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Answer given by Ms McGuinness
on behalf of the European Commission
(25.10.2023)

The EU has adopted significant restrictive measures (sanctions) against Russia since the start of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. These measures, agreed unanimously by the Council, have been adopted and entered into force gradually over the course of 2022. This also concerns several export and import restrictions laid down in Council Regulation (EU) No 833/2014¹. A very significant amount of goods – far more than half of pre-war imports and exports from/to Russia – is now subject to full trade bans, while other goods do not fall within the scope of sanctions. Furthermore, during the year 2022 there has been a substantial increase in prices for the imports of some goods, notably energy and raw materials, driven up by Russia's aggression. Therefore, general trade statistics mixing products that are subject to restrictions and those which are not, should not be used as an indicator of a possible breach of sanctions per se.

Member States are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of sanctions. In its role as guardian of the Treaties, the Commission monitors the proper application of EU law, including uniform implementation of EU sanctions by national competent authorities, and dedicates significant resources to support them. As part of this, the Commission is in regular contact with Member States, including Austria, and industry to explain the measures, discuss their impact, ensure compliance with sanctions by EU operators and prevent these from indirectly supporting the Russian war effort. The Commission stands ready to discuss cases of sanctions violations with national authorities competent for their investigation and also does so regularly with the Austrian authorities.

¹ Council Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine (OJ L 229, 31.7.2014, p. 1).