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China Now Supplies 90% of Russia's Sanctioned Tech Imports – Bloomberg

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Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping at a military parade in Beijing in September 2025. **TASS**

Russia's dependence on China for sanctioned technology imports has risen to 90%, Bloomberg reported Friday, citing people familiar with official statistics.

The increase from roughly 80% a year earlier comes despite Kremlin efforts to promote import substitution and achieve what President Vladimir Putin has called "technological sovereignty," according to the report.

Sources told Bloomberg that tougher European Union sanctions had further restricted Russia's remaining channels for acquiring Western technology directly.

The figures highlight how more than four years of Western sanctions imposed over the war in Ukraine have reshaped Russia's trade flows, pushing the country deeper into China's economic orbit and increasing Beijing's leverage over Moscow.

EU officials are well aware of China's role in supplying Russia with dual-use technologies and even geospatial intelligence used in the war effort, Bloomberg reported, citing sources familiar with the matter.

However, European governments remain reluctant to impose major sanctions on Beijing for fear of economic retaliation.

The break with the West has turned Russia into "China's vassal," Elina Ribakova, an economist with the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, D.C., told Deutsche Welle last February.

"China is the biggest trade partner by far whereas Russia is a very small share of where China exports," she added. "For Russia, it's overwhelmingly now the largest trade partner."

Related article: China Hikes Prices on Dual-Use Goods Exports to Russia – Study

According to Russia's Gaidar Institute, China purchased 27% of all Russian exports last year and supplied 36% of Russia's imports.

At the same time, Russia's share of Chinese exports fell from 3.2% to 2.7%, roughly comparable to Mexico's share and more than five times smaller than that of the United States.

"Russia is a big country but it doesn't have the capacity to be self-sufficient," Zsolt Darvas, a senior fellow at Brussels-based think tank Bruegel, told Deutsche Welle. "So, it must obtain these products from somewhere else. And increasingly, that's China."

Ribakova said China has also helped Russia obtain Western-made goods indirectly, particularly dual-use products that can serve both civilian and military purposes.

Trade between Russia and China declined in 2025 for the first time since the start of the war, falling 6.5% to 1.63 trillion yuan ($234 billion), according to Chinese customs data cited in the report.

Chinese exports to Russia fell 3.4% year-on-year, while Russian exports to China dropped 9.9%.

The slowdown in bilateral trade drew concern in the Kremlin, Reuters reported last August, citing sources close to the Russian government.

According to those sources, Putin planned to ask Chinese President Xi Jinping during the Russian leader's visit to Beijing not to allow trade volumes to decline further because Russia's economy had become critically dependent on them.

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