Switzerland Expands Ban on Defense Sales to Russia and Ukraine

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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ZURICH — Switzerland's government said Wednesday it would expand an export ban on defense materials to Russia and Ukraine and look to beef up measures to stop Russians using the country to bypass sanctions.

A government spokeswoman said the ban on defense sales could include certain ships, airplanes and protective gear.

The Swiss government also said in a statement it wanted quickly to draft and submit new proposals on how to prevent Switzerland from being used to circumvent recently announced European Union sanctions against Russia.

Last month, the EU outlined its toughest Russian sanctions yet and published a law that would curb arms sales to Russia and to cut off financing for five major Russian banks over Moscow's support for rebels in Ukraine.

Wednesday's move by the Swiss government follows its decision last week to add 26 Russians and Ukrainians, and 18 organizations to a list designed to prevent it being used as a conduit to get around Western sanctions against Russia.

Switzerland decided in March against imposing its own sanctions in response to the Ukraine crisis, and has instead taken measures to ensure it does not become a place for individuals or funds to avoid European sanctions.

Among these measures is a move to forbid financial intermediaries in Switzerland from doing new business with individuals who have been sanctioned by the EU.

Switzerland, a global commodity trading and private banking hub, is a popular destination for Russia's wealthy elite and it has been reluctant to take steps that could compromise its cherished neutrality or damage trade ties with Moscow.

Figures from the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs show Switzerland exported just 612,000 Swiss francs ($674,380) worth of arms to Russia in 2013 and 182,000 francs worth to Ukraine.

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