

EU Extends Sanctions Against Russia Following Delay From Hungary

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Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission. © **European Union**

The EU has agreed to remove four individuals from its sanctions list against Russia after a delay from Hungary, AFP and Reuters reported Friday, paving the way for the bloc to extend restrictions on more than 2,400 others for another six months.

Diplomatic sources told AFP that those set to have their asset freezes and visa bans lifted include businessmen Vladimir Rashevsky and Vyacheslav Kantor, Russian Sports Minister Mikhail Degtyarev and the sister of billionaire Alisher Usmanov.

Reuters, which also cited diplomatic sources, [reported](#) that Rashevsky was "removed due to a weak legal case rather than pressure from Budapest."

The EU must renew two sets of sanctions on Russia every six months through a unanimous vote. Hungary, which shares relatively warm relations with Russia, has repeatedly used sanctions renewal votes as leverage to advance its interests.

"Our determination to support Ukraine is decisive," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen posted on X after the decision to extend sanctions on Russia.

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On Thursday, the Financial Times [reported](#) that Hungary's ambassador to the EU demanded the removal of Russian billionaire Mikhail Fridman from the bloc's sanctions list before agreeing to extend sanctions over Russia's war in Ukraine

However, Fridman was kept on the sanctions list despite pressure from Budapest.

Hungarian officials argued that renewing the sanctions, which also target Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, could complicate ongoing peace negotiations between Ukraine, Russia and the United States.

The sanctions, set to expire on March 15, required unanimous approval from the EU's 27 member states to be renewed.

Hungary's latest standoff follows a similar last-minute hold-up in January over broader economic sanctions on Russia. Budapest ultimately relented after securing reassurances from Brussels that its concerns would be addressed.

AFP contributed reporting.

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