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Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini
on behalf of the European Commission
(6.6.2019)

EU restrictive measures were imposed in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and Russia's actions in destabilising the situation in eastern Ukraine. The measures provide a strong signal of the EU's support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. In March 2015, the European Council linked the duration of the economic sanctions to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements. Any decision to prolong, amend or lift these measures, which are under constant review, is for the Council to make. Complete implementation of the Minsk Agreements has not yet been achieved, as assessed by the European Council in December 2018.

It is difficult to quantify the isolated impact of EU restrictive measures on the Russian economy as they coincided with the emergence of broader economic headwinds, including existing structural impediments to growth, oil prices fluctuations and rouble depreciation. These resulted in a significant slowdown of the Russian economy in 2014 and a relatively subdued recovery since.

The Commission regularly evaluates the economic impact of the EU measures and the retaliatory sanctions imposed by Russia in the agri-food sector. The spill-over effect of restrictive measures on Russia on the EU economy have remained contained and manageable overall. Despite the difficulties caused by the Russian ban, the EU agri-food sector has shown a remarkable resilience and most of the affected sectors have been able to find alternative markets. Since 2013, i.e. prior to the introduction of the Russian ban, overall EU agri-food exports to third countries have significantly grown by 14.6%, reaching a remarkable level of EUR 137.4 billion in 2018.