

**February 2024**

It has been two years since Russia launched its all-out assault on Ukraine on 24 February 2022. [European Union leaders](#) and the [European Parliament](#) have condemned this unprovoked and unjustified military aggression in the strongest possible terms, as it grossly violates international law and undermines European and global security. On 2 March 2022, the United Nations General Assembly [adopted a resolution](#) reaffirming Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity by a broad majority. The war has left thousands of Ukrainian civilians dead and injured, and cities nearly razed to the ground. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as of 31 December 2023 more than [6.44 million](#) Ukrainians had fled to foreign countries; with more than [5 million](#) registering for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in EU Member States. In addition, in December 2023 the International Organization for Migration reported more than [3.5 million](#) [registered](#) internally displaced persons in Ukraine. The conflict has become Europe's worst security crisis since the end of World War Two.

On 23 June 2022, EU leaders granted Ukraine EU [candidate country status](#), and on 14 December 2023, the European Council agreed to open accession negotiations with Ukraine. The European Parliament underlines that [Ukraine's membership of the EU](#) represents a geostrategic shift [and urges](#) the Commission and EU Member States to continue to support Ukraine. European Parliament resolutions have highlighted various aspects of the war's impact, including the situation of [women](#) and [children](#) fleeing the war, and have recognised the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of [terrorism](#). The EU and its allies, within and beyond the G7, have adopted [hard-hitting sanctions](#) aimed at causing severe damage to the Russian economy and its ability to continue waging war. In February 2024 the EU adopted a [13th package of sanctions](#). Relatedly, in May 2022, the Commission published a proposal that would [harmonise](#) the handling of violations of EU restrictive measures.

In an unprecedented move, the EU has mobilised resources under the [European Peace Facility](#) to provide Ukraine with military assistance, including lethal equipment such as ammunition. Moreover, several EU Member States have decided to provide Ukraine with [tanks](#). On the humanitarian front, the EU is providing aid, including through the EU civil protection mechanism, and has [activated](#) the Temporary Protection Directive. After two years of war, EU and Member State assistance to Ukraine and its people totals over €88 billion. This amount includes a broad spectrum of actions: budgetary support including for fast recovery, energy assistance, military support, humanitarian aid and support to refugees. Needs are, however, increasing as continued shelling destroys Ukrainian critical infrastructure. Ukrainian cereal and oilseed production and exports were initially [hit hard](#) not only because of the war but also because of the [Russian blockade](#) of Ukraine's ports on the Black Sea. Exports have now returned to [2023 levels](#). Nevertheless, the EU, the Member States and partners have adopted new policies to find alternative sources of [energy](#) and [raw materials](#). Despite the resilience the Ukrainian economy has displayed, EU support is still essential for Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction. The estimated cost of reconstruction from damages caused in Ukraine now exceeds [€452 billion](#). Through direct financial aid, private investment and capacity building, the [Ukraine Facility](#) will support Ukraine in its recovery and its path to EU accession, with up to €50 billion allocated for the 2024-2027 period.

All EPRS publications on this topic can be found in one place on the [EPRS blog](#). This topical digest ends with a list of EPRS audiovisual material on Russia's war on Ukraine.

## Russia's war on Ukraine

**The following EPRS publications explore in detail the EU response to Russia's war on Ukraine, and the military power of both Ukraine and Russia.**



## Ukraine: Military state of play – February 2024

*'At a glance' note by Sebastian Clapp and Jakub Przetacznik, February 2024*

Two years after the start of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, the war appears to be at a stalemate. While Ukraine successfully recaptured large parts of its territory in the summer and autumn of 2022, the 2023 counteroffensive was not successful in liberating the whole of Ukraine and the war has turned into a war of attrition. The European Union and United States have provided Ukraine with substantial military assistance, but the continuation of military support faces significant political challenges in both the EU and the US.

## Legal options for confiscation of Russian state assets to support the reconstruction of Ukraine

*Study by Philippa Webb, February 2024*

This report analyses the options under international law for the confiscation of Russian state assets to support Ukraine's reconstruction. It focuses on Russian Central Bank assets, \$300 billion of which are frozen in various jurisdictions. The report considers four avenues for overcoming Russia's immunity from enforcement: avoidance of immunity through purely executive or legislative action; justification for the breach of international law on the grounds that it is a countermeasure; evolution of international law to lift immunity from enforcement upon, for example, a finding of aggression by a United Nations principal organ; and an exception in international law for the enforcement of international judgments.

