

EU Reactions to Russian War against Ukraine: Overview March – Mid-June 2026

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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 March 2026 to mid-June 2026. For overviews of developments in previous periods →[eucrim 3/2024](#), 174-176, →[eucrim 4/2024](#), 267-268, →[eucrim 1/2025](#), 6-7, →[eucrim 2/2025](#), 114-118, and →[eucrim 4/2025](#), 255-258, each with further references.

- **4 March 2026:** The European Commission releases its [2025 General Report](#), taking stock of the EU's main actions during a year shaped by growing geopolitical instability. The report points in particular to the Union's continued engagement with Ukraine, including financial assistance, humanitarian relief, military support, and restrictive measures against Russia.
- **6 March 2026:** Justice Commissioner [Michael McGrath reports](#) to EU Justice Ministers on work to strengthen accountability for crimes committed in and against Ukraine. He underlines the importance of setting up the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine and calls for progress on the International Claims Commission for Ukraine, while also reaffirming the role of the International Criminal Court in prosecuting atrocity crimes.
- **14 March 2026:** The [Council extends the individual sanctions](#) targeting persons and entities responsible for undermining or threatening Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence for another six months. The measures, now prolonged until 15 September 2026, continue to apply to around 2,600 individuals and entities and include asset freezes, travel restrictions, and a ban on making funds or economic resources available to listed persons and entities.
- **16 March 2026:** The [Council imposes sanctions on nine individuals](#) held responsible for atrocities committed in Bucha and neighbouring areas during the early phase of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The listings include senior Russian military officials whose units are linked to killings of civilians, executions, looting, and torture. The Council states that the conduct amounts to war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- **16 March 2026:** The [Council adds four individuals](#) to the EU sanctions list for Russian information manipulation and interference activities. The listings target propagandists and media figures accused of spreading narratives that justify Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including calls for further violence, the denial of Ukrainian identity, and disinformation about Ukraine and its armed forces. The

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measures are adopted under the EU sanctions framework addressing Russia's destabilising hybrid activities against the EU, Ukraine, and other partners.

- **25 March 2026:** The Commission presents [AGILE](#), a new €115 million funding instrument to speed up defence innovation. The initiative responds to lessons from Russia's war against Ukraine by supporting faster development, testing, and deployment of technologies such as drones, artificial intelligence, and quantum solutions, with a focus on start-ups and SMEs.
- **26 March 2026:** The [ECJ rules in the appeal cases of five leading businessmen](#) operating in Russia against their sanctions imposed by the Council of the European Union (C-696/23 (*Pumpyanskiy*), C-704/23 P (*Khudaverdyan*), C-711/23 P (*Rashnikov*), C-35/24 P (*Mazepin*) and C-111/24 P (*Khan*)). It upholds their freezing of funds, confirming that the criterion set out in Art. 2(1)(g) of Decision 2014/145/CFSP must be interpreted as meaning that the economic sectors concerned – not the individual businesspersons – must constitute a substantial source of revenue for the Russian government. Consequently, restrictive measures may be imposed on all influential businesspersons in such sectors, even if they themselves do not directly generate revenue for the state. The concept of "influence" within the meaning of the criterion is deemed to exist where a person plays a significant role in a sector of economic importance to the Russian government. Actual proximity to the government or the exercise of specific influence is not required. What is decisive is the economic significance of the person, assessed on the basis of factors such as position, activities, shareholdings and investments.
- **30 March 2026:** The Commission adopts a [€1.5 billion work programme under the European Defence Industry Programme](#) to strengthen Europe's defence production and deepen cooperation with Ukraine. The programme includes €260 million for projects aimed at rebuilding and modernising Ukraine's defence industrial base, as well as further support for joint production, procurement, and defence innovation involving Ukrainian and EU industry.
- **1 April 2026:** The [EU receives €1.4 billion](#) in proceeds from immobilised Russian Central Bank assets to support Ukraine. Most of the amount is channelled through the Ukraine Loan Cooperation Mechanism, while a smaller share supports Ukraine's military and defence needs through the European Peace Facility.
- **1 April 2026:** The [Commission takes steps](#) to implement the €90 billion Ukraine Support Loan for 2026 and 2027. It proposes €45 billion in support for 2026, including budgetary assistance and funding for Ukraine's defence industrial capacities, and authorised procurement derogations to speed up drone purchases.
- **15 April 2026:** The [Commission announces](#) €1.07 billion for 57 new European Defence Fund projects, including initiatives relevant to Ukraine's defence industry. The selected projects deepen cooperation with Ukrainian partners, include Ukrainian participation in drone-related cyber defence work, and allow Ukrainian entities to apply to sub-calls for start-ups and SMEs.
- **21 April 2026:** The Council [imposes sanctions](#) on two entities over Russian hybrid activities, including propaganda and disinformation. The listings target Euromore, a pro-Kremlin media platform spreading narratives that justify Russia's war against Ukraine, and Pravfond, a Russian state-funded foundation used to reinforce disinformation claims about Ukraine and neighbouring states. The measures form part of the EU sanctions framework addressing Russia's destabilising activities against the EU, Ukraine, and other partners.
- **23 April 2026:** The [EU adopts its 20th package of sanctions against Russia](#), further tightening pressure on the Russian economy and its military-industrial base. The package includes new energy measures targeting Russia's shadow fleet, ports, and LNG-related services, as well as further restrictions on banks, crypto services, and payment channels used to circumvent sanctions. It also introduces additional trade restrictions, lists companies involved in military production and sanctions evasion, and activates the EU's anti-circumvention tool in response to re-exports of sanctioned goods

