



By: TA | AP Brief

The EU blamed Russia for state-sponsored terrorism



The European Union's top diplomat said Wednesday that an attempted attack on a **German airport** blamed on Russia appears to be "state sponsored terrorism," as EU countries weighed their response.

The German government on Tuesday blamed Russia for the attempted attack at Leipzig/Halle Airport on Aug. 4 using a **drone** laden with explosives and announced it would shut down a Russian consulate among other measures.

The drone was found near a Ukrainian cargo plane and the device was defused. The airport is a major international freight hub and is used for providing support to Ukraine. German officials said at the time that the incident posed a new level of danger.

"It is clear that it has all the hallmarks of state sponsored terrorism. The question is: what do we do about this?" EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas told reporters before chairing a meeting of the bloc's defense ministers in Ireland.

Moscow has been widely accused by Western officials of running a campaign of sabotage and disruption with the aim of undermining support for Ukraine and destabilizing European nations.

Russian President Vladimir Putin dismissed Berlin's allegations, instead claiming that Germany's government wants to distract from its own failings and dissatisfaction among voters with "the need to counter an aggressive Russia." He said that any proof being offered "has been planted."

The EU had already been planning to impose sanctions on more people over Russia's war on Ukraine and has "in the pipeline 1,600 listings for the military complex of Russia, and maybe there are more to be added," Kallas said.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot said the failed attack was part of "a long-term plan led by the Kremlin to destabilize the European Union, its democratic processes, but obviously also its support for Ukraine."

Barrot said France has summoned Russia's envoy in Paris to "protest strongly."

"We won't allow an act of such gravity without consequences," he said, adding that France wants to impose more sanctions on shadow fleet ships illicitly transporting oil to fuel the Kremlin's war on Ukraine.

One of several worrying incidents

The nature of the attempted attack and its attribution to Russia appear to warrant a new approach from the EU and perhaps NATO, but the member nations remain cautious about being dragged into open conflict with the nuclear armed country.

Germany insisted that it was "not at war" but had become a "daily target" of Russia's hybrid campaign.

The EU has slapped almost two dozen **packages of sanctions** against Russia over its war on Ukraine, targeting roughly 3,000 people and entities, including President Vladimir Putin, several oligarchs who back him and scores of Russian lawmakers.

Russian banks and financial institutions have been hit, as well as hundreds of ships that make up a shadow fleet illicitly shipping oil to fuel Putin's war effort, and many companies, notably energy firms and drone manufacturers.

The measures mostly concern asset freezes and travel bans. People and companies in countries considered backers of Russia are also on the EU list, including from Belarus, China, Iran and North Korea.

We will stand shoulder to shoulder with our friends in Ukraine - Ed Miliband

British Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband also attended the EU meeting, along with officials

from Ukraine, Canada, Norway, Switzerland and Iceland.

“We see an attempt by Russia to divide us in Europe and to deter us from our support for Ukraine,” Miliband told reporters.

“This attempt will fail. It will fail because we will stand up to Russian aggression. We will stand shoulder to shoulder with our friends in Ukraine,” he said, for “as long as it takes for them to prevail in this conflict.”

The failed attack in Germany is one of several worrying incidents or acts of sabotage reported across Europe recently, including a fire at a major drone making factory in Poland, with Russia suspected in many cases.

There have also been drone incursions in Estonia and Latvia resulting from Russia’s war in Ukraine.

Spain has publicly accused Russia, along with Israel, of using disinformation to incite migrants to cross from Morocco into its Ceuta enclave in northern Africa.