

**Priority question for written