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Answer given by Mr Jørgensen
on behalf of the European Commission
(16.4.2026)

The stepwise ban of Russian gas imports introduced by Regulation (EU) 2026/261¹ pursues a different purpose than Union restrictive measures ('sanctions'). Regulation (EU) 2026/261 is a trade and energy policy measure, meant to eliminate essential security risks for the Union resulting from trade dependencies with Russia, and to establish a monitoring and reporting framework to enhance the security of gas supply. The appropriate legal bases for such measure are Article 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) (trade policy) and 194 of the TFEU (energy policy).

This purpose is markedly different from the purpose of foreign policy measures, such as sanctions under Article 215 of the TFEU, which are, in the case of Regulation 833/2014², to increase the costs of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine and to put pressure to stop the aggression.

The Commission, Parliament and Member States have designed Regulation (EU) 2026/261 in a manner that fully respects national sovereignty, enhances economic security in all Member States and avoids any hardship for individual countries. It is fully in line with EU law and obligations under international law.

The Commission has been working intensively with Hungary and Slovakia to prepare the phase out of gas trade with Russia, in order to guarantee that the transition to more reliable suppliers can happen without any risks for supply security in both countries. Removing remaining dependencies on Russia will ultimately increase security of supply for all European countries.

The Commission will continue its work with both Member States to facilitate the implementation of the Regulation.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2026/261/oj/eng>.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/833/2026-01-16>.