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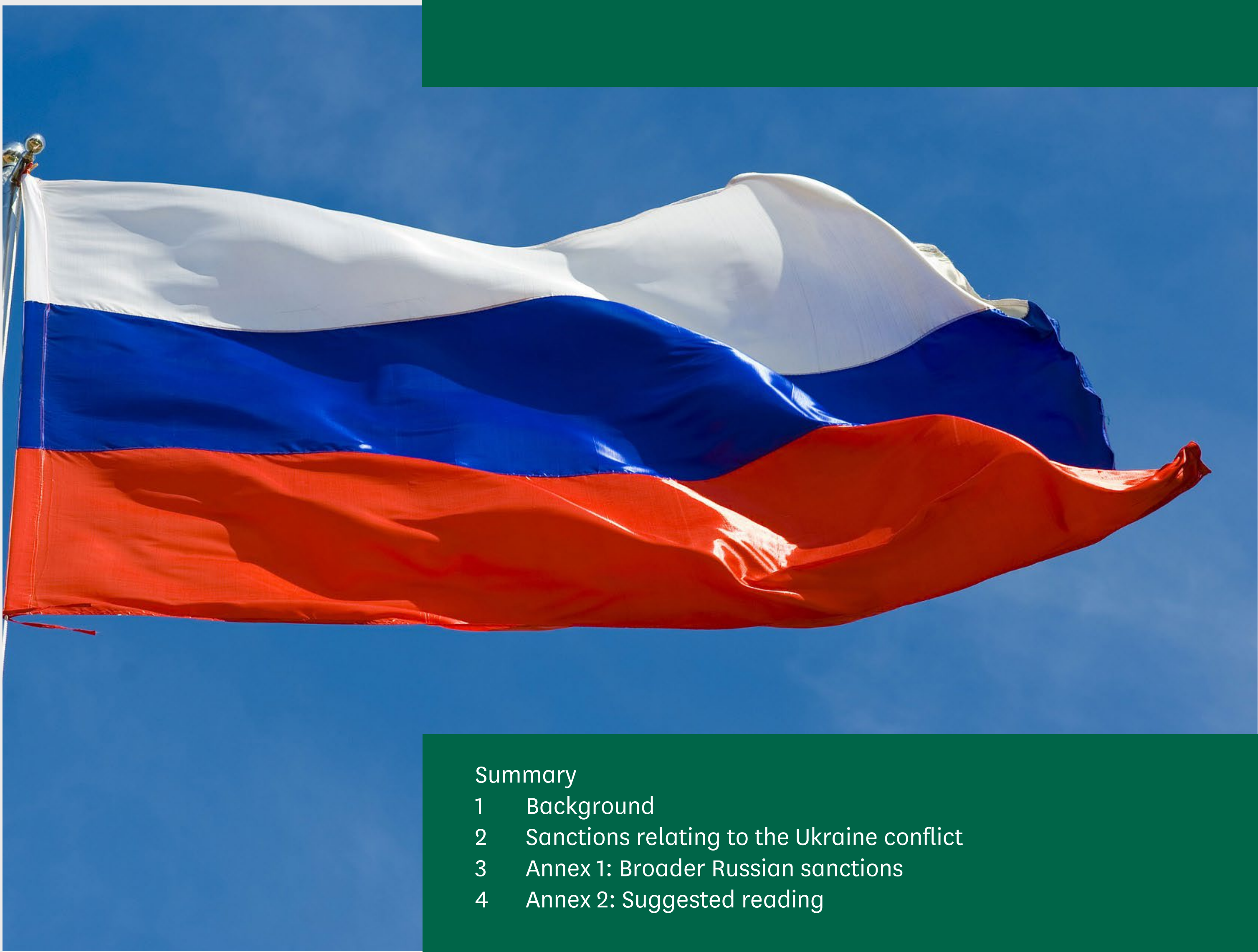
By Claire Mills

Sanctions against Russia: What has changed since January 2025?



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Summary

The extensive sanctions regimes established by the UK, the EU, the US and other allies and partners, in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, remain in place.

The UK Government and EU leaders have been clear in their continued support for Ukraine. There has been concern among some commentators, however, that sanctions coordination among allies, with respect to Ukraine, could slowly unravel as the Trump administration pursues a different Ukraine strategy from that of the previous US administration.

A US divergence from the EU and the G7?

The US sanctions regime against Russia is extensive and remains largely intact under the Trump administration.

However, there has been a notable shift in US sanctions policy towards Russia during President Trump's second term. Except for some oil-related sanctions, the Trump administration has not joined the UK, the EU and other allies and partners in imposing any new wide-ranging sanctions on Russia or in lowering the Oil Price Cap, which aims to limit Russian energy revenues.

Instead, President Trump has appeared to favour the threat of sanctions or tariffs as part of a broader diplomatic strategy to bring about the negotiation of a peace agreement in Ukraine. In July 2026, President Trump was reported to have expressed support for legislation, originally introduced by the late Senator Lindsey Graham in 2025, that will impose additional sanctions on key sectors of Russia's economy, and allow the US administration to impose 100% tariffs on the five largest importers of Russian oil and gas. Several Democrat Senators have expressed concern that the bill merely allows the President to "expand his reach into tariffs".

US sanctions on Russian oil

In October 2025, the US imposed direct sanctions on Russia for the first time under the Trump administration. The move coincided with the cancellation of further face-to-face talks with President Putin over a potential peace agreement in Ukraine.

The US Treasury said that sanctions on Russia's two largest oil companies, Rosneft and Lukoil, were a direct result of Russia's "lack of serious commitment to a peace process to end the war in Ukraine". The US also called on Russia to immediately agree to a ceasefire.

Suspension of some oil sanctions

Global energy prices have surged since March 2026 in response to the US/Israeli conflict with Iran which has effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz.

In an attempt to lower global oil prices, between March and June 2026 the US temporarily lifted sanctions on the sale and delivery of Russian-origin oil and petroleum products already in transit. Ukraine's allies rejected the move, with many viewing it as a concession to Russia who is widely regarded as a net beneficiary of the current conflict due to the rise in oil prices.

UK and EU sanctions since January 2025

Since the beginning of 2025, the UK and the EU have continued to tighten sanctions against Russia, targeting strategic sectors of Russia's economy including Russia's defence industry, its banking sector, international finance and procurement networks, Russia's shadow fleet and its energy sector more broadly, those supporting and facilitating Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the occupation of the annexed territories, and those enabling sanctions evasion, including in third countries.

Measures designed to restrict Russia's energy revenues have included lowering the Oil Price Cap, and in May 2025 the European Commission presented a roadmap for achieving a total end to the EU's dependence on Russian energy. By the end of 2027, imports of Russian oil and gas will be stopped and Russian nuclear energy will be phased out.

Both the UK and the EU have financed the purchase of military equipment for Ukraine using the proceeds from frozen Russian assets. However, the debate over the seizure of Russian state-owned assets as a means of supporting Ukraine remains ongoing.

The government has estimated that UK, EU and US sanctions have denied Russia access to at least $450 billion since February 2022. This includes $285 billion in immobilised foreign currency reserves of the Russian Central Bank that is held within EU and G7 countries. In October 2025, the Office for Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) said that, as of May 2025, £28.7 billion of assets linked to Russia had been frozen in the UK since 2022 (PDF).

At the time of writing:

- The UK has sanctioned 3,450 individuals, entities and ships under the Russia regime. Of those, 3,215 designations have been made since 24 February 2022.
- The EU has sanctioned almost 3,000 individuals and entities and 673 shadow fleet vessels.

Sanctions against Russia have also continued under other UK and EU regimes relating to human rights, chemical weapons, cyber and the broader hybrid threats posed by Russia.

1 Background

Coordinated sanctions against Russia by the EU, US, UK and other allies such as Canada have been in place since 2014.

Sanctions against Russia were first imposed in response to the annexation of Crimea and the ongoing destabilisation of Ukraine. Those coordinated sanctions have since been expanded and strengthened in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. It is this regime, as it relates to Ukraine, which is the focus of this briefing.

However, sanctions against Russian nationals and entities have also been imposed over the last decade in relation to human rights abuses in Russia, corruption, chemical weapon attacks and in response to Russian hybrid activity, or those activities below the threshold of conflict such as cyberattacks, sabotage, and the spreading of disinformation (all often referred to as activities in the 'grey zone').

Since early 2025, sanctions have been increasingly used by the EU and the UK to address the Russian hybrid threat and what the then head of the CIA, Bill Burns, and the head of MI6, Sir Richard Moore, said in September 2024 was a "reckless campaign of sabotage across Europe".[1] These sanctions regimes are examined in greater detail in Annex 1: Broader Russian sanctions.