## Economic impact of Russia's war on Ukraine: European Council response

*Briefing by Annastiina Papunen, February 2024*

This briefing looks at the economic impact Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine has had on the European Union over the last 24 months, and analyses how the European Council has responded to limit the negative economic effects of the war. EU leaders followed the developing situation closely and reacted immediately to the Russian attack in February 2022. In addition to sanctions prepared in coordination with EU allies, the EU leaders also tasked the European Commission with preparing contingency measures.

## Establishing the Ukraine Facility

*'At a glance' note by Tim Peters, February 2024*

The proposed Ukraine Facility will support Ukraine, its recovery and its path to EU accession, providing up to €50 billion in grants and loans for the years 2024 to 2027. On 6 February 2024, the European Parliament and the Council came to a political agreement on the establishment of the Ukraine Facility, following up on the agreement in the European Council on the revision of the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF). The MFF should finance the grants and guarantee the loans of the Facility. Additional financing is expected to come from frozen Russian assets. The European Parliament managed to secure an enhanced role for the European and Ukrainian Parliaments as well as Ukrainian civil society in scrutinising the use of the Facility.

## European Peace Facility: Continued EU military assistance to Ukraine

*'At a glance' note by Bruno Bilquin, February 2024*

Provision of the EU military assistance to Ukraine planned under the European Peace Facility is lagging behind schedule. The Special European Council of 1 February invited the Council to agree by early March to amend the Regulation establishing the Facility, in order to increase its financial ceiling.

## Outcome of the special European Council meeting of 1 February 2024

*Briefing by Ralf Drachenberg with Christoffer Nielsen, February 2024*

EU leaders reached a swift and unanimous decision on the long-term EU budget at the special European Council meeting of 1 February 2024, sending a strong and united message of the EU's continued support for Ukraine. Leaders discussed the EU's military support to Ukraine, calling on the Council to agree to a European Peace Facility top-up by March 2024, and welcomed the agreement on the use of profits from frozen Russian assets to support Ukraine's reconstruction.

## Russia's war on Ukraine: Implications for the Arctic

*Briefing by Gabija Leclerc, February 2024*

With the return of full-blown war to European soil, and the implications of climate change, heated geopolitics has returned to the 'high north'. Russia's aggression has catalysed Finland and Sweden's applications for membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), reinforcing the alliance's Arctic dimension.



## **The future of EU financing for Ukraine: Options ahead of the 1 February European Council meeting**

*'At a glance' note by Tim Peters, February 2024*

This 'at a glance' note, written ahead of the special European Council meeting of 1 February 2024, presents three options for financing EU support for Ukraine.

### **Financing Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction**

*Chapter in [Ten issues to watch](#), EPRS, January 2024*

Ukraine's gross domestic product declined by 29.1 % in 2022. That development, combined with the need to increase military spending significantly has put massive pressure on Ukraine's public finances. The total support made available to Ukraine since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion by 'Team Europe', consisting of the EU and its Member States, amounts to over €68 billion.

### **Prosecution of international core crimes and reparation for victims in Russia's war on Ukraine**

*Chapter in [Ten issues to watch](#), EPRS, January 2024*

A series of ongoing legal actions aim to secure justice and reparations for victims of Russia's aggression in Ukraine. Several international courts are dealing with aspects of this conflict, and some of the proceedings have received significant public attention.

### **Enlargement policy: Reforms and challenges ahead**

*Briefing by Branislav Staniček and Jakub Przetacznik with Antonio Albaladejo Roman, December 2023*

The geopolitical dimension of enlargement policy became more pronounced in 2022, when Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia asked to join the EU. Since then, fresh geopolitical challenges have accelerated the need to reform enlargement policy and cemented a shift towards the merit-based integration of new countries. Geopolitical considerations include security and defence, and also foreign policy alignment, for instance in terms of relations with strategic competitors such as China and Russia.

### **European Peace Facility: State of play on 30 November 2023**

*Briefing by Bruno Bilquin, December 2023*

In November 2023, over 20 months after the start of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the European Union had earmarked €12 billion from the European Peace Facility (EPF), itself funded by the Member States, for military aid to Ukraine. Set up before the launch of Russia's war on Ukraine, the EPF was initially intended to finance military assistance worldwide, with a particular focus on Africa. This briefing explains the increases made to the EPF financial ceiling in light of the war and provides details on EPF mobilisations to Ukraine.

