

Sanction shadow fleet captains, terminals: Zelenskyy urges EU to ramp up pressure

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by Shipping Telegraph



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A strong 18th package of EU sanctions against Russia is needed now, its key targets should be the Russian shadow tanker fleet and its captains, the terminals that Russia uses to ship its oil, the oil trade, Russian banks and other financial instruments, as well as the supply chains that bring equipment or parts for making weapons, said Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Speaking last Thursday to the participants of the European Council session, Zelenskyy called on the European Union to impose tougher sanctions against Russia and expand sanctions not just against the Russian tankers, but also their captains, and the terminals that Russia uses to ship its oil.

Strengthening sanctions against Russia, ensuring financial support for Ukraine, and sending a clear political signal regarding the country's accession to the European Union – with these calls, president Zelenskyy addressed the participants of the European Council session.

The war in Ukraine once again took center stage at the latest summit of the European Council on Thursday, as leaders of the bloc called for increased support to Kyiv.

The EU is working on yet another raft of sanctions against Russia, but the leaders made little headway.

A key aim is to make further progress in blocking Russia's "shadow fleet" of oil tankers and their operators from earning more revenue for Moscow's war effort.

"Russia's military ambitions grow when its oil revenues are high. Over time, we've seen how strongly some European countries still depend on Russian oil," Zelenskyy told EU leaders.

He also stressed the need to lower the price cap on Russian oil: "A cap of \$45 could help move toward peace, of course. But for real, lasting peace – and we shared it yesterday with all the partners: European partners, U.S. partners – a cap of \$30 per barrel is needed to block Russia's ability to fund its aggression."

Zelenskyy also paid special attention to Ukraine's EU accession process. The president emphasized that Ukraine is fulfilling all its commitments for EU accession and called for supporting the opening of the first negotiating cluster, "Fundamentals."

"Opening Cluster One "Fundamentals" in the negotiation process could be more than just a technical step. It would be a political decision that defines Ukraine's future integration with Europe," the Ukrainian president said.

On the sidelines of the summit, EU leaders sought to allay the concerns of Hungary and Slovakia over ending their access to Russian gas as foreseen by the EU's plan to gradually stop the import of Russian gas and oil into the EU by the end of 2027.

The main obstacles have come from the positions of the Hungarian and Slovak governments.