

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000291/25
to the Commission
Siegbert Frank Droese (ESN)
(23 January 2025)**

Subject: Russian 'shadow fleet' in the Baltic Sea

1. What is the Commission's assessment of the environmental and maritime safety implications of the so-called Russian shadow fleet of oil tankers in the Baltic Sea, which, according to Greenpeace and others, represents a major environmental threat? ⁽¹⁾
2. Against this background, what is the Commission's view of the impact of the sanctions policy against the Russian Federation?

Submitted: 23.1.2025

**Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(1 April 2025)**

1. The Commission takes the risks posed by Russia's shadow fleet very seriously, addressing environmental and maritime safety threats with targeted measures. EU sanctions include carve-outs for vessels in need of assistance or saving life at sea. Working with the European Maritime Safety Agency and Member States, the Commission monitors these threats to protect the Baltic marine and coastal environment.

Coastal and flag States must uphold the Law of the Sea Treaty ⁽¹⁾ obligations, with coastal States enforcing environmental measures and flag States ensuring vessels meet insurance and certification standards. The Commission has also engaged with third countries providing flags to these vessels, urging them to meet their responsibilities.

On 19 February 2025, the Commission proposed amending Directive 2002/59/EC ⁽²⁾ to mandate insurance reporting for all vessels entering EU Mandatory Ship Reporting Systems, including those in transit. This enhances maritime safety and environmental protection.

2. EU sanctions are a key tool to weaken Russia's military aggression by imposing significant economic and political costs. These measures, including a ban on Russian oil imports (with exceptions for pipelines) and the G7+ Oil Price Cap, have reduced Russia's oil revenues, limiting resources for its war effort. To evade sanctions, Russia is using a 'shadow fleet' of tankers.

The EU can designate shadow fleet vessels involved in deceptive or high-risk shipping, imposing port access bans and service restrictions. So far, 153 vessels have been designated under the 14th, 15th, and 16th sanctions packages, leading to a significant reduction in their operations.

¹ <https://www.ndr.de/nachrichten/mecklenburg-vorpommern/Tankerliste-Greenpeace-warnt-vor-russischer-Ostsee-Schattenflotte,schattenflotte102.html>

⁽¹⁾ The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos).

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2002/59/oj/eng>