### **Establishing the Ukraine Facility: Financing Ukraine's recovery and its path to EU accession**

*Briefing by Marianna Pari and Tim Peters, November 2023*

The proposed Ukraine Facility is designed to support Ukraine, its recovery and its path to EU accession, allocating up to €50 billion for 2024 to 2027. The Facility will: provide Ukraine with direct financial support in the form of grants and loans ('Pillar I'); mobilise private investment in Ukraine by providing guarantees and blended finance ('Pillar II'); and finance assistance and capacity-building programmes for Ukraine's central, regional and municipal tiers of government and civil society to help them achieve the EU acquis and standards ('Pillar III'). This briefing provides an overview of the Ukraine Facility and its path through the legislative procedure.

### **Question Time: State of Play – Ammunition Plan for Ukraine**

*'At a glance' note by Sebastian Clapp and Jakub Przetacznik, November 2023*

On 2 March 2023, Ukraine sent a request for assistance to the EU for the supply of 155 mm-calibre artillery rounds. On 20 March, the Council agreed on a three-track proposal on ammunition (delivery from existing stocks; joint procurement from industry; increasing production). The aim of the proposal is to provide one million rounds of artillery ammunition for Ukraine by March 2024. It is unclear whether Member States and industry will be able to deliver on time. In November 2023, 300 000 rounds of ammunition had been delivered from Member States' stocks, and 180 000 had been ordered from industry but not yet been delivered.



## Supporting Ukraine's EU accession process

*'At a glance' note by Branislav Staniček, October 2023*

On 2 October 2023, EU-27 foreign ministers gathered in Kyiv to discuss political and military support for Ukraine's war effort and its EU accession process. Ukraine formally requested to join the European Union in February 2022. The EU recognised Ukraine as an accession candidate in June 2022.

## Russia's war on Ukraine: High environmental toll

*'At a glance' note by Gabija Leclerc, October 2023*

The environmental impact of Russia's war on Ukraine has rapidly grown since Russia's initial invasion. The destruction of the Kakhovka Dam further increased the harm inflicted on nature, and brought international attention to the environmental dimension of the war. Ukraine is now looking into the legal options to hold Russia accountable for the environmental damage it has caused.

## Act in support of ammunition production

*Briefing by Sebastian Clapp, September 2023*

This briefing tracks the history of the act in support of ammunition production, adopted in July 2023. Put forward by the European Commission to facilitate the ramping-up of production capacity for ammunition and missiles in the EU, the act seeks to ensure the European defence industry can better support Ukraine and EU Member States.

## EU sanctions on Russia: Update, economic impact and outlook

*Briefing by Anna Caprile, September 2023*

This briefing, published in September 2023, discusses the 11 packages of EU sanctions that at that point had been adopted in rapid succession following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In what has already been labelled a 'sanctions revolution', these resulted in an unparalleled set of measures targeting key sectors of the Russian economy and Russian political elites. New sanctions were also adopted against Belarus and Iran, in response to their involvement in Russia's war of aggression.

## EU-Ukraine 2035: Strategic foresight analysis on the future of the EU and Ukraine

*Study by Mario Damen, September 2023*

This analysis uses foresight methodologies to look at the future of the EU and Ukraine, using a time horizon of 2035. It was launched in June 2022 as a Strategic Foresight Conversation, a few months after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Four scenarios examine future developments along two main axes: the Ukraine-Russia relationship and the EU-Ukraine relationship. The resulting policy considerations address four areas of future EU action: the transition from military support to a new European security architecture; EU enlargement and recovery in Ukraine; developing an effective, green and sovereign EU; and continuity and review of EU relations with five countries key to the conflict.

## Mapping threats to peace and democracy worldwide: Normandy Index 2023

*Study by Eleni Lazarou and Branislav Staniček, August 2023*

The most recent edition of the annual EPRS study on levels of threat to peace, security and democracy across the world. See chapters on Russia and Ukraine, and also on Belarus and Moldova.

## Financing Ukraine's recovery: Consequences for the EU budget and budgetary control, and principles for success

*In-depth analysis by Tim Peters, June 2023*

This publication provides detailed insight on the use of the EU budget to support Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees. It explains the recent Commission proposal for a new 'Ukraine Facility' to finance the country and its recovery in the years 2024 to 2027. The paper addresses the challenges of ensuring full parliamentary scrutiny, democratic oversight, and effective budgetary control of the enormous amounts spent on Ukraine's recovery, and presents principles for a successful recovery.

## Reinforcing the European defence industry

*Briefing by Sebastian Clapp, June 2023*

The EU and its Member States have taken several steps to reinforce the European defence industry, especially since the start of Russia's war on Ukraine. Member States have significantly boosted their defence budgets, the



combined total of which is set to reach €290 billion a year in 2025. This briefing discusses the structure and current challenges of the European defence industry and presents ways by which it might be reinforced.

