

EU Reactions to Russian War against Ukraine: Overview End of November 2025 – February 2026

News

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This news item continues the reporting on key EU/CoE reactions following the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022: the impact on the protection of the EU's financial interests, on the EU's internal security policy, and on criminal law.

The following overview covers the period from November 2025 to February 2026. For overviews of developments in previous periods →[euclid 3/2024](#), 174-176, →[euclid 4/2024](#), 267-268, →[euclid 1/2025](#), 6-7 and →[euclid 2/2025](#), 114-118, each with further references.

- **17-18 November 2025:** The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and Europol intensify their cooperation in order to address attempts to circumvent EU sanctions against Russia and Belarus. At a [joint meeting](#), the two bodies examine emerging trends and discuss ways to improve coordinated enforcement. Member States report a significant increase in exports of vehicles to third countries, raising concerns that such exports may be used to bypass EU restrictive measures and indirectly support Russia's military capabilities. Investigations also reveal related criminal activities, including money laundering and document forgery. As part of their strengthened cooperation, OLAF and Europol launch a new operational initiative, "Project Transporter", aimed at supporting national investigations into possible breaches of sanctions. The initiative brings together investigators from customs, the police, and financial crime authorities to enhance coordination and share operational information in cases involving vehicle exports to Russia and Belarus.
- **20 November 2025:** The Council imposes [restrictive measures on ten individuals](#) responsible for serious human rights violations and for the repression of civil society and democratic opposition in Russia, including members of the Russian judiciary involved in the prosecution of journalists and human rights activists.
- **3 December 2025:** The European Parliament and the Council [reach a provisional agreement](#) to permanently end Russian gas imports into the EU and gradually phase out Russian oil. The measures form part of the EU's REPowerEU strategy aimed at reducing dependence on Russian fossil fuels and strengthening Europe's energy security. The Commission will monitor implementation and may issue recommendations.
- **3 December 2025:** The Commission presents a [package of legal proposals](#) aimed at addressing Ukraine's financing needs for 2026–2027 in light of Russia's ongoing war of aggression. The initiative outlines two possible solutions: (1) EU borrowing, backed by the EU budget, and (2) a Reparations Loan, based on the cash balances generated from immobilised Russian central bank assets held in

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Preprint euclid 2025, Vol. 20(4)

ISSN: 1862-6947

<https://euclid.eu>



the EU. Both proposals aim to ensure continued financial support for Ukraine's state budget, defence capabilities, and economic resilience. They also include safeguards designed to protect Member States and financial institutions from potential retaliatory measures linked to the use of Russian assets. The package consists of five legislative proposals, including a regulation establishing the Reparations Loan, measures preventing the return of immobilised Russian central bank assets to Russia, amendments to the EU sanctions framework, and changes to the EU's multiannual financial framework to allow the EU budget to underpin a loan to Ukraine.

- **8 December 2025:** The [Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe examines](#), for the first time, the implementation of the ECtHR's judgment in the inter-state case *Ukraine and the Netherlands v. Russia*, concerning Russia's actions in eastern Ukraine since 2014 and the full-scale invasion beginning in 2022, including the downing of flight MH17. The Committee stresses that Russia remains bound by its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights, despite no longer being a party to the Convention. It calls on CoE member states to explore all possible means to ensure the execution of the judgment and accountability for the serious violations of international law identified by the Court. The decision condemns attacks on civilians, the unlawful transfer of Ukrainian children to Russia, and the systematic use of sexual violence during the conflict. The Committee also reiterates the need for accountability for the downing of MH17 and urges Russia to acknowledge responsibility and cooperate with international efforts.
- **15 December 2025:** The Council [imposes sanctions](#) on five individuals and four entities involved in supporting Russia's "shadow fleet" used to transport Russian oil. The targeted individuals are business figures linked to major Russian oil companies and are associated with vessels that conceal the origin of Russian crude oil while engaging in high-risk shipping practices. The sanctioned entities include shipping companies based in the United Arab Emirates, Vietnam and Russia that own or manage tankers already subject to restrictive measures for transporting Russian oil.
- **15 December 2025:** The Council [adopts sanctions](#) against twelve individuals and two entities linked to Russia's hybrid activities, including foreign information manipulation, propaganda campaigns, and cyber-attacks targeting the EU and its partners. The measures target individuals involved in promoting pro-Kremlin narratives about Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including figures associated with institutions and networks supporting Russian state messaging.
- **16 December 2025:** Thirty-five countries and the European Union [sign a convention establishing an International Claims Commission](#) for Ukraine. It will be established within the framework of the Council of Europe. The new body forms part of a broader compensation mechanism addressing damage caused by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. It builds on the Register of Damage for Ukraine, created in 2023, which collects compensation claims submitted by individuals, organisations, and public bodies (→[eucrim 1/2025, 9](#)). The International Claims Commission will review and assess these claims and determine the amount of compensation owed in each case. The convention will enter into force once it has been ratified by at least 25 signatories and sufficient funding has been secured for its operation.
- **18 December 2025:** The Council of the EU [adopts restrictive measures](#) against 41 additional vessels linked to Russia's so-called shadow fleet of oil tankers. The vessels become subject to a port access ban as well as a prohibition on the provision of a broad range of maritime transport services. The measure targets non-EU tankers used to circumvent the oil price cap mechanism, otherwise support Russia's energy revenues or are suspected of transporting military equipment for Russia. With the new listings, the total number of sanctioned vessels connected to Russia's shadow fleet rises to nearly 600.
- **18/19 December 2025:** 25 Heads of State or Government [adopt conclusions](#) on Ukraine at the European Council meeting. The conclusions include, *inter alia*: Reaffirmation of the EU's continued support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; commitment to maintaining

comprehensive political, financial, humanitarian, and military assistance; steadfast support for Ukraine's path towards EU membership; calls for a full, unconditional ceasefire by Russia; call for a continued work on a new sanctions package against Russia. [EU leaders also agree](#) to provide a €90 billion EU loan to Ukraine for 2026–2027 to support its financial and defence needs. The funding will be raised through EU borrowing on capital markets and backed by the EU budget headroom. The loan is to be implemented by enhanced cooperation as Czechia, Hungary and Slovakia declared their opt out from the financial support to Ukraine. Repayment of the loan is expected to be linked to future reparations from Russia, while Russian assets immobilised in the EU remain under consideration as a possible source for financing the support.