[1] FT Live: CIA Director Bill Burns and MI6 Chief Sir Richard Moore talk to FT editor Roula Khalaf, 7 September 2024. See also Central Intelligence Agency, Opinion Piece: Intelligence partnership helps the US and UK stay ahead in an uncertain world, 7 September 2024. In October 2024, the EU established a new sanctions framework specifically to address the hybrid threats posed by Russia.

2 Sanctions relating to the Ukraine conflict

2.1 Overview: What has changed in 2025?

The extensive sanctions regimes that have been established since 2022 by the UK, the EU, the US and other allies and partners, remain in place.

There has been concern among some commentators, however, that sanctions coordination among allies, with respect to Ukraine, could unravel.[2]

Since entering office at the end of January 2025, President Trump has pursued a different approach to the Russia/Ukraine conflict from his predecessor, President Biden. The US has stopped all US-funded military assistance to Ukraine, prioritised efforts to secure a ceasefire and long-term peace agreement and been seeking a reset of US–Russia relations.[3]

Has there been a divergence between the US and its allies on Russian sanctions policy?

The US sanctions regime against Russia is extensive and remains largely intact under the Trump administration.[4]

However, there has been a notable shift in US sanctions policy towards Russia during President Trump's second term. With the exception of some oil sanctions imposed in October 2025 (see below), the US has not joined the UK, the EU and other allies and partners, in imposing any new wide-ranging sanctions on Russia, including on the anniversary of the Russian invasion.[5] Nor has the US added any new individuals or entities to its Russia sanctions list.

2 See Reuters, "EU-US policy divide on Russian oil sales to India to hit October trade", 11 September 2025; Brookings, An update on the efficacy of sanctions against Russia, 21 August 2025

3 All of these issues are examined in a series of Commons Library briefing papers which are accessible via the Library's Conflict in Ukraine collection.

4 See for example, US Department of the Treasury, Press release, 2 April 2025 and Press release, 9 October 2025. Like the UK and the EU, the current US sanctions regime against Russia, which relates to Ukraine, dates back to 2014. Detailed information on the sanctions imposed by the US after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 is provided in Commons Library research briefing, Sanctions against Russia (February 2022 to January 2025).

5 Significant sanctions against Russia have been announced on previous anniversaries of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. See US Department of State, 2021-2025 archived content, Press release, 24 February 2023 and Press release, 23 February 2024

Notably, in July 2025, the US did not support the lowering of the Oil Price Cap, which aims to limit Russian energy revenues that are being used to fund the conflict in Ukraine (see Lowering the Oil Price Cap).[6]

In early February 2025, the US Department of Justice also disbanded Task Force KleptoCapture, the interagency law enforcement taskforce dedicated to implementing the US sanctions regime against Russia and targeting Russian oligarchs. The decision was reportedly taken in recognition of a shift in the department's priorities towards fighting drug cartels and transnational crime.[7] The US has also disbanded taskforces aimed at combatting Russian disinformation and investigating war crimes in relation to the Ukraine conflict.

Instead, President Trump has appeared to favour the threat of sanctions or tariffs as part of a broader diplomatic strategy to bring about the negotiation of a peace agreement in Ukraine.[8] The US administration has also used the threat of sanctions against countries that have continued to trade in Russian oil, although additional tariffs have only been imposed on India so far, despite China being the largest importer of Russian oil globally.[9] In September 2025, President Trump announced that the US was "ready to do major sanctions on Russia" but only when NATO member states stop buying oil from Russia.[10] He has also called on EU and other G7 countries (Canada, the UK, Italy, Germany, France and Japan) to impose "50% to 100% tariffs on China" for their purchase of Russian oil in an effort to undermine the relationship between China and Russia.[11]

6 Reuters, "EU-US policy divide on Russian oil sales to India to hit October trade", 11 September 2025

7 "From oligarchs to cartels: The US reshapes global law enforcement", Radio Free Europe, 7 February 2025; "Trump administration disbands taskforce targeting Russian oligarchs", Reuters, 6 February 2025 and "Kleptocrats to benefit from Trump DoJ's anti-corruption pause, experts say", The Guardian, 10 March 2025

8 CNN, "Trump's empty threats on Russia sanctions", 18 August 2025; CNN News Central, Transcript, 22 August 2025 and Times Radio, "Trump's Russia sanctions threats are all talk, no action", 15 September 2025

9 Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, October 2025 – Monthly analysis of Russian fossil fuel exports and sanctions, 13 November 2025. Section 5 of the Executive Order does, however, provide for the imposition of this additional 25% tariff on any other country that is determined to be "directly or indirectly importing Russian Federation oil".

10 Donald J Trump, @realDonaldTrump, Truth Social, 13 September 2025 (accessed 16 September 2025). Hungary and Slovakia have negotiated exemptions from existing EU prohibitions on the import of Russian oil, while Turkey remains the third-largest importer of Russian oil, behind China and India (Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, October 2025 – Monthly analysis of Russian fossil fuel exports and sanctions, 13 November 2025)

11 The Financial Times, "US urges G7 to impose up to 100% tariffs on China and India over Russian oil", 11 September 2025 and "Donald Trump tells EU to hit China and India with 100% tariffs to pressure Vladimir Putin", 9 September 2025 (subscription required) and Donald J Trump, @realDonaldTrump, Truth Social, 13 September 2025 (accessed 16 September 2025)

US imposes sanctions on Russian oil in a 'first' for the Trump administration

October 2025 - the Trump administration imposes sanctions on Russian oil for the first time.

In October 2025, President Trump cancelled face-to-face talks with President Putin, that had been expected to take place in Hungary, saying that "every time I speak with Vladimir, I have good conversations, and then they don't go anywhere".[12]

The US Treasury subsequently announced sanctions on Russia's two largest oil companies: Rosneft and Lukoil, including several of their overseas subsidiaries, which it said was a direct result of Russia's "lack of serious commitment to a peace process to end the war in Ukraine". The US also called on Russia to immediately agree to a ceasefire.[13] Combined, Rosneft and Lukoil account for nearly half of Russia's crude oil exports and 5 to 6% of global supply.[14]

The move came two days after similar action by the UK (see below). On the imposition of US sanctions, President Trump said, "I just felt it was time" and that he hoped the sanctions would force a breakthrough in peace negotiations. The US has indicated that the sanctions could be "swiftly withdrawn" if a peace agreement was reached.[15]

Responding to media questions on 23 October 2025, President Putin dismissed the economic impact of the US sanctions saying that "they will have serious implications for us, but they will not significantly affect our economic well-being". He also suggested that the move "represents an unfriendly step with regard to Russia" and that "actions like this by the US administration harm Russia-US relations".[16]

US eases some sanctions on seaborne oil

Global energy prices have surged since March 2026 in response to the US/Israeli conflict with Iran and the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Approximately 25% of the world's seaborne oil and almost 20% of the global trade in Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) transits the Strait each year.[17]

12 CNN, "How Trump's plan for a Budapest summit with Putin turned into sanctions on Russia", 24 October 2025
13 US Treasury, Press release, 22 October 2025
14 Center for European Policy Analysis, US oil sanctions on Russia: progress, 28 October 2025; Oxford Economics, Sanctions tighten: US targets the financial lifelines of Russian oil exports, 28 October 2025 and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 15 October 2025
15 BBC News, "Trump says Putin talks 'don't go anywhere' as he imposes new sanctions", 22 October 2025
16 President of Russia, Answers to media questions, 23 October 2025
17 International Energy Agency, Strait of Hormuz Fact Sheet, February 2026

In an attempt to lower global oil prices, the US Treasury said that it would temporarily lift sanctions on the sale and delivery of Russian-origin oil and petroleum products already loaded on to vessels prior to 12 March 2026.[18]

US Secretary to the Treasury Scott Bessant said that it was a "deliberately short-term measure" to enable oil to "keep flowing into the global market" and would not provide "significant financial benefit to the Russian government" as it only authorised the sale and delivery of oil "already stranded at sea".[19]

Ukraine's allies rejected the move, with many viewing it as a concession to Russia who is widely regarded as a net beneficiary of the current conflict due to the rise in oil prices.[20] President Zelenskyy said the decision was "not very logical" and would "not help peace".[21]

Despite being initially described as a short-term measure, the US Treasury extended that waiver twice, in April and May 2026.[22] However, the waiver was not extended in June 2026.[23]

Sanctioning Russia Act

Originally introduced by the late Senator Lindsey Graham in 2025, a new version of the Sanctioning Russia bill is receiving increasing bipartisan support within the US Congress. If passed, the legislation would impose additional sanctions on key sectors of Russia's economy, including its shadow fleet, and allow the US administration to imposed 100% tariffs on the five largest importers of Russian oil and gas.[24]

Despite the previous bill having been stalled by the Trump administration while it pursued peace talks with President Putin, President Trump is reported to have since expressed his support for the legislation.[25] In a post of Truth Social on 19 July 2026, he also said that he wanted to see Iran added to the bill.[26] Several Democrat Senators have expressed concern that the bill will allow the President to "expand his reach into tariffs", with Senator Ron Wyden saying "that's what he lives for".[27]

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18 US Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control, Russia-related General License 134A, 19 March 2026

19 Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, @SecScottBessent, X (formerly Twitter), 6 March 2026 (accessed 28 April 2026)

20 BBC News, "US easing of Russian oil sanctions draws criticism", 13 March 2026 ; Chatham House, "The Iran war has been an economic gift for Putin", 10 April 2026; The Economist, "Vladimir Putin enjoys a huge windfall from the Iran war", 13 March 2026 and The Financial Times, "Russia rakes in $150mn a day in extra revenue from surging oil prices", 12 March 2026

21 Politico, "Not very logical: Zelenskyy blasts US for easing Russia sanctions", 13 March 2026

22 US Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control, Russia-related General License 134B, 17 April 2026 and Russia-related General license 134C, 18 May 2026

23 AL-Monitor, "US quietly allows waiver on Russian oil to expire", 17 June 2026

24 Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Press release, 21 July 2026. See also Atlantic Council, "What the latest US sanctions bill means for Russia – and for China, India and Iran", 27 July 2026

25 The Hill, "Russia sanctions bill may move as Congress looks to honor Graham", 14 July 2026

26 Donald J. Trump, @realDonaldTrump, Truth Social, 19 July 2026 (accessed 28 July 2026)

27 Axios, "Senate preparing to vote on Russia sanctions next week", 23 July 2026

2.2 UK sanctions introduced since January 2025

"Britain stands with Ukraine, shoulder to shoulder, and our support remains unwavering.

Russia should be in no doubt of our resolve, and we will not backdown until we achieve long lasting and just peace for Ukraine".

Prime Minister Andy Burnham, 27 July 2026

Since the beginning of 2025, and in concert with the EU, the UK has tightened sanctions against Russia, continued to target Russia's shadow fleet and implemented further measures designed to restrict Russia's energy revenues (see below). It has also financed the purchase of military equipment for Ukraine using the proceeds from frozen Russian assets.[28]

The debate over the seizure of Russian state-owned assets within the UK is also ongoing.[29] The government has reiterated the need to act in concert with others, given that the majority of Russian state assets are held outside of the UK's jurisdiction.[30] In a joint statement on 10 October 2025, the leaders of the E3 countries (UK, Germany and France) said they were "ready to progress towards using, in a coordinated way, the value of the immobilised Russian sovereign assets to support Ukraine's armed forces and thus bring Russia to the negotiation table" and that they would do so in "close cooperation with the United States of America".[31]

The UK Government has previously expressed support for the idea of a €140 billion EU 'reparations loan' to Ukraine, financed using the immobilised assets of the Russian Central Bank (separate to the EU windfall mechanism and G7 Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration loan). That proposal remains on hold however, after EU leaders failed to agree its terms (see Debate on the seizure of Russian state-owned assets).[32] In January 2026, when Defence Secretary John Healey, now Chancellor of the Exchequer, also expressed support for the idea of using oil seized from sanctioned Russian oil tankers to support Ukraine.[33]

At of 24 July 2026, the UK Government has made 3,450 sanctions designations under the Russia regime, including 1,928 individuals, 902 entities and 620 shadow fleet vessels. Of those designations 3,215 have been made since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.[34]

28 Prime Minister's office, Press release, 25 June 2025. This is examined in more detail in Library Research briefing, Detailed timeline of UK military assistance to Ukraine (February 2022 to present)
29 The legal debate around the seizure of frozen Russian state-owned assets is examined in Commons Library briefing paper, Sanctions, international law and seizing Russian assets
30 HC Deb 17 July 2025, c481
31 Prime Minister's Office, Joint E3 leaders statement, 10 October 2025
32 HC Deb 15 October 2025, Ukraine, c392
33 Defence Committee, Oral evidence: The work of the Secretary of State for Defence (PDF), HC973, 27 January 2026
34 HM Government, UK Sanctions List (accessed 24 July 2026)

Sanctions designations have also been made under the UK's cyber, chemical weapons and global irregular migration and trafficking regimes (see Annex 1: Broader Russian sanctions).

The government has estimated that UK, EU and US sanctions have denied Russia access to at least $450 billion since February 2022. This includes $285 billion in immobilised foreign currency reserves of the Russian Central Bank that is held within EU and G7 countries.[35]

In October 2025, the Office for Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) said that, as of May 2025, £28.7 billion of assets linked to Russia had been frozen in the UK since 2022.[36]

1 Legislative basis for UK sanctions against Russia

The Russia (Sanctions) (EU exit) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 were published on 10 February 2022. The regulations amended the sanctions designation criteria initially set out in the Russia (Sanctions) (EU exit) Regulations 2019, which had been established to ensure that sanctions relating to Russia continued to be implemented after the UK left the EU.

Those regulations have been amended frequently as more sanctions measures have been announced. Notably, the government has expanded the criteria for those who could be subject to sanctions, and increasingly targeted third parties for their role in enabling sanctions evasion.

In June 2023, the government also introduced legislation enabling sanctions to be maintained against Russia until it pays compensation to Ukraine (Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 2023). The purpose of sanctions against Russia are to:

- encourage Russia to cease actions destabilising Ukraine or undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty or independence of Ukraine
- promote the payment of compensation by Russia for damage, loss or injury suffered by Ukraine on or after 24 February 2022 as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine

New sanctions

The UK has continued to use the full extent of its legal powers to sanction individuals with ties to the Russian Government, Russian officials, those facilitating the Russian invasion of Ukraine and spreading disinformation,

35 HM Government, UK support to Ukraine: Factsheet (PDF), last updated 11 June 2026 and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Estimating the impact of sanctions on Russia's war efforts, June 2025

36 Office for Financial Sanctions Implementation, Annual Review 2024-25 (PDF), October 2025

companies and organisations within strategic sectors of the Russian economy, those linked to the Russian defence sector and broader military supply chains, and international procurement and sanctions evasion networks.[37]

The government has also taken several new steps since January 2025, which are outlined below.

Targeting foreign financial institutions and crypto networks

In February 2025, the UK sanctioned, for the first time, a third-party financial institution based in Kyrgyzstan in an effort to disrupt "Russia's use of the international financial system to support its war efforts".[38]

Accusing Russia of exploiting the Kyrgyz financial sector to evade sanctions by channelling money through "opaque financial networks, including through the use of cryptocurrencies", the government announced further designations in August 2025 and May 2026.[39]

The power of the government to target those providing financial services or making funds available to "any designated person or entity supporting, or benefitting from, the Russian Government" was provided in the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) (Amendment) (No.3) Regulations 2024, first introduced in May 2024 (as the No.2 regulations) and replaced in July 2024.[40]

The UK has also continued to target Russian financial institutions assisting the Russian state in evading sanctions.[41]

The US started to take similar secondary measures against foreign financial institutions at the end of 2023 under the Biden administration.[42]

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37 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 14 February 2025; Press release, 24 February 2025; Press release, 20 May 2025; Press release, 17 June 2025; Factsheet: GRU Cyber and hybrid threat operations, 18 July 2025; Press release, 21 July 2025; Press release, 12 September 2025; Press release, 15 October 2025; Press release, 4 December 2025; Policy Paper, 9 December 2025; Press release, 18 December 2025; Press release, 24 February 2026; Press release, 5 May 2026; Press release, 16 June 2026 and Prime Minister's Office, Press release, 9 May 2025. Sanctions evasion is also discussed in more detail in Commons Library briefing, Sanctions against Russia: Targeting third countries

38 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 24 February 2025

39 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 20 August 2025 and Press release, 26 May 2026

40 The regulations were re-introduced to meet the requirements for parliamentary scrutiny as set out by the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 and did not implement any new measures.