### **Tax treatment of Ukrainian refugees**

*Briefing by Pieter Baert, June 2023*

This briefing looks, in particular, at the tax treatment of Ukrainian refugees who continue to perform their duties for their Ukrainian employers through teleworking. It details the measures the Ukrainian government has taken on this issue, and Ukraine's wider participation in global and EU initiatives to improve overall tax compliance.

### **China-Russia relations: A quantum leap?**

*Briefing by Ulrich Jochheim, May 2023*

China's response to Russia's war on Ukraine – a balancing act sometimes referred to as 'pro-Russia neutrality' – has so far been much closer to Russia than it was in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea. At the same time, developments since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 have increased Russia's dependency on China, which some now describe as a growing 'vassalisation' of Russia.

### **UK support to Ukraine: Stimulating EU-UK relations?**

*'At a glance' note by Marcin Szczepański, May 2023*

This 'at a glance' note discusses the possibility that common efforts on Ukraine might help bring about a meaningful new chapter in EU-UK relations. It is clear that the UK and EU are aligned on the need to respond to Russia's aggression and support Ukraine, and that informal coordination has strengthened collective efforts. Since the UK's withdrawal from the EU, however, there is no formal framework for relations in the foreign policy field.

### **Russia's war on Ukraine: Forcibly displaced Ukrainian children**

*Briefing by Micaela del Monte, April 2023*

On 17 March 2023, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova, Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights. They are accused of '[the] war crime of unlawful deportation of population (children) and that of unlawful transfer of population (children) from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation'. This briefing reviews the applicable international policy and legal frameworks on children's rights and presents the European Parliament's position.

### **Seeking justice in Ukraine: A year's worth of efforts to ensure that core international crimes do not go unpunished**

*Briefing by Micaela del Monte and Katrien Luyten, February 2023*

This briefing sums up a year's worth of efforts by the international community, in particular the EU and its Member States, to ensure that core international crimes committed in Ukraine do not go unpunished and that those responsible are brought to justice. It is not exhaustive; but offers a chronological account of key steps taken between 24 February 2022 and 18 February 2023.

### **EU energy security and the Ukraine war: From sprint to marathon**

*Briefing by Lasse Boehm and Alex Wilson, February 2023*

This briefing assesses how the EU has adapted its energy markets and secured supplies over the past year in response to the rupturing of relations with Russia.

### **One year of temporary protection for people displaced from Ukraine**

*'At a glance' note by Katrien Luyten, EPRS, February 2023*

In response to mass arrivals of refugees, the EU moved swiftly to grant Union-wide temporary protection to people arriving from Ukraine. By the end of December 2022, 3.8 million non-EU citizens who had fled Ukraine were benefitting from temporary protection. The EU Temporary Protection Directive, activated for the first time, has generally had a very positive response, as it has prevented extreme pressure on national asylum systems and offered security to the people affected.

### **Russia's war on Ukraine: US support**

*Briefing by Gisela Grieger, February 2023*



The US has been at the forefront of multilateral actions to tackle the multiple adverse implications of Russia's war of aggression both for Ukraine and the whole world. This briefing details the significant military, financial and humanitarian assistance the US has provided to Ukraine and its EU neighbours.

### **Russia's war on Ukraine: US sanctions**

*Briefing by Marcin Szczepański, February 2023*

This briefing discusses the battery of sanctions and multilateral measures the US imposed on Russia following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and provides information on US sanctions in general, their interplay with EU sanctions, and the impact Western sanctions have had on Russia's economy.

### **Russia–Belarus military cooperation**

*'At a glance' note by Jakub Przetacznik, February 2023*

Is the Belarusian army capable of supporting Russia in direct battle, without further undermining the stability of Lukashenka's regime? As bilateral military cooperation progresses, with repetitive military exercises and a growing Russian military presence in Belarus, the answer remains unclear.

### **Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, section in: [Outcome of the special European Council meeting of 9 February 2023](#)**

*Briefing by Suzana Anghel and Ralf Drachenberg, February 2023*

This briefing includes a section on the content and outcomes of the European Council's discussion of Ukraine at its 9 February 2023 meeting, at which the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, delivered an address.

### **Russia's war on Ukraine: Western-made tanks for Ukraine**

*'At a glance' note by Sebastian Clapp, January 2023*

Following repeated requests by Ukraine and almost a year of hesitation and delicate negotiations, in January 2023 EU Member States, Norway, the UK and the US decided to send Western-made main battle tanks to Ukraine. This 'at a glance' note provides specifications on the tanks concerned, and an overview of the negotiation process (which has been particularly contentious).

