



Plenary sitting

B10-0161/2024

6.11.2024

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 136(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on EU actions against the Russian shadow fleets and ensuring a full
enforcement of sanctions against Russia
(2024/2885(RSP))

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B10-0161/2024

European Parliament resolution on EU actions against the Russian shadow fleets and ensuring a full enforcement of sanctions against Russia (2024/2885(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine,
 - having regard to the UN Charter, including Article 41 thereof on measures not involving the use of armed force,
 - having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS),
 - having regard to Rule 136(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas since February 2022, the EU has adopted an unprecedentedly high number of restrictive measures, or sanctions, in response to Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, aimed at ending the war, undermining Russia’s economic, financial and military ability to sustain the war effort, defending the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and the safety of its population and ensuring respect for international law and the principles of the UN Charter;
- B. whereas restrictive measures, or sanctions, are one of the tools available under the EU’s common foreign and security policy; whereas they are generally part of a comprehensive policy approach that includes political dialogue, multilateral coordination and diplomatic efforts with the aim of countering certain policies and activities and should not be presented as a punitive measure;
- C. whereas EU sanctions do not target a country or population but specific policies or activities, the means to conduct them and those responsible for them, such as the governments of non-EU countries, entities or individuals, and comply with obligations under international law, in particular with regard to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- D. whereas Russia’s unabated war of aggression against Ukraine, its continued ability to purchase new ammunition, military equipment or components for such equipment and its continued economic, financial and military ability to sustain the war effort call into question the effectiveness of the existing sanctions against Russia, notably with regard to persisting exemptions and unintended loopholes, lack of implementation or enforcement, and circumvention, and underline the need to strengthen and broaden international coordination of sanctions;
- E. whereas the EU, in coordination with the G7 Price Cap Coalition, established a price cap on crude oil and petroleum products of Russian origin with the aim of maintaining global supplies, while limiting the revenue streams used by Russia to finance its war of aggression against Ukraine; whereas the enforcement of this price cap faces significant challenges due to the operation of a Russian ‘shadow fleet’ of oil tankers employed to

circumvent the restrictions on Russian oil exports;

- F. whereas Russia has invested heavily in the build-up of this shadow fleet, in an estimated amount of more than EUR 9 billion since early 2022¹; whereas the oil tankers used by Russia to circumvent restrictions on its oil exports are often old vessels with no adequate maintenance history or clear ownership; whereas such vessels often sail under the flags of countries with poor safety controls, lack satellite tracking and operate without insurance, thus being generally unfit for service and contributing to a rising risk of maritime collisions on international trade routes and posing a major environmental threat, inter alia, through oil spills that are harming marine ecosystems and coastal areas, in particular along the coastline of EU Member States in the Baltic Sea; whereas these vessels also engage in transshipment operations allowing Russia to launder its oil and evade sanctions and price caps through extremely risky maritime manoeuvres in European seas, including in marine protected areas with particularly sensitive wildlife, where oil spills would have disastrous consequences²;
- G. whereas the traffic of such vessels has risen dramatically in the course of 2024, with the number of trips completed by Russian shadow vessels more than doubling³;
- H. whereas it remains necessary to uphold internationally recognised safety and security standards for maritime traffic despite the fact that UNCLOS grants maritime vessels the right of innocent passage, i.e. the right to ‘freely navigate through territorial seas’;
- I. whereas the EU has started, in its 11th, 12th and 14th sanctions packages, to address the risks posed by the Russian ‘shadow fleet’ with regard to sanctions circumvention and is discussing further measures with its international partners, in particular the G7 countries; whereas the EU has so far banned 27 shadow tankers from accessing EU ports and services, and international partners have imposed similar restrictions on individual tankers, with the United Kingdom imposing sanctions on 18 Russian oil tankers and 4 liquefied natural gas (LNG) tankers;
1. Reiterates its condemnation, in the strongest terms, of Russia’s unprovoked, illegal and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine; calls on Russia to immediately terminate all military activities in Ukraine and to completely and unconditionally withdraw all forces, proxies and military equipment from the entire internationally recognised territory of Ukraine, to end its forced deportations of Ukrainian civilians and to release all detained and deported Ukrainians, particularly children;
 2. Emphasises that EU sanctions do not target either Russia as a country or its population, but are aimed at ending Russia’s unprovoked, illegal and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine;
 3. Underlines that the objective of EU sanctions in response to Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine is to strategically weaken the Russian economic and industrial base, in particular the military-industrial complex, in order to undermine the ability of the Russian Federation to continue waging the war, attacking the civilian population and

¹ KSE Institute, ‘[Creating “Shadow-Free” Zones](#)’.

