

**Question for written answer E-002009/2024
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Adrian-George Axinia (ECR)

Subject: EU sanctions against Russia and the potential use of former Soviet republics to circumvent these sanctions

In the light of the sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation following its invasion of Ukraine, I would like to inquire about reports indicating that former Soviet republics in the Caucasus are being used to circumvent these sanctions.

Specifically, there are allegations that the control of national management institutions is being leveraged to monopolise key economic sectors.

For instance, in Uzbekistan, it has been reported that Octobank JSC, which is controlled by the National Agency of Perspective Projects, appears to dominate cross-border financial transactions, including money transfers and peer-to-peer payments, potentially sidelining other financial institutions.

In this context:

1. Can the Commission share what measures are being taken to monitor and address potential sanctions evasion through these mechanisms? Has it contacted the Uzbek authorities in relation to potential breaches of the sanctions regime, and if not, does it intend to do so?
2. Is the Commission aware of the situation regarding Octobank JSC and its implications for the integrity of the EU's sanctions regime, and what steps is it considering to ensure that such circumvention efforts do not undermine the effectiveness of the sanctions against the Russian Federation?

Submitted: 10.10.2024