to Russia for the first time. The package also includes new listings of individuals and entities, including actors linked to propaganda, the abduction of Ukrainian children, and the looting of cultural heritage.

- **23 April 2026:** The [Council finalises the legal framework](#) for a €90 billion EU support loan to Ukraine, enabling the Commission to start disbursements in the second quarter of 2026. The loan is intended to cover Ukraine's urgent budgetary needs and to strengthen Ukrainian and European defence industrial capacities in 2026 and 2027. The Council also makes €45 billion available for 2026, including €16.7 billion in macro-financial and Ukraine Facility support and €28.3 billion for Ukraine's defence industrial capacities.
- **30 April 2026:** The [European Parliament adopts a resolution](#) demanding accountability for Russia's attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine. MEPs support the rapid establishment of the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine and stress that responsibility should extend to those directing or enabling international crimes; the EP also reaffirms support for the ICC investigation, calls for stricter application and expansion of EU sanctions against Russia, and gives its consent to the International Claims Commission for Ukraine as a mechanism to support compensation for civilian victims.
- **1 May 2026:** EU leaders [reaffirm](#) their support for Ukraine at an informal summit in Cyprus. President *Ursula von der Leyen* and European Council President *António Costa* meet with Ukrainian President *Volodymyr Zelenskyy* and welcome the adoption of the €90 billion Ukraine Support Loan and the 20th sanctions package against Russia.
- **8 May 2026:** The Commission publishes the [2026 Eurobarometer](#), showing continued public support for EU action in response to Russia's war against Ukraine. According to the survey, most respondents see Russia's invasion as a threat to EU security and support continued assistance to Ukraine, including financial and humanitarian aid, sanctions against Russia, and aid until a just and lasting peace is reached.
- **11 May 2026:** The Council [expands the mandate of EUAM Ukraine](#) to support Ukraine in countering hybrid threats and reintegrating veterans into civilian security and civil protection structures. The mission's new tasks include support for critical infrastructure protection, cyber-security, and countering foreign information manipulation, while continuing its work on civilian security sector reform and investigations of international crimes.
- **11 May 2026:** The Council imposes [sanctions on 16 individuals and seven entities linked to the unlawful deportation](#) and forced transfer of Ukrainian children to Russia and occupied territories. The listings target actors involved in forced assimilation, indoctrination, militarised education, and unlawful adoption, including youth centres, military-patriotic organisations, and officials in Russian-occupied territories.
- **11 May 2026:** The EU, Ukraine, Canada, and international partners hold a [high-level meeting](#) in Brussels on the return of Ukrainian children forcibly transferred or unlawfully deported by Russia. Participants agree to strengthen tracing, verification, and monitoring efforts, support Ukrainian authorities and civil society in securing returns, expand diplomatic engagement, and reinforce accountability for unlawful deportation, "re-education," and militarisation. The EU also announces an additional €50 million to support child protection and education.
- **15 May 2026:** The Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopts a [Resolution](#) "establishing the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Management Committee of the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine". This is an important step towards the practical implementation of the Special Tribunal, which is tasked to investigate, prosecute and try individuals who bear the greatest responsibility for the crime of aggression against Ukraine; it was established by a bilateral treaty between the Council of European and Ukraine on 25 June 2025. The Enlarged Partial Agreement ensures the financing of the Special Tribunal as well as support for its operation by State Parties. The

Agreement is supported by 34 Council of Europe Member States, the European Union, Australia, and Costa Rica. The EU supports the tasks of the Special Tribunal by the [International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine](#) (ICPA) at Eurojust, which may pass investigations to the future tribunal. Funding of this Centre was [ensured](#) until December 2026. Furthermore, the EU [financially supports the Tribunal](#) by €10 million.