### **Russia, quo vadis?, chapter by Anna Caprile in [Ten issues to watch in 2023](#)**

*In-depth analysis, EPRS, January 2023 (see also the [video presentation](#) by Anna Caprile)*

Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has shaken the geopolitical foundations of Europe, opening a colossal security and identity rift in the Eurasian region. Its outcome will shape Europe's and Russia's futures, in seemingly drastically divergent directions. In 2023 and beyond, the EU will have consequential choices to make.

### **Russia's war on Ukraine – Maritime logistics and connectivity: State of play**

*'At a glance' note by Karin Jacobs, December 2022*

Russia's war on Ukraine has caused export blockages and rising food prices worldwide. Ukraine is one of the world's largest producers of grains and oilseeds, and prior to the war, more than 90 % of these products, around 6 million tonnes, were exported via the Black Sea. Through the Black Sea grain (BSG) initiative and the EU 'solidarity lanes', these goods are being exported again, thereby improving maritime connectivity and logistics.

### **Generators of Hope: Delivering energy equipment to Ukraine for the winter ahead**

*'At a glance' note by Sidona Mazur, Agnieszka Widuto and Jakub Przetacznik, December 2022*

On 23 November 2022, the European Parliament partnered with Eurocities to launch the 'Generators of Hope' campaign to provide Ukraine with energy equipment for the winter. Russian attacks on civilian infrastructure temporarily left around 10 million Ukrainians without power, while temperatures had already dropped below zero. The campaign was launched with the aim of facilitating city-to-city donations of power generators, transformers and other devices, to be sent with the logistical support of the EU civil protection mechanism.

### **2022 Sakharov Prize laureate: The brave people of Ukraine**

*'At a glance' note by Jakub Przetacznik, EPRS, December 2022*

The 2022 Sakharov Prize was awarded to the people of Ukraine, represented by their president, elected leaders and civil society, who are fighting hard and have sacrificed so much to protect their country from Russia's attacks.



### Russia's war on Ukraine: People with disabilities

'At a glance' note by Micaela del Monte and Marie Lecerf, November 2022

Estimates show that around 2.7 million people with disabilities in Ukraine face a disproportionate risk of violence or death and lack access to medical care; this number will likely increase as the conflict goes on. Since the war began, the European Parliament has been drawing attention to the needs of people with disabilities in Ukraine.

### European Peace Facility: Ukraine and beyond

'At a glance' note by Bruno Bilquin, November 2022

The European Peace Facility, operational since July 2021, finances activities with military implications and supports the armies of partner countries and EU Member States with infrastructure, training and equipment. Reacting to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, for the first time in its history the EU mobilised funds for the delivery by Member States of military equipment, including lethal weaponry, to assist a partner country.

### Russia's war on Ukraine: Designating a state as a sponsor of terrorism

'At a glance' note by Beatrix Immenkamp, November 2022

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy first asked the United States Congress and the White House to add Russia to the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism in April 2022. He has since extended the call to governments around the world. Both the US House of Representatives and the Senate have passed resolutions calling on the Secretary of State Antony Blinken to add Russia to the list, which he has so far refused to do. On 18 October 2022, the European Parliament held a debate on designating Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism.

### Russia's war on Ukraine: Impact on global food security and EU response

Briefing by Anna Caprile and Eric Pichon, September 2022

The response of the international community, including an agreement brokered by the United Nations and Turkey to unblock exports from Black Sea ports, has calmed fears of an imminent widespread food global crisis stemming from Russia's war on Ukraine. However, a number of food import- and food aid-dependent countries remain highly vulnerable to food price and foreign exchange volatility. This publication updates and expands an 'at a glance' note from April 2022.

### European Cultural Heritage Days: Russia's cultural war against Ukraine

Briefing by Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, September 2022

Russian aggressors have looted artefacts from Ukraine's public and private collections, added them to Russian collections and declared them to be part of Russian history and culture. This briefing describes the Russian attacks on Ukrainian cultural heritage, and the reactions and responses of the international community.

## Audiovisual material

### EU sanctions on Russia explained

Video with Anna Caprile, August 2023

### The environment, a victim of war

Video, EPRS, July 2023

### Russia, quo vadis?

Video with Anna Caprile, January 2023, in 10 issues to watch in 2023

## Further reading

### Latest on Russia's war in Ukraine [What Think Tanks are thinking]

Briefing by Marcin Grajewski, January 2024



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