

France Opposes Seizing Frozen Russian Assets to Boost Ukraine Military Aid

By [AFP](#)

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Paris, France. **Matt Hardy / pexels**

France's Finance Minister said Tuesday that his country was opposed to seizing frozen Russian assets to fund military aid for Ukraine, arguing the move would violate international agreements.

Tapping into more than 200 billion euros (\$216 billion) in frozen Russian assets has been proposed as a way to bridge the large gap in defense budgets as Europe takes on a greater role in Ukraine's defense amid uncertain U.S. support under President Donald Trump.

But the proposal has sparked tensions within Europe. Britain has long backed the measure, while France remains far more cautious.

"France's position is that these Russian assets... belong notably to the Russian Central Bank," Finance Minister Eric Lombard told France Info radio.

He stressed that funds for Ukraine cannot come from "assets that are captured," as this "would be contrary to international agreements that France and Europe have signed."

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Minister Delegate for Europe Benjamin Haddad told France 2 that while the seizure of frozen assets was a "lever" available to Europe, he warned against using it.

"It still raises legal questions and questions of economic precedent, of the messages sent to investors," he said.

Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot told parliament Monday evening that billions of euros in interest earned from frozen Russian assets were already being directed to Ukraine.

"But the pure and simple confiscation of these assets would represent too great a financial risk for the eurozone, for the European Central Bank, which would weaken member states at a time when they must be as strong as possible to support Ukraine," he said.

During a debate in the French National Assembly on Monday, several lawmakers — including former Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, who now leads President Emmanuel Macron's centrist party — voiced support for the measure.

EU countries are already using interest generated from frozen Russian assets to help arm Ukraine and finance its post-war reconstruction, a windfall estimated at 2.5 billion to 3 billion euros annually.

The Guardian reported Tuesday that the issue is creating "tensions" between the U.K. and France, which are leading European efforts to respond swiftly to Trump's abrupt shift in policy on Ukraine.

Within the European Union, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Poland have been the strongest advocates for seizing the assets outright rather than merely using the interest to secure loans for Ukraine, the newspaper said.

During his White House meeting with Trump last week, Macron reiterated his opposition to confiscating the assets.

"You can take the proceeds of the frozen assets but you cannot take the assets themselves as this is not respecting international and we want to respect international law," Macron said.

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