- **19 May 2026:** The [European Parliament approves](#) revised rules on foreign investment screening in sensitive sectors such as defence, artificial intelligence, semiconductors, critical raw materials, and financial services. The reform makes screening mandatory for all Member States and seeks to protect EU security and public order in light of growing geopolitical risks, including Russia's war against Ukraine.
- **21 May 2026:** In the [preliminary ruling proceedings C-483/23 \(T Trust\), and Joined Cases C-428/24 \(FZ AR\) and C-476/24 \(SX\)](#), the ECJ rules that the freezing of assets held by trusts is compatible with EU law where there is actual or economic attribution to sanctioned or designated persons. The three cases concern the freezing of funds and economic resources indirectly linked, via trust structures, to persons subject to EU restrictive measures in connection with Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. The ECJ finds that, in order to ensure the *effet utile* of EU law, the terms "belonging to" and "control" must be interpreted broadly. Applied to trust arrangements, this means that funds placed into a trust by a settlor listed on the sanctions list may continue to be regarded as his property or as being under his control, provided that he continues to exercise actual or legal influence over them or derives economic benefit from them. This applies mutatis mutandis to beneficiaries of a trust. This interpretation is in line with the concept of "freezing of funds and economic resources" in Regulation (EU) No 269/2014, which aims to prevent, as much as possible, all possible uses of and transactions involving the assets in question. In addition, this aligns with the objective of restrictive measures, namely the protection of Ukraine's territorial integrity and maintenance of international peace and security, which require that any circumvention of those measures be prevented. Consequently, *de facto* influence and the ability to use such assets must also be taken into account.
- **28 May 2026:** The Council [approves the seventh regular payment](#) under the Ukraine Facility, allowing Ukraine to receive nearly €2.8 billion. The payment follows Ukraine's completion of several reform steps under the Ukraine Plan, including measures related to public financial management, the judiciary, anti-corruption and anti-money laundering, financial markets, public assets, human capital, and the business environment. The Ukraine Facility provides over €50 billion in grants and loans for Ukraine's recovery, reconstruction, and modernisation from 2024 to 2027, with disbursements linked to reform progress and EU accession-related commitments.
- **29 May 2026:** The [Council appoints Cornelia Taylor](#) as the new Head of Mission of EUAM Ukraine, with effect from 1 July 2026. EUAM Ukraine supports civilian security sector reform in line with EU standards and Ukraine's accession-related commitments. Since Russia's full-scale invasion, the mission has also assisted Ukrainian authorities with the investigation and prosecution of international crimes, integrated border management, and support in liberated territories. Its mandate was recently broadened to include countering hybrid threats and supporting veteran reintegration (see above).
- **3 June 2026:** The European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee [adopts a report](#) on Ukraine's reform progress and EU accession path. MEPs welcome Ukraine's efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, judicial reform, and anti-corruption measures during the war, while calling for continued safeguards for the rule of law, media freedom, and independent anti-corruption bodies. They stress that Ukraine must be directly involved in any peace negotiations and reiterated that Russia should pay for the damage caused by its war of aggression.
- **10 June 2026:** EP and Council negotiators [reach a provisional agreement](#) on measures to strengthen EU defence readiness and speed up defence investment. The deal simplifies permits, procurement, and intra-EU transfers of defence-related products, while also facilitating the implementation of the

European Defence Fund. In relation to Ukraine, the agreement allows costs linked to testing in Ukraine to be eligible for EDF funding, thereby supporting closer cooperation with Ukrainian entities and the integration of battlefield experience into European defence projects.

- **15 June 2026:** The EU and [Ukraine open accession negotiations](#) on the “fundamentals” cluster, marking the first negotiating cluster opened in Ukraine’s accession process. The cluster covers core areas such as the rule of law, fundamental rights, democratic institutions, public administration reform, and economic criteria. It includes the chapters on judiciary and fundamental rights, justice, freedom and security, public procurement, statistics, and financial control. Progress under this cluster will shape the overall pace of Ukraine’s accession negotiations;
 - **15 June 2026:** The Council adopts [new sanctions targeting](#) Russia’s war economy, hybrid activities, and human rights violations. The package lists 34 individuals and 47 entities, including companies supporting Russia’s military-industrial complex, suppliers of drones and military equipment, and actors involved in the shadow fleet used to export Russian oil. It also targets propagandists spreading narratives in support of Russia’s war against Ukraine and renews the restrictive measures linked to Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol until 23 June 2027.
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