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Answer given by Ms Albuquerque
on behalf of the European Commission
(21.8.2026)

The decision to impose EU restrictive measures ('sanctions') on Russia in the context of its illegal aggression against Ukraine, is taken unanimously by all Member States in the Council. These measures are carefully targeted, proportionate and temporary, set with the view to increase pressure on Russia and its war economy, supporting efforts to end the brutal war of aggression.

Sanctions are regularly reviewed and the EU can calibrate, ease or lift them if the EU's objectives or meaningful steps towards them, are achieved. The EU's sanctions are carefully calibrated to limit unintended effects on the EU and partner countries, maintaining an appropriate balance between effectiveness of sanctions as a foreign and security policy tool and broader economic impacts. The Commission closely monitors the economic impact of the EU's sanctions against Russia, including on sectors that have historically relied on exports to the Russian market. Within its competences, the Commission also supports Member States in implementing EU restrictive measures.

The Commission encourages Member States to design specific support measures aimed at preserving local expertise and facilitating the adaptation of economic activities to new market conditions. Unrelated to sanctions alignment, enterprises in Western Macedonia may benefit from support under the European Regional Development Fund¹ as well as from the Just Transition Fund². Both programmes have allocated financial resources to support entrepreneurship, business competitiveness and economic diversification in the region. Specifically targeted to adversely affected workers, the European Social Fund Plus³, offers longer-term assistance to workers, especially in anticipation of change.

¹ Through the Western Macedonia 2021-2027 Programme. https://commission.europa.eu/funding-and-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-regional-development-fund-erdf_en.

² Through the Just Development Transition 2021-2027 Programme. https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/just-transition-fund_en.

³ https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/stakeholders-and-business/funding-opportunities/european-regional-development-fund-erdf-greece-western-macedoniadytiki-makedonia_en.