41 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 20 May 2025

42 This is examined in section 3.1 of Commons Library briefing, Sanctions against Russia (February 2022 to January 2025)

Further export and import restrictions

Since 2022, the UK has implemented extensive prohibitions on the export of goods and services to Russia and the import of Russian and Russian-origin goods into the UK, including through third countries.[43]

A new tranche of trade restrictions entered into force in April 2025, enabled by the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) (Amendment) Regulations 2025, which bring the UK into line with existing EU sanctions:

- An export ban on chemicals that are used as riot control agents (and which are assessed to have been used by Russian forces), electronics, machinery, plastics and metals which have military or industrial uses, and related ancillary services (technical assistance, financial services and funds, brokering services).
- A ban on the import of synthetic diamonds processed in third countries, in line with existing sanctions on the import of Russian diamonds processed in third countries, and helium, which the government assesses is becoming an important source of revenue for the Russian Government. The ban also extends to the provision of ancillary services.
- Prohibitions on the transfer of technology (such as intellectual property, industrial knowledge, trade secrets and information contained in blueprints and designs) related to a range of goods already subject to export sanctions. These are wide-ranging and include any goods of strategic importance to Russia's military-industrial and economic development.[44]
- A ban on the transfer of software via intangible means (download or cloud-based systems for example), related to business enterprise, industrial design and the oil and gas sector. The provision of related ancillary services is also prohibited.[45]

In October 2025, the government announced that an import ban on oil products refined in third countries from Russian-origin crude oil, will be introduced. The move will close a loophole in the existing sanctions regime, although the government did not announce when that prohibition would take effect (see below).[46]

43 Department for Business and Trade, Trading under sanctions with Russia

44 Existing technology transfer controls under the 2019 regulations only apply to certain categories of military-related goods.

45 Prohibitions already exist in relation to software provided by tangible means (for example on a flash drive or the hard drive of a computer). Explanatory Memorandum to the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 (PDF), April 2025

46 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 15 October 2025 and HC Deb 15 October 2025, Ukraine

Excluding Kremlin-linked elites from the UK

There are longstanding powers in UK immigration law to exclude foreign nationals from the UK if their presence is not conducive to the public good.[47]

In February 2025, the government expanded the exclusion criteria so that, for as long as Russia is considered an acute national security threat, the Home Office can consider for exclusion people who have known financial, political or governmental ties to the Russian state. The government says the exclusion criteria won't target ordinary Russians but the most senior and influential individuals. It says:

> This category will consider any individual who:
>
> - provides significant support to the Russian state,
> - and/or owes their significant status or wealth to the Russian state,
> - and/or has access to the highest levels of the Russian state.[48]

Sanctioning those involved in 'Russification' of the occupied territories, the deportation of Ukrainian children and erasing Ukrainian cultural heritage

Several individuals and youth organisations have already been sanctioned by the UK for facilitating and supporting Russia's occupation of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts, including participation in the re-education and/or forcible deportation of thousands of Ukrainian children to Russia.

The government has accused Russia of attempting to "legitimise its illegal control of sovereign Ukrainian territory" and, in September 2025, said that Russia was pursuing a "long-standing Russification policy" in those occupied territories, in an attempt to "eradicate Ukrainian culture, identity and statehood".[49] Part of that Russification policy, it has been suggested, is to re-educate and prepare young Ukrainians for service in the Russian armed forces.[50]

Further designations of Russian officials and state-linked youth organisations have followed. The government continues to call for the "unconditional" return of all Ukrainian children that have been forcibly transferred and deported.[51] In May 2026, the UK Government also announced a further £1.2 million of funding for the Ukrainian Verification Centre and Tracing

47 House of Commons Library, Visa bans, CBP 7035, 4 April 2024

48 WS458, Home Office changes to exclusions guidance, 24 February 2025 and Home Office, Press release, 24 February 2025

49 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 26 September 2022; Press release, 29 September 2023 and Press release, 3 September 2025

50 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 3 September 2025

51 As above and Press release, 11 May 2026

Mechanism which helps to locate and identify Ukrainian children who have been forcibly deported.

Trafficking of vulnerable migrants to fight on the Ukrainian frontline

In May 2026, the government announced sanctions against those individuals involved in the trafficking vulnerable migrants to fight for Russian on the frontline in Ukraine. According to the FCDO, "Networks sanctioned by the UK have been deceptively recruiting foreign migrants in search of a better life and either sending them to the front line as cannon fodder or putting them to work in weapons factories".

These sanctions designations are the first made under the UK's new Global irregular migration and trafficking in persons sanctions regime.[52]

Extending existing sanctions: Targeting Russia's shadow fleet and restricting Russia's energy revenues

The Russian energy sector is the government's largest revenue stream (around 30% of Russian state revenues).[53] In an effort to restrict this important source of income, prohibitions on the import into the UK of Russia-origin oil and gas and related products are in place. Companies and individuals operating within Russia's energy sector have been the target of sanctions since the outset and those designations continue.[54]

In October 2025 the UK sanctioned Russia's two largest oil companies, Rosneft and Lukoil. The government also announced sanctions on "enablers" of Russia's energy sector, including companies in India and China facilitating the trade in Russian-origin oil.[55] Sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil have also been adopted by the US, a move that has been welcomed by the Foreign Secretary who said that "collective efforts will make the greatest difference".[56] The designations of four of Russia's largest oil companies were also announced in December 2025.[57] In February 2026 the UK also designated one of the world's largest oil pipeline companies, PJSC Transneft, which transports 80% of Russian oil exports.[58]

52 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 5 May 2026

53 Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, Follow the money: Understanding Russia's oil and gas revenues, March 2024

54 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 24 February 2025; Press release, 15 October 2025 and Prime Minister's Office, Press release, 17 June 2026

55 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 15 October 2025. Sanctions against third countries is examined in Commons Library briefing, Sanctions against Russia: Targeting third countries

56 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, For peace in Ukraine, we must go after Russia's money: Foreign Secretary's article, 27 October 2025

57 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 18 December 2025

58 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 24 February 2026

As a result of energy sanctions, the government suggested in December 2025 that Russian oil revenues had hit their lowest level since February 2022, falling over a quarter in 2025.[59]

Lowering the Oil Price Cap

In December 2022, the G7 countries imposed an Oil Price Cap (OPC), with the purpose of reducing Russian revenues and its ability to fund “its war of aggression”, while also limiting the effect of the conflict on global energy prices, particularly for low-income and middle-income countries”.[60] The aim of the OPC is to prohibit access to vessels and the provision of services, such as insurance and finance, which enable maritime transportation of Russian-origin crude oil and petroleum products globally, unless such products are purchased at, or below, a designated price cap. Many of those services are provided within G7 countries.[61] The OPC does not impose a blanket ban on the provision of these services by UK service providers.

The UK and the EU indicated in May 2025 that they were examining the possibility of lowering the OPC to further restrain Russian oil revenues.[62]

In July 2025, the UK and the EU announced that the OPC would be lowered from $60 a barrel to $47.60 and that the price cap will be dynamically adjusted in future to ensure that it remains 15% below the average price of Russian Urals crude oil over the previous six-month period.[63] The already established price caps on high-value refined oil products, such as diesel and petrol ($100) and low-value refined oil products, such as fuel oil ($45), remain the same.

The new price cap came into effect on 2 September 2025.[64] The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, said that the move would target Russia’s oil revenues “while keeping energy markets stable”.[65] Canada, New Zealand and Japan have all supported the move.[66]

The US, however, did not support lowering the price cap and has not implemented it. President Trump has, instead, favoured imposing tariffs on countries buying Russian oil. So far, India, the largest importer of Russian oil, has been targeted with 50% tariffs on Indian goods entering the US.[67]

There is some debate among analysts as to whether the change in the OPC will make any substantial long-term difference, with evidence that oil cargoes

59 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 18 December 2025
60 G7 statement of Finance Ministers, 2 September 2022
61 PQ34073, Oil: Russia, 6 March 2025
62 Press release, 20 May 2025
63 Bank of Finland Blog, New oil price cap adds to Russia’s economic distress, 8 August 2025
64 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 18 July 2025
65 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 18 July 2025
66 The Kyiv Independent, “Japan slaps new sanctions on Russia over Ukraine war, lowers oil cap”, 12 September 2025
67 This is examined in more detail in Commons Library briefing paper, Sanctions against Russia, Targeting third countries

destined for India have been diverted to China instead. The split in policy between the US and the UK/EU has also raised concerns that compliance with the OPC will weaken in the longer term.[68]

On 31 January 2026, the Oil Price Cap was lowered again under the new dynamic pricing mechanism to $44.10 per barrel. Again, the United States has not implemented the change.[69]

Countering the Russian 'shadow fleet'

To evade sanctions Russia has employed a shadow fleet (ageing vessels with obscure ownership, which are uninsured, registered in countries which do not support sanctions (flag states), and often environmentally unsound) to transport Russian oil and gas around the globe in contravention of the oil price cap.

