# EU prepares sanctions contingency as Trump administration signals shift on Ukraine peace talks



The European Union is preparing contingency plans to maintain economic sanctions against Russia amid concerns that the Trump administration may abandon peace negotiations with Ukraine and seek closer relations with Moscow. This development arises as US President Donald Trump’s efforts to broker a swift end to Russia’s war against Ukraine—ongoing for more than three years—have not succeeded within his first 100 days in office, with both Moscow and Kyiv rejecting key elements of the US proposals.

Kaja Kallas, the EU’s High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, revealed to the Financial Times that the bloc is working on a "plan B" should the United States withdraw from mediating the conflict. “It’s a question whether the Americans will want to leave. We see signs that they are contemplating whether they should leave Ukraine and not try to get a deal with the Russians because it’s hard,” she said.

A spokesperson for US Secretary of State Marco Rubio indicated on Tuesday that without progress in the peace process, Washington will scale back its role as a mediator. Trump's ideas for economic rapprochement with Russia—part of his peace proposal—have heightened concerns among European officials. Some EU countries might push for Brussels to lift its sanctions on Russia, while worries persist that US businesses could resume economic activities with Russia even as EU firms remain barred.

Hungary has emerged as a potential obstacle to continuing the EU’s sanctions regime, threatening to veto a unanimous vote required at the end of July to extend economic measures against Russia. In response, Kallas noted that while the EU is concentrating on maintaining unified support ("plan A"), alternative strategies exist to uphold sanctions. One such option could entail individual EU member states implementing sanctions independently; for example, Belgium might issue royal decrees to freeze Russian state assets within its jurisdiction. The Belgian government declined to comment on these tactics.

Kallas also acknowledged ongoing discussions within certain EU member states about whether to align with the US if it shifts its stance away from supporting Ukraine. “It is clear that these types of discussions are going on in certain member states and maybe hopes that we don’t really have to support [Ukraine] any more,” she said. “But it’s also a false hope, because if you look at Russia that is investing more than 9 per cent of its GDP on the military, they will want to use it again.”

The US peace proposals include lifting sanctions imposed jointly with the EU and resuming economic cooperation in sectors like energy. However, Kallas underscored that no EU country would accept recognition of Crimea as part of Russia—a key element of the US plan that Kyiv strongly opposes. “I can’t see that we are accepting these kind of things. But we can’t speak for America, of course, and what they will do,” she said. “On the European side, we have said this over and over again... Crimea is Ukraine.”

She further highlighted the strategic importance of US assistance, particularly military support, acknowledging that bridging any withdrawal gap would be challenging for Europe alone. “In terms of military support, of course it’s harder to fill the gap if the Americans are leaving,” Kallas said, while also noting that Europe could potentially increase financial support to Ukraine.

Kallas called on the US to exert pressure on Russia to end the conflict, reflecting President Trump’s stated desire to stop the bloodshed. “There are tools in the Americans’ hands that they can use to put the pressure on Russia to really stop this war,” she said. “President Trump has said that he wants the killing to stop. He should put the pressure on the one who is doing the killing.”

The Financial Times is reporting that these dynamics underscore a fragile moment in transatlantic relations concerning the future of sanctions and diplomatic efforts surrounding the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The outcome of these internal and international discussions will significantly influence the geopolitical landscape and the ongoing conflict in Eastern Europe.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

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