- **22 December 2025:** The Council [imposes restrictive measures](#) on two members of the Russian judiciary: *Dmitry Gordeev*, a judge of the Moscow City Court, and *Lyudmila Balandina*, a state prosecutor. Both played key roles in politically motivated repressions against opposition figures, human rights defenders, and individuals critical of the Russian authorities or supportive of Ukraine.
- **14 January 2026:** The European Commission [presents a legislative package](#) designed to secure continued EU financial support to Ukraine for the period 2026–2027 in response to Russia's ongoing war of aggression. The proposals aim to implement the European Council's political agreement of 18 December 2025 to provide €90 billion in assistance to support Ukraine's budgetary and defence needs over the next two years (see above). The package includes three main legislative proposals: (1) A new proposal establishing the €90 billion [Ukraine Support Loan](#) through enhanced cooperation, which is designed to ensure macro-financial stability in Ukraine and ease the country's external financing constraints. (2) A proposal [amending the Ukraine Facility Regulation](#), which ensures that the funds for the Ukraine Support Loan can be channeled by the Facility. The proposal also updates the Ukraine Plan, including measures to strengthen the rule of law and the fight against corruption (conditionality mechanism). (3) Proposal [amending the Regulation for the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027](#), which will allow the coverage of the loan to Ukraine from the EU budget "headroom". The Commission also indicates that immobilised Russian assets held in the EU may be used in the future to repay the loan, while a separate proposal for a reparations loan based on these assets remains under consideration.
- **23 January 2026:** The European Union and the Council of Europe [sign an agreement](#) to finance an advance team tasked with preparing the establishment of a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine (→[eucrim 1/2025, 9](#)). The preparatory team will develop the institutional, logistical, and organisational foundations of the tribunal, which is intended to prosecute senior political and military leaders for the crime of aggression. The work will include preparing the election of judges and a prosecutor, drafting rules of procedure and evidence, and developing the tribunal's court management system. The project will be managed by the Council of Europe and supported with €10 million from the EU through the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments. The preparatory phase is expected to last up to 24 months.
- **29 January 2026:** The Council [imposes sanctions](#) on six individuals linked to Russia's hybrid activities, in particular foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) targeting the EU and its partners. The listings include television presenters and media figures associated with Russian state propaganda, as well as cultural personalities accused of promoting pro-Kremlin narratives about the war in Ukraine and spreading anti-Ukraine and anti-Western disinformation.
- **29 January 2026:** The European Commission [announces €153 million in humanitarian assistance](#) to support people affected by Russia's war against Ukraine. Of this amount, €145 million is allocated to Ukraine to fund protection assistance, shelter, food, cash support, psychosocial services, and access to water and healthcare. An additional €8 million is directed to Moldova to support Ukrainian refugees hosted in the country.

- **11 February 2026:** The [European Parliament approves](#) the legislative package enabling the €90 billion EU loan to support Ukraine for 2026–2027. The Commission tabled the package on 14 January 2026 (see above). MEPs stress that Ukraine must commit to continue democratic reforms and fight corruption as the funding is subject to strict conditions.
 - **23 February 2026:** The Council [imposes restrictive measures](#) on additional eight individuals responsible for serious human rights violations and for the repression of civil society and democratic opposition in Russia. The sanctions target members of the Russian judiciary involved in politically motivated trials against activists, as well as officials responsible for detention facilities where political prisoners were reportedly held in solitary confinement and subjected to inhuman or degrading conditions.
 - **24 February 2026:** Marking the fourth anniversary of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, European institutions condemn Russia’s illegal and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, and reaffirm Ukraine’s future in the EU. In a [joint statement](#), the Presidents of the European Commission, the European Council, and the European Parliament highlight, inter alia, the EU’s financial support to Ukraine, which has become close to €200 million since 2022. The statement also highlights ongoing efforts to ensure accountability for Russia’s actions, including plans to establish the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine and the International Claims Commission (see above). In a [resolution](#), the European Parliament stresses that Russia and its allies are entirely responsible for the war and the ensuing crimes. MEPs call for more EU sanctions against Russia, further energy decoupling from Russian resources, and continued military, financial, and political support for Ukraine. They also recommend accelerating Ukraine’s integration into the single market and accelerating EU preparations for future enlargement through internal institutional reforms.
 - **25 February 2026:** The European Commission [proposes](#) that the European Union become a founding member of the International Claims Commission for Ukraine, initiated under the umbrella of the Council of Europe on 16 December 2025 (see above).
 - **26 February 2026:** The European Commission [launches the EastInvest Facility](#), a new financing platform aimed at supporting EU regions bordering Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine that are particularly affected by Russia’s war against Ukraine. The participating financial institutions estimate that the facility could mobilise at least €28 billion in public and private investments to strengthen economic development, trade, and security in the EU’s eastern border regions.
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The project is co-financed by the [Union Anti-Fraud Programme \(UAFP\)](#), managed by the [European Anti-Fraud Office \(OLAF\)](#).



Co-funded by
the European Union