The UK, and other allies and partners have committed to addressing the risks posed by the shadow fleet, and since mid-2024 the UK has been imposing sanctions on suspected vessels. The Department of Transport has also been working alongside the Joint Maritime Security Centre and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to challenge suspected shadow fleet vessels to provide details of their insurance status as they pass through UK waters.[70] In December 2024, the UK, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Estonia and Finland also agreed a new partnership to challenge suspected vessels along the Baltic route.[71]

In addition to transporting Russian oil in contravention of the OPC, such vessels are also alleged to be transporting military equipment destined for Russia, transporting stolen Ukrainian grain, gathering intelligence and sabotaging critical underseas infrastructure.[72] In early January 2025, the Ministry of Defence announced that the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force had activated Operation Nordic Warden, which will track potential threats to undersea infrastructure and monitor the movements of Russia's shadow fleet.[73]

Since January 2025, the UK Government has continued to designate vessels alleged to be part of the Russian shadow fleet.[74] Under those sanctions, designated vessels are banned from entering UK ports, accessing UK maritime services, and are at risk of being detained in UK territorial waters.

68 Reuters, "EU-US policy divide on Russian oil sales to India to hit October trade", 11 September 2025
69 The Export Practitioner, "UK and EU lower Russian oil price cap, US holds at $60", 15 January 2026
70 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 17 October 2024
71 Prime Minister's Office, Joint Statement by the Nordic-Baltic 8++ countries, 16 December 2024
72 See RAND, Countering Russia's shadow fleet, January 2025 and Council of the European Union, Press release, 18 July 2025
73 Ministry of Defence, Press release, 6 January 2025
74 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 24 February 2025; Press release, 9 May 2025; Press release, 20 May 2025; Press release, 12 September 2025; Press release, 15 October 2025; Sanctions notice, 24 February 2026 (PDF) and Prime Minister's Office, Press release, 17 June 2026

Since May 2025, sanctions have also been extended to the individuals and entities enabling the operation of that fleet, including ship captains and those responsible for procuring, registering, crewing and managing those vessels.[75] In June 2025, the UK also sanctioned the Russian military agency responsible for developing Russia's underwater intelligence gathering operations (GUGI).[76]

Seizing stateless vessels

In June 2025, the countries of the Nordic-Baltic 8++ group, including the UK, issued a statement reiterating that stateless vessels (unregistered ships with no 'flag state') and falsely flagged vessels are not entitled to rights under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, including freedom of navigation, and that any vessel failing to fly a valid flag in the North Sea or Baltic Sea would be dealt with in accordance with international law.[77]

In January 2026 the UK assisted the United States in seizing a sanctioned vessel (Bella 1/ Marinera) that was falsely flagged. US action was based on counter-Iran sanctions, but the operation has been linked to activities of shadow fleet vessels more generally. In a statement to the House of Commons, then Defence Secretary John Healey said that the Bella 1 is a "sanctioned, stateless vessel which carries a long history of nefarious activity and shares close links with both Iran and Russia" and that the UK had acted, in part, to counter this "expanding global security threat".[78] The government has said that the international legal basis exists for the seizure of further vessels.[79] In evidence to the Defence Select Committee in late January 2026, the former Defence Secretary, who is now Chancellor of the Exchequer, also suggested that the UK would support using the oil from seized sanctioned vessels to financially support Ukraine.[80]

The UK intercepted and seized its first Russian shadow fleet tanker in the English Channel on 14 June 2026.[81] See Commons Library briefing, Seizing the shadow fleet for further detail.

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75 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 20 May 2025; Press release, 17 June 2025 and Press release, 21 July 2025

76 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 17 June 2025

77 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, NB8++ joint statement on the shadow fleet, 20 June 2025. Every ship is registered under a flag state, which is not necessarily the same as the country where the ship's owner is located. A ship is bound by the laws of the flag state under which it is registered, and the flag state has overall responsibility for the implementation and enforcement of international maritime regulations by all the ships which fly its flag. See The Mission to Seafarers, Flag States

78 Ministry of Defence, Oral statement to Parliament, 7 January 2026

79 See Defence Committee, Oral evidence: The work of the Secretary of State for Defence (PDF), HC973, Q.185, 27 January 2026; BBC Verify, "Dozens of sanctioned Russian tankers navigate Channel despite UK vow of assertive action", 23 January 2026; The Observer, "Britain slow to act against Kremlin's shadow fleet of sanctions busting tankers", 3 February 2026 and BBC News, "UK now 'ready' to seize Russian shadow fleet ships, Healey says", 25 March 2026

80 Defence Committee, Oral evidence: The work of the Secretary of State for Defence (PDF), HC973, 27 January 2026

81 HC Deb 15 June 2026, c618

The government has said that the UK has sanctioned more shadow fleet vessels than any other country.[82] As of 24 July 2026, 620 vessels in the Russian shadow fleet have been sanctioned.[83]

Closing a sanctions loophole – an import ban on oil products refined in third countries

As outlined above, in October 2025 the government announced that an import ban on oil products refined in third countries from Russian-origin crude oil, will also be introduced.[84] The government had previously said that while importers of oil products into the UK are required to provide evidence that goods are not of Russian origin, "in line with WTO [World Trade Organization] rules of origin, Russian oil which has been substantially processed in a third country is no longer considered to be of Russian origin".[85] The EU announced such measures in July 2025 and an EU ban on such imports took effect on 21 January 2026.

Implementing legislation was adopted in the UK on 20 May 2026 (The Russia (Sanctions) (EU exit) (Amendment) Regulations 2026). However, measures relating to the import ban on Russian-origin oil products refined in third countries, including diesel and jet fuel, will be phased in. A full ban will be in place by 1 January 2027. The government has said that phasing in these measures will support UK supply chains and "ensure market flexibility while increasing pressure on Russia". [86] The licence allowing for continued imports will be reviewed by the government every two weeks, potentially allowing for the full ban to be implemented earlier. The government has rejected suggestions that phasing in these measures amounts to a sanction's waiver for Russia.[87]

Closing a loophole – maritime services ban related to the export of Russian LNG

At a meeting of G7 foreign ministers in Canada in November 2025, the UK Foreign Secretary also announced that the UK would establish a maritime services ban related to the export of Russian Liquefied Natural Gas. A ban on the import to the UK of Russian LNG was implemented in 2023. However, that prohibition did not extend to British firms providing maritime services to the Russian LNG sector as a whole.[88]

In addition to closing the loophole relating to the import of Russian-origin oil products refined in third countries, The Russia (Sanctions) (EU exit)

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82 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 9 May 2025

83 Gov.uk, The Sanctions List (accessed 24 July 2026)

84 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 15 October 2025 and HC Deb 15 October 2025, Ukraine

85 PQ44634, Oil: Russia, 22 April 2025. Further UK guidance on the import of Russian-origin oil and oil products is available from the Department for Business & Trade, UK ban on Russian oil and oil products

86 Department for Business and Trade, Press release, 12 June 2026

87 BBC News, "UK waters down new Russian oil sanctions as fuel prices rise", 20 May 2026

88 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 12 November 2025

(Amendment) Regulations 2026 also ban the import of uranium originating in Russia and bans the maritime transport of Russian Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) either from Russia to third countries or between third countries. The provision of financial and brokering services to facilitate this trade are also be prohibited. Ship specification powers will also be expanded to include ships carrying either LNG or coal and coal products that originated in Russia.[89]

New legislation to address sanctions evasion through third countries

Giving evidence to the Business and Trade Sub-Committee on Economic Security, Arms and Export Controls at the end of February 2026 the then Trade Minister, Chris Bryant, also indicated that the government would be bringing new legislation forward to target sanctions evasion and the export of goods to third countries which are then re-directed to Russia.

He confirmed that the UK already has a list of countries of concern with respect to diversion (Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Serbia, Turkey, Thailand, India, UAE, Vietnam, China, and Malaysia).

No timetable for the new legislation has been announced, although Mr Bryant indicated the desire to see the legislation introduced in 2026.[90]

2 Useful documents and guidance

- HM Government, Russian invasion of Ukraine: UK government response
- The UK Sanctions List. This is a searchable database across all UK sanctions regimes (geographic and thematic). It includes individuals, companies and organisations and ships. Since January 2026, the government has moved to this single list for all sanctions designations.
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Guidance: Russia list of designations and sanctions notices
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Collection: Russia sanctions regime, Industry and specialist guidance. This page collates all the government's guidance on Russian sanctions; sanctioned persons, banks, companies, goods and services; maritime services and the Oil Price Cap and sanctions evasion.
- HM Government, Russia sanctions: guidance. This page provides a list of the legislation that underpins the Russia sanctions regime.

89 Explanatory Memorandum to The Russia (Sanctions) (EU exit) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 (PDF), 20 May 2026
90 As above

- The government has established an Export Support Team and online query service to help UK businesses trading with Ukraine, Russia and Belarus.
- HM Government, UK support to Ukraine: Factsheet (PDF). A summary of the assistance that the UK has been providing to Ukraine since 2022.
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Estimating the impact of sanctions on Russia's war efforts, June 2025

2.3 EU sanctions since January 2025

"The 27 member states are united in supporting Ukraine. Ukraine is moving forward on EU accession. We are stepping up our pressure on Russia. There is momentum, let's build on it".

President of the European Council, António Costa, 19 June 2026

Since January 2025, the EU has adopted six additional sanctions packages. The 21st, and latest, package of sanctions was agreed on 23 July 2026 amid concern that collective political will over sanctions is beginning to fray. Ahead of the package being agreed several individual EU member states were reported to have demanded concessions over proposed measures in order to protect national economic interests or large domestic corporations.[91]

Like the UK, the EU's sanctions have been wide ranging. They have continued to target strategic sectors of Russia's economy including Russia's defence industry, Russia's banking sector, international finance and procurement networks, Russia's shadow fleet, those supporting and facilitating Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the occupation of the annexed territories and those enabling sanctions evasion, including in third countries. Addressing disinformation and Russian propaganda has also been identified as a priority.

The EU has also released money to Ukraine generated from the proceeds of frozen Russian assets through its windfall mechanism.[92]

Further detail is available in:

- Council of the European Union, 16th package of sanctions on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, 24 February 2025
- Council of the European Union, 17th package of sanctions on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, 20 May 2025. This package of sanctions was part of a set of broader EU measures targeting Russian hybrid activities and human rights violations (See Annex 1: Broader Russian sanctions).[93]

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91 See Financial Times Editorial Board, "The EU needs to hold together on Russia sanctions", 21 July 2026 and Politico, "Post-Orbán sanctions showdown exposes EU capitals red lines", 22 July 2026

92 Council of the European Union, Press release, 18 July 2025; Press release, 17 May 2025; Press release, 24 February 2025; EU sanctions against Russia and European Commission, Daily News, 11 August 2025

93 Council of the European Union, Press release, 20 May 2025

- Council of the European Union, 18th package of sanctions on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, 18 July 2025. Within this package was the EU's announcement that it would, in conjunction with the UK, lower the Oil Price Cap (see above), along with a full transaction ban involving the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 gas pipelines (to prevent their completion and future use) and an import ban (effective in January 2026) on refined petroleum products made from Russian-origin crude oil and entering the EU via third countries (with the exception of the UK, US, Canada, Switzerland and Norway, who are all regarded to have already imposed restrictive measures on Russian oil imports that are equivalent to EU import restrictions).[94]

- Council of the European Union, 19th package of sanctions, 23 October 2025. Further measures targeting Russia's energy, financial and military industrial sectors were announced, including sanctions against the facilitators of Russia's energy sector in third countries such as China. A ban on the import of Liquefied natural gas (LNG) will start in January 2027, although a transition period for existing contracts will be in place until January 2028.[95] The EU also announced that it would strengthen controls over the movement of Russian diplomats within the EU and take further measures against those responsible for the abduction and re-education of Ukrainian children. The EU also imposed further measures on Belarus.

- Council of the European Union, 20th package of sanctions, 23 April 2026. The EU's 20th package of sanctions addresses energy, financial services, including cryptocurrencies, the Russian defence industrial complex and trade. Among other things, designations target emerging companies in the Russian energy sector and focus on the "shadow fleet ecosystem", including in third countries. Mandatory due diligence checks on the sale of tankers will be introduced, along with a ban on the provision of maintenance and other services for Russian LNG tankers and icebreakers. From January 2027, the provision of LNG terminal services to Russian entities or entities owned or controlled by Russian nationals or operators, will also be prohibited. The package includes "the basis" for a future maritime services ban on Russian crude oil and petroleum products. The implementation of such a ban is to be taken forward in discussion with the G7 and participating countries in the Price Cap Coalition.[96] The EU's anti-circumvention tool will also be activated for the first time by prohibiting the export of computer equipment and radios to Kyrgyzstan, where there is a high risk of re-export to Russia. The EU is

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94 For more information on the Nord Stream pipelines see Commons Library briefings, Sanctions against Russia (February 2022 to January 2025) and Geopolitical implications of Nord Stream 2, March 2022.

95 See also Council of the European, Press release, 20 October 2025

96 Council of the European Union, Press release, 23 April 2026

also introducing a cap on ammonia imports. [97] The EU also imposed further measures on Belarus.

Prior to the adoption of the package of measures, the EU also announced sanctions against nine individuals who played a role in the Bucha massacre in 2022. Their actions have been determined by the EU to constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes.[98] At the time of writing, those nine individuals do not appear on the UK sanctions list.

- Council of the European Union, 21st package of sanctions, 23 July 2026. Described as the "largest batch of individual listings of the last four years", these latest measures significantly expand existing trade restrictions, sanctions targeting Russia's military industrial complex, its financial sector, including crypto platforms based in third countries, and Russia's oil industry and shadow fleet. Vessels supporting the shadow fleet will also now be subject to potential sanctions, while additional sanctions designations have been made in relation to those who companies and individuals that facilitate the shadow fleet (the 'shadow fleet ecosystem'), including, for the first time, a crewing agency. The automatic readjustment of the oil price cap (see above) has also been suspended for 12 months, to offset the rise in price of Russian oil due to the impact of the US conflict with Iran.

  The EU also announced that a comprehensive visa ban will be introduced, at a date to be determined, preventing combatants and ex-combatants serving in the Russian armed forces and other proxy groups, from entering the EU.

Prior to the introduction of these latest sanctions measures, further listings were also made in May, June and mid-July 2026. Those designations relate to existing areas covered by sanctions, including Russia's military industrial base, Russia's shadow fleet and the network that supports it, the spread of disinformation and propaganda, and those involved in the forcible deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children to Russia. Additional sanctions designations were also made under the EU's global human rights sanctions regime (see Annex one), including 15 individuals accused of human rights violations against Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian detainees.[99]

As of July 2026, the EU has sanctioned almost 3,000 individuals and entities responsible for actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity,

97 European Commission, Statement by President Von der Leyen on the 20th package of sanctions against Russia, 6 February 2026

98 Council of the European Union, Press release, 16 March 2026 and Official Journal of the European Union, Council Decision (CFSP) 2026/214 (PDF), 16 March 2026

99 Council of the European Union, Press release, 11 May 2026; Press release, 15 June 2026; Press release, 13 July 2026 and Press release, 17 July 2026

sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, including by enabling sanctions evasion. [100] The EU has also sanctioned 673 shadow fleet vessels.[101]

Any proposal to lift EU sanctions as part of a peace agreement in Ukraine would require the approval of the EU and other sanctioning states.

Ending EU reliance on Russian oil and gas imports by 2027

One of the EU's initial responses to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 was to announce a plan for phasing out Russian fossil fuel imports by improving sustainability in, and diversifying, the EU's energy supplies. Under the REPowerEU plan, the initial intention was to end the EU's dependency on Russian energy by 2030.[102]

Import bans on Russian oil, petroleum products, coal and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) have subsequently been introduced. As outlined above, a ban on the import of refined petroleum products from third counties, made with Russian-origin oil, took effect in January 2026.

