

EN

E-000497/2023

Answer given by Mr Reynders
on behalf of the European Commission
(2.5.2023)

Pursuant to the Treaties, Member States have to implement EU sanctions. Member States must share any information on violation and enforcement problems and judgments handed down by national courts with the Commission. In accordance with EU law, such information can only be used for the purposes for which it was provided or received.

In December 2022, the Commission issued a proposal for a Directive to harmonise the criminal definitions of, and penalties for, the violation of sanctions¹. The proposal includes a provision specifically requiring Member States to report statistics on cases of sanctions' violation that fall within the scope of application of the Directive.

In March 2022, the Commission also issued a Recommendation on immediate steps in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in relation to investor citizenship schemes (ICS) – also referred to as golden passports - and investor residence schemes². The Commission stressed that ICS must be terminated as they breach EU law and it recommended that Member States having operated such a scheme assess whether naturalisations of individuals should be withdrawn, among others where the individual concerned is included in the EU sanctions lists.

Cyprus withdrew its nationality from 43 individuals. Bulgaria stated that no Russian or Belarusian nationals subject to sanctions had applied for or acquired Bulgarian citizenship. Malta withdrew nationality from two Russian nationals, one of which is subject to EU sanctions while the other is subject to United States sanctions. The Commission does not otherwise collect information on naturalisations granted by Member States.

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/document/2a578063-d2e8-4e06-8f40-95b16fc92c20_en

² https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/recommendation-limit-access-individuals-connected-russian-belarusian-government-citizenship_en