

(English version)

Priority question for written answer P-001793/26
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Karin Karlsbro (Renew)
(3 May 2026)

Subject: EU sanctions and stolen grain

Recent investigative reporting indicates that substantial quantities of grain looted from Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine have been exported via complex maritime routes and sold on international markets, including to third countries. This has given rise to concerns regarding the circumvention of international sanctions and the indirect financing of Russia's war effort. Evidence suggests the use of 'dark fleet' vessels, the deactivation of tracking by automatic identification systems, ship-to-ship transfers and falsified documentation to obscure the origin of the grain.

1. How does the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) intend to address the alleged circumvention of EU restrictive measures related to the trade in stolen Ukrainian agricultural products?
2. Does the VP/HR plan to propose or support sanctions against individuals, companies or intermediaries found to be knowingly involved in such practices?
3. What additional measures does the VP/HR envisage to strengthen monitoring, traceability and enforcement mechanisms in order to prevent stolen grain from entering EU or global markets, including cooperation with international partners and maritime authorities?

Submitted: 3.5.2026

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(29 May 2026)

1. The High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) strongly condemns all actions that help fund Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and that circumvent EU sanctions. The systematic plunder of Ukrainian grain from territories illegally occupied by Russia is a Russian state policy to strip Ukraine of essential agricultural produce and income and continues to be addressed by the EU with the highest priority.
2. The HR/VP stands ready to target actions related to the trade in stolen Ukrainian agricultural products by proposing listing of individuals and entities, including enablers and buyers in third countries if necessary. As part of the 20th package of sanctions in response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine ⁽¹⁾, upon proposal of the HR/VP, the Council listed two entities incorporated in third countries owning vessels used to transport stolen Ukrainian grain, adding to the five individuals and two entities listed for their involvement with the theft of Ukrainian grain and agricultural products ⁽²⁾. Furthermore, nine vessels undermining or threatening the economic subsistence or food security of Ukraine are currently sanctioned under EU restrictive measures against Russia ⁽³⁾. The Commission oversees the effective implementation and enforcement of these sanctions across Member States. Imposing any additional restrictive measures requires a unanimous decision by the Council.
3. The HR/VP, together with Commission services, is working closely with Member States and partner countries (for instance, in the G7 and in the International Maritime Organisation), including with their maritime authorities, to counter the operations of Russia's shadow fleet, following a whole-of-route approach.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/04/23/russia-s-war-of-aggression-against-ukraine-20th-round-of-stern-eu-sanctions-hits-energy-military-industrial-complex-trade-and-financial-services-including-crypto/>.

⁽²⁾ Council Decision 2014/145/CFSP of 17 March 2014 and Council Regulation (EU) No 269/2014 of 17 March 2014 concerning restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine.

⁽³⁾ Council Decision 2014/512/CFSP and Council Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 of 31 July 2014 concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine.