

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001313/25  
to the Commission**

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(31 March 2025)

*Subject:* Enforcement of the EU ban on Russian coal imports and measures to prevent sanctions circumvention through Russian shadow fleet tactics and intermediary countries

Despite the EU's import ban on Russian coal, Russia exploits regulatory loopholes through a shadow fleet to sustain operations.

In 2023, under Poland's PiS-led government, the vessel *Roseburg*, allegedly manned by Russian nationals, docked in Szczecin with coal falsely claimed as Kazakh, raising concerns over the misrepresentation of the origins of coal via non-EU intermediary countries.

Common evasive tactics include vessel reflagging, shell companies and ship-to-ship transfers. Reports suggest that up to 900 000 tonnes of Russian coal were brought into Poland under false pretences in 2023, highlighting the persistent challenges in enforcing sanctions effectively.

Given this situation:

1. Is the Commission aware of any allegations or evidence suggesting that Russian coal entered the Polish market in 2023, in spite of the EU's import ban? If so, what measures have been taken to investigate and address these concerns?
2. In the light of Russia's documented use of a shadow fleet and intermediary countries such as Kazakhstan to obscure the origins of its coal exports, what specific measures has the Commission put in place to detect and prevent such sanctions circumvention tactics?
3. How does the Commission assess the effectiveness of current sanctions enforcement mechanisms, and is it considering the provision of more advanced support to Member States most in need, such as the Baltic states?

Submitted: 31.3.2025

**Answer given by Ms Albuquerque on behalf of the European Commission**  
(25 June 2025)

Under Council Decision 2014/512/CFSP <sup>(1)</sup> and Regulation (EU) 833/2014 <sup>(2)</sup>, the EU may designate specific vessels for their contribution to Russia's warfare against Ukraine, including vessels that are part of Russia's shadow fleet, which seeks to circumvent the EU and Price Cap Coalition's caps while engaging in deceptive and high-risk shipping practices contrary to international standards. Such vessels are subject to a port access ban and a ban on provision of services.

To date, the EU has designated a total of 342 vessels as part of the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> sanctions packages <sup>(3)</sup>, <sup>(4)</sup>, <sup>(5)</sup>, <sup>(6)</sup> adopted in response to Russia's war against Ukraine. In its proposal for the 18<sup>th</sup> sanctions package <sup>(7)</sup>, the Commission proposes to designate additional 77 vessels.

The Commission is continuously monitoring the developments relating to vessels belonging to Russia's shadow fleet as part of its efforts to combat the circumvention of the EU's Russia sanctions.

It has also reached out to third countries providing flagging services to these vessels raising concerns of environmental protection and maritime safety.

All decisions on EU sanctions are taken unanimously by Member States in the Council, including decisions on the sanctioning of vessels.

With regards to allegations of circumvention or breaches of sanctions, the Commission welcomes any concrete information but does not comment on individual cases.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 229, 31.7.2014, p. 13-17, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2014/512/oj/eng>.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ L 229, 31.7.2014, p. 1-11, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/833/oj/eng>.

<sup>(3)</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/06/24/russia-s-war-of-aggression-against-ukraine-comprehensive-eu-s-14th-package-of-sanctions-cracks-down-on-circumvention-and-adopts-energy-measures/>.

<sup>(4)</sup> [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-adopts-15th-sanctions-package-against-russia-its-continued-illegal-war-against-ukraine-2024-12-16\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-adopts-15th-sanctions-package-against-russia-its-continued-illegal-war-against-ukraine-2024-12-16_en).

<sup>(5)</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_25\\_585](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_585).

<sup>(6)</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/05/20/russia-s-war-of-aggression-against-ukraine-eu-agrees-17th-package-of-sanctions/>.

<sup>(7)</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement\\_25\\_1471](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_25_1471).

Member States are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of EU sanctions. National authorities are in charge of following up on possible breaches and conducting investigations.

The Commission is in close contact with the competent authorities in the Member States and readily provides support in sanctions implementation.

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