To date, there is no outright prohibition on the import of Russian pipeline gas or liquefied natural gas (LNG) into the EU, except where LNG is due to be re-exported to non-EU countries through EU facilities. As a result, the EU remains the largest global importer of Russian pipeline gas and LNG.[103] Temporary exceptions to existing import prohibitions have also been extended to several countries, including Hungary and Slovakia, which rely on Russian supplies of oil and gas and have no viable alternative options.[104]

REPowerEU Roadmap: May 2025

As a result of increased Russian gas imports into the EU in 2024, in May 2025 the European Commission presented a roadmap for achieving a total end to the EU's dependence on Russian energy. Under that plan, imports of Russian oil and gas will be stopped, and Russian nuclear energy will be phased out, by 1 January 2028.[105]

Individual EU member states were expected to present national plans for phasing out Russian energy dependence by the beginning of March 2026.[106] In April 2026, the Commission said that it would assess the plans and publish recommendations "where appropriate".[107]

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100 Council of the European Union, EU sanctions against Russia (accessed 27 July 2026)
101 Council of the European Union, Press release, 23 July 2026
102 European Commission, Press release, 8 March 2022
103 Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, June 2026 – Monthly analysis of Russian fossil fuel exports and sanctions, 10 July 2026
104 Council of the European Union, Press release, 3 June 2022
105 European Commission, Press release, 6 May 2025
106 European Commission, Questions and answers on the REPowerEU proposal, 17 June 2025
107 European Commission, REPowerEU – phase out of Russian energy imports (accessed 27 July 2026)

In June 2025, the European Commission presented legislative proposals for phasing out Russian gas imports. A regulation phasing out Russian imports of pipeline gas and LNG was subsequently adopted in January 2026.[108] Under that regulation, a full ban will take effect for LNG imports from the beginning of 2027 and for pipeline gas imports from autumn 2027.

Legislation to phase out Russian oil imports is reportedly expected in April 2026.[109]

There have also been calls for the EU's dependence on Russian energy to be phased out earlier than the end of 2027.[110] As outlined above (Overview: What has changed in 2025?), in mid-September 2025, President Trump said that the US was ready to impose significant sanctions on Russia when NATO member states (of which 23 are EU members, including Hungary and Slovakia) stop importing Russian oil.[111] In an interview with ABC News on 7 September 2025, President Zelenskyy also said that countries had to stop purchasing "any kind of energy from Russia, and by the way, anything, any deals with Russia. We can't have any deals if we want to stop them".[112] He also said that the US should place more pressure on Russia.[113]

Questions have also been raised about the viability and long-term security of replacing Russian oil and gas with supplies from the US, with some arguing that this is an opportunity for the EU to become totally energy independent instead.[114]

Debate on the seizure of Russian state-owned assets

Discussions within the EU over the seizure of frozen Russian assets also continues, although little practical progress has been made.

Several countries, including the Baltics and many eastern European countries) advocate for the outright seizure of Russia's state assets within the EU. However, others, including Belgium (which is where most of the frozen Russian assets are held by the securities depository Euroclear) continue to express concerns over the effect on the international financial system, the legal precedent that it would set, and the potential liability to legal

108 Council of the European Union, Press release, 26 January 2026. The regulation was agreed by qualified majority voting, to avoid being vetoed by any one member states. Hungary, Slovakia and Austria were reported to be opposed to the plans (European Commission, Press release and news article, 17 June 2025 and The Guardian, "Europe will never return to Russian gas, European Commission insists", 17 June 2025)

109 Reuters, "EU to propose permanent ban on Russian oil after Hungary election, document shows", 24 February 2026

110 See for example, HC Deb 1 September 2025, c95

111 Donald J Trump, @realDonaldTrump, Truth Social, 13 September 2025 (accessed 16 September 2025)

112 ABC News, Interview with President Zelenskyy, 7 September 2025

113 As above

114 See for example, European Environmental Bureau, "The EU's roadmap to ending Russian energy imports is well-intentioned but replacing Russian gas with US gas is senseless", 6 May 2025

challenges by Russia.[115] The French Government has suggested using the assets as leverage in any peace agreement negotiations.[116]

In March 2025, the European Parliament debated the issue of asset seizure. In his opening statement, European Commissioner Christophe Hansen said that the EU Commission was open to discussing any "legally and financially sound options to continue pressuring Russia to stop its war of aggression" but at this stage, the Commission's priority "is to operationalise the G7 ERA [Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration] loans and to make available funding to Ukraine".[117]

Proposal for a €140 billion reparations loan

In September 2025, the European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, proposed establishing a €140 billion 'reparations loan' to Ukraine using immobilised Russian assets held by Euroclear. The assets, initially held as bonds, have matured into a cash pool reported to be worth around €175 billion.[118]

Under the proposed mechanism, that money would be transferred to the European Commission, which would then issue a €140 billion loan to Ukraine. The remainder would be used to pay back the pre-existing ERA loan to Ukraine (see above). Ukraine would repay the loan only after Russia ends the war in Ukraine and agrees to compensate for the damages caused. The European Commission believes that a loan would fall short of seizing Russian assets because Russia, in theory, would be able to recover the assets if it agreed to pay reparations.[119] Several governments, including Germany and Lithuania suggested that the loan should be used to purchase military equipment for Ukraine.[120]

European leaders discussed the proposal at a European Council summit at the end of October 2025, although no agreement was reached. EU leaders agreed to return to the issue at their next meeting on 18-19 December 2025.[121]

However, the December European Council summit also failed to reach an agreement on any reparations loan. Instead, EU leaders agreed to provide Ukraine with a €90 billion loan for 2026-2027, and backed by the EU budget, to ensure "necessary financial support", including meeting Ukraine's "military needs".[122] Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic secured an exemption

115 Belgium has an investment treaty with Russia which provides for international arbitration in the event of a dispute between the parties. See Euronews, "What is the reparations loan for Ukraine and why is the EU stuck with the plan?", 25 October 2025

116 Euronews, "European Parliament mulls seizure of Russian assets to help Ukraine", 12 March 2025

117 European Parliament, Verbatim report of proceedings, 12 March 2025

118 Euronews, "What is the reparations loan for Ukraine and why is the EU stuck with the plan?", 25 October 2025

119 As above

120 The Financial Times, "Germany's Merz backs using frozen Russian assets for Ukraine", 25 September 2025

121 European Council, Remarks by President Antonio Costa, 24 October 2025

122 European Council, European Council Meeting – Ukraine (PDF), 18 December 2025

from the loan agreement, which could, in theory, be repaid using frozen Russian assets subject to further agreement by the EU member states.[123] The UK joined the loan scheme in July 2026.[124] Work on the longer term use of frozen Russian assets to assist Ukraine remains ongoing.[125]

3 Other partners and allies

The UK and EU have worked with Ukraine's partners and allies to coordinate on sanctions to achieve maximum effectiveness.

Sanctions imposed to the end of January 2025 are examined in the Commons Library research briefing Sanctions against Russia (February 2022 to January 2025).

For information on sanctions announced by some of Ukraine's main partners over the course of 2025 and 2026, the following sources are useful:

Canada and Japan – members of the G7

- Government of Canada, Sanctions – Russian invasion of Ukraine
- Government of Canada, Consolidated Canadian Autonomous Sanctions List
- Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Sanctions against Russia and other countries

Australia

- Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Russia's invasion of Ukraine
- Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Russia sanctions framework

New Zealand

- New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade, Russia sanctions
- New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade, Overview of sanctions against Russia

123 Politico, "EU agrees to €90B loan – but VDL and Merz suffer defeat as assets plan fails", 19 December 2025
124 European Commission, Joint Statement of the European Union and the United Kingdom on United Kingdom participation under the Ukraine Support Loan, 13 July 2026
125 European Council, Remarks by President António Costa, 19 December 2025

3 Annex 1: Broader Russian sanctions

Sanctions against Russian nationals and entities have also been imposed over the last decade in relation to human rights abuses in Russia, corruption, chemical weapon attacks and in response to Russian hybrid activity, or those activities below the threshold of conflict such as cyberattacks, sabotage, and the spreading of disinformation (often referred to as activities in the 'grey zone').

In 2025, sanctions have been increasingly used by the EU and the UK to address the Russian hybrid threat and what the then head of the CIA, Bill Burns, and the head of MI6, Sir Richard Moore, said in September 2024 was a "reckless campaign of sabotage across Europe".[126]

3.1 UK sanctions frameworks targeting Russia

In the UK, Russian nationals, state organisations and companies have been targeted under several sanctions' regimes:

- Russia: this is the framework through which the majority of Ukraine-related sanctions following the Russian invasion have been made, and is the focus of this briefing. The regime has also been used to target actors behind Russian state-sponsored hostile activity in the UK. In December 2025 the UK designated the Russian Intelligence Agency, the GRU, in its entirety for its role in the Salisbury poisonings in 2018.[127]
- Chemical weapons: used in response to the attacks in Salisbury in 2018 and the Novichok attack on Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny in 2020. In October 2024 and July 2025, the UK used this regime to sanction several military figures and a Russian research institute, over the transport and use of chemical weapons on the battlefield in Ukraine.[128] Further sanctions were imposed in July 2026.[129]
- Cyber: used in 2015 and 2018 to sanction several Russian military intelligence officers and units of the GRU (the main intelligence

[126] FT Live: CIA Director Bill Burns and MI6 Chief Sir Richard Moore talk to FT editor Roula Khalaf, 7 September 2024. See also Central Intelligence Agency, Opinion Piece: Intelligence partnership helps the US and UK stay ahead in an uncertain world, 7 September 2024 and Council of the European Union, Hybrid threats/ Russia: Statement by the High Representative, 18 July 2025

[127] See for example, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 4 December 2025

[128] Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 8 October 2024 and HM Treasury, Financial Sanctions Notice (PDF), 7 July 2025

[129] Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office, Press release, 6 July 2026

directorate of the Russian armed forces) for attacks on the German Parliament and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Since 2022, the regime has been used to increasingly target Russian hackers and cybercrime networks, including those with links to Russian military intelligence.[130] In July 2025 the UK also sanctioned a series of individuals and units of the GRU for cyber operations targeting Ukraine both prior to, and since, the Russian invasion.[131] Many of those sanctions were coordinated with the United States. In July 2026, the UK Government also announced its first joint cyber sanctions package with the EU, targeting Russian state and cyber criminal proxies carrying out attacks across Europe.[132]

- Global Human Rights: also referred to as Magnitsky sanctions. In February 2024, the UK imposed sanctions in relation to the death of Alexei Navalny under this regime.[133] Sanctions were also imposed in April 2023 in relation to the poisoning, arrest and imprisonment of politician and journalist Vladimir Kara-Murza, who is a dual UK-Russian citizen.[134]

- Global anti-corruption: used in 2021 to sanction Russian officials for their role in the serious corruption uncovered by Sergei Magnitsky. In April 2025, the UK sanctioned a pro-Russian network under this regime which was acting to destabilise Moldova.[135]

4 Further reading

- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Policy Paper: UK action against Russian foreign information warfare, July 2026
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Policy paper: Profile – GRU cyber and hybrid threat operations, July 2026
- Commons Library briefing, Countering Russian influence in the UK, March 2025. Examines broader efforts to limit the influence of Russia within the UK.
- An examination of the UK's sanctions framework more broadly is also available in Commons Library research briefing, The UK Sanctions Framework.

130 The full list of Treasury Notices is available at: HM Treasury, Cyber financial sanctions: List of asset freeze targets. See also Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 7 May 2024; Press release, 1 October 2024; Press release, 11 February 2025 and Press release, 19 November 2025
131 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Factsheet: GRU cyber and hybrid threat operations, 18 July 2025
132 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 13 July 2026
133 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 21 February 2024
134 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 21 April 2023
135 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Press release, 2 April 2025

3.2 New EU sanctions frameworks

In 2024, the EU approved two new sanctions frameworks specifically focused on Russia, and which sit alongside the EU framework designed to address Russian military aggression in Ukraine:

- A country-specific human rights regime, May 2024. It sits alongside the EU's global human rights sanctions regime and allows the EU to specifically target those who "provide financial, technical, or material support for, or are otherwise involved in or associated with people and entities committing human rights violations in Russia". It also introduces trade restrictions on exporting equipment which might be used for internal repression and equipment, technology or software intended for use in information security and the monitoring or interception of telecommunications.[136]

- A regime to address hybrid threats from Russia, October 2024. The framework allows the EU to target those engaged in the actions and policies of the Russian Government which "undermine the fundamental values of the EU and its member states, their security, independence and integrity, as well as those of international organisations and non-EU countries". The scope of the regime was extended in May 2025 to allow for the designation of tangible assets linked to Russia's destabilising activities, including financial transactions.[137]

Both frameworks have been used extensively over the course of 2025 and 2026.[138] Among other things, the most recent sanctions in July 2026 have targeted cyber networks, addressed human rights violations in Russia and human rights violations against Ukrainian prisoners of war.[139]

In May 2025, sanctions were also imposed under the EU's chemical weapons regime for the alleged use of chemical weapons on the frontline in Ukraine.[140] The same regime was used again in July 2026 for the imposition of sanctions, in conjunction with the UK (see section 3.1 above), against six individuals involved in the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny in February 2024.[141]

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136 Council of the European Union, EU Sanctions against Russia
137 As above
138 Council of the European Union, Press release, 16 December 2024; Press release, 20 May 2025; Press release, 20 May 2025; Press release, 15 July 2025; Press release, 15 July 2025; Press release, 5 September 2025; Press release, 15 December 2025; Press release, 22 December 2025; Press release, 29 January 2026; Press release, 23 February 2026; Press release, 21 April 2026
139 Council of the European Union, Press release, 13 July 2026; Press release, 13 July 2026 and Press release, 13 July 2026. See also Council of the European Union, Cyber/ Russia: Statement by the High Representative, 13 July 2026
140 Council of the European Union, Press release, 20 May 2025
141 Council of the European Union, Press release, 3 July 2026

4 Annex 2: Suggested reading

Commons Library research on the Ukraine conflict, including briefings on the legality of seizing sanctioned Russian assets, and sanctions application in the UK's Overseas Territories is available at: Collection: The Conflict in Ukraine.

See also:

- Carnegie Europe, "Taking the pulse: Are the EU's watered-down sanctions better than none?", 28 July 2026
- Politico, "Post-Orbán sanctions showdown exposes EU capitals red lines", 22 July 2026
- Financial Times Editorial Board, "The EU needs to hold together on Russia sanctions", 21 July 2026
- Henry Jackson Society, Why sanctions are not working: How Russia is adapting and surviving, 21 July 2026
- Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, June 2026 – Monthly analysis of Russian fossil fuel exports and sanctions, 10 July 2026
- Politico, "Russian shadow fleet enabled by EU-linked insurers, investigators say", 1 June 2026
- Nigel Gould-Davies, The coming crisis in Russia's political economy, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 18 May 2026
- Tom Keatinge, "The West's Ukraine sanctions strategy has lost its way", RUSI Commentary, 13 April 2026
- Elisabeth Braw, "The shadow fleet is undermining the maritime order more brazenly than before", Atlantic Council, 22 April 2026
- Timothy Ash, "The Iran war has been an economic gift for Putin", Chatham House Expert Comment, 10 April 2026
- Razom We Stand, Europe's Russian energy dependency scorecard, 24 March 2026
- Business and Trade Sub-Committee on Economic Security, Arms and Export Controls, Oral evidence session with Trade Minister Chris Bryant, 26 February 2026
- Center for Strategic and International Studies, Russia-Ukraine war in 10 charts, 24 February 2026. Chart one provides a snapshot of the Russian

economy and the prospects for its long-term productivity in the face of sanctions.

- The Economist, “How big is the prize of reopening Russia?”, 17 February 2026
- European Policy Centre, “EU should move Russian account out of Belgium to gain strategic options”, 16 February 2026
- Friends of Europe, “Europe’s Plan C: Unlocking frozen Russian assets to fund Ukraine”, 13 February 2026
- Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation, Bypassing the blockade: How Hong Kong feeds European technology into Russia’s war in Ukraine (PDF), February 2026
- Dr Richard Connelly, “Why economic pain won’t stop Russia’s war”, RUSI Commentary, 28 January 2026
- Anna Matilde Bassoli and Emma Isabella Sage, “Old ships: modern menace: How to tackle the world’s shadow fleets”, RUSI Commentary, 28 January 2026
- Politico, “Russia’s arms-makers thrive despite sanctions, new report says”, 30 November 2025
- BBC News, “On the frontline of Europe’s standoff with Russia’s sanctions-busting shadow fleet”, 19 November 2025
- The Financial Times, “US sanctions on Russia will not work unless Trump steps up enforcement”, 10 November 2025
- Carnegie Politika, “Will Trump’s sanctions make a dent in Russia’s oil exports?”, 28 October 2025
- Timothy Ash, The ‘fortress Russia’ economy has adapted well to pressure. But stagflation offers an opportunity for the West, Chatham House Expert Comment, 5 September 2025
- Chatham House, Tightening the oil price cap to increase the pressure on Russia, September 2025
- The Times, “How Europe can hit Russia where it hurts – and why it probably won’t”, 12 August 2025
- Chatham House, Understanding and improving sanctions today, 14 July 2025
- International Crisis Group, A frozen conflict: The dilemmas of seizing Russia’s money for Ukraine, June 2025

- BBC News, “How the West is helping Russia to fund its war on Ukraine”, 30 May 2025

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