

**Question for written answer E-001491/2022
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Susanna Ceccardi (ID)

Subject: Clarification on how the European Union plans to prevent Russia circumventing sanctions through illegal transactions using dummy companies

In recent years, Iran has become highly skilled in circumventing the international finance system, subsidising terrorism through its proxy companies and laundering billions of dollars through illegal transactions using dummy companies.

Developed and engineered by Iran's political leadership, this system has, according to authoritative press sources¹, helped it withstand the sanctions imposed by the US Administration to push Teheran into rejoining the JCPOA.

Official documents obtained by the British press² have revealed that the Syrian regime uses a similar system. These documents show links between the owners of dummy companies, President Bashar al-Assad and Syria's economically powerful élite, including sanctioned individuals.

At the end of an official meeting between the Russian Foreign Minister and his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Sergey Lavrov confirmed that Moscow will work in close cooperation with Teheran, including on how to circumvent the restrictions³.

In light of these stated intentions and the sanctions imposed by the Commission following the invasion of Ukraine, can the Vice President / High Representative answer the following:

1. What preventive measures have been taken to prevent steps taken by the EU being circumvented, which would render sanctions ineffective?
2. What does he intend to do to punish the behaviour of those countries likely to undermine trust in the international financial system and its reliability?

¹ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/clandestine-finance-system-helped-iran-withstand-sanctions-crush-documents-show-11647609741>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/mar/22/syria-using-maze-of-shell-companies-to-avoid-sanctions-on-assad-regimes-elite?s=08>

³ <https://en.mfa.gov.ir/portal/newsview/674934>