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said he had spoken to Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico "almost daily" in recent days to convince him to change his mind. "But it took a very long time again — the processes are too sluggish," he told reporters in Berlin.

The last raft of EU sanctions, **imposed** on May 20, targeted almost 200 ships in Russia's sanction-busting shadow fleet of tankers. On Friday, 105 more ships were blocked from European ports, locks and from ship-to-ship transfers, bringing the total number of vessels now sanctioned to more than 400.