² Greenpeace, ‘[Analysis of Russian shadow fleet data](#)’.

³ CREA, ‘[Ensuring an ecological disaster: ‘Shadow’ tanker spill could cost coastal states USD 1.6 bn](#)’.

violating the territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as to hamper Russia's access to military technologies and components and to target political and economic elites so as to undermine their support for the regime;

4. Notes that the long-term impact of the EU's sanctions packages has not yet been fully realised and that Russia is actively seeking to circumvent them; calls for support for the work of the EU Sanctions Envoy on anti-circumvention in order to prevent the systematic re-export of sanctioned EU goods to Russia, which is seriously undermining the effectiveness of EU sanctions and obstructing international efforts to end the war; calls, in this respect, for all candidate and potential candidate countries for EU accession to strictly align with EU sanctions in response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine as a sign of their readiness to take on the obligations of EU membership; reiterates its call on the Council to expand the powers of the European Public Prosecutor's Office in order to address the crime of violation of Union restrictive measures;
5. Expresses its concern that Russia has been successfully circumventing restrictive measures imposed on its oil exports by operating a Russian 'shadow fleet' of oil tankers and may therefore still be able to intensify its war efforts against Ukraine in the short term, especially during the upcoming winter season;
6. Recalls the International Maritime Organization's assembly resolution A.1192(33) of December 2023 on illegal operations in the maritime sector by the shadow fleet and its acknowledgement that the fraudulent registration of ships, the existence of fraudulent registries and related deceptive shipping practices pose serious threats to, among other areas, the environment⁴;
7. Calls for the EU to impose additional restrictive measures with the aim of definitively undermining Russia's economic and financial ability to sustain its war efforts; calls, therefore, for the EU to fully ban all Russian fossil fuel imports, including LNG, via pipeline or shipment, to ban all maritime vessels used by Russia to circumvent sanctions on its oil and gas exports and to impose targeted sanctions on shipowners;
8. Calls on the G7 countries to more effectively enforce the price cap imposed on Russian seaborne oil, to substantially decrease the oil price cap and to crack down on the loopholes used by Russia to repackage and sell its oil at market prices;
9. Calls for the EU and its Member States to exercise strict control over Russia's 'shadow fleet', which, in addition to violating EU and G7 sanctions, poses an immense ecological threat to the ecosystem as a result of its technical deficiencies and frequent breakdowns; calls, in particular, for the EU to enhance the monitoring of maritime vessels of interest through the European Maritime Safety Agency, in particular to better detect transshipping operations by establishing a comprehensive list of vessels belonging to the Russian 'shadow fleet', to launch targeted inspections, including at sea, and also impose sanctions whereby vessels are permanently or temporarily blocked for administrative reasons;
10. Calls on the Member States to assess and strengthen their administrative capacities to

⁴ IMO, [Resolution A.1192\(33\)](#).

ensure swift implementation and strict enforcement of EU sanctions; calls for harmonised testing of the origin of fossil fuel, LNG and refined fossil fuel imports to prevent the re-export of Russian energy to the EU; welcomes the clarifications and guidance notes addressed by the Commission to European businesses to help them identify and avoid circumvention; calls on the Member States to thoroughly investigate companies' compliance with export restrictions on listed goods and to impose dissuasive penalties;

11. Reiterates its call to maintain a coherent approach towards sanctions without any exemptions induced by sectoral or national interests; emphasises the need for Member States to acknowledge and accept that severe sanctions against the Russian Federation unavoidably entail negative effects on their economic situation and encourages Member States to clearly state the necessity of sustaining and reinforcing these measures for the protection of the EU's security interests;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the President, Government and Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.