

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000141/26
to the Commission
Sandro Gozi (Renew)
(14 January 2026)**

Subject: Retention of an EU-owned vessel in Finland 2

The answer to Question E-003715/2025 ⁽¹⁾ does not respond fully to the questions raised. The Finnish Customs Authority did not acknowledge until 17 December 2025 that the audit concerned Oy Kotka Yacht Store Ltd (KYS), the operator of the port of Kotka, and not Luna Tower Kft, the owner of the yacht. As a result, an EU company was prevented from freely using its property for 12 months because of an audit concerning another entity.

In 2022/2023, the former owner of the yacht, a Russian company, paid the storage fees directly to Mr Ponomarenko instead of paying them to KYS, and it apparently did so again in 2024/2025. These transactions appear to be incompatible with Regulation (EU) 2022/345, which restricts certain payments between Russian and European entities.

The Finnish Customs Authority did not examine the implications of these facts in relation to intra-Community VAT and the protection of the financial interests of the Union under Article 325 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Does the Commission intend to take any action in this case, in particular by examining all the options provided for in the Treaties?

Submitted: 14.1.2026

**Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(3 March 2026)**

The Commission is grateful for the Honourable Member's clarification following the Commission's reply to another written question (E-003715/2025) ⁽¹⁾ on the same subject.

Under the Union Customs Code ⁽²⁾, customs authorities may retain goods to carry out controls and audits necessary to ensure compliance with EU law.

The responsibility for ensuring the legality, proportionality, and correct application of audits and retention measures lies with the competent Finnish authorities.

They must ensure compliance with Regulation (EU) 2022/345 ⁽³⁾, which restricts certain transactions between Russian and EU entities. The assessment of potential breaches to this regulation, as well as the implications for value added tax, remains a matter of national competence.

The Commission may, in case of systemic misapplication of EU law, engage with national authorities or initiate infringement proceedings before the Court of Justice of the European Union. Based on the information available, the present case does not seem to involve prejudice to the EU budget.

The case appears to concern an individual customs case and disputes between private parties, which fall within the responsibility of the competent Finnish authorities. Economic operators may seek remedies before national courts or use EU-level mechanisms such as the Solvit network ⁽⁴⁾.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-003715-ASW_EN.html

⁽¹⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-003715-ASW_EN.html.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02013R0952-20221212>.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/345/oj/eng>.

⁽⁴⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/solvit/index_en.htm; https://ec.europa.eu/solvit/what-is-solvit/index_en.htm; list of national Solvit centres: https://ec.europa.eu/solvit/contact/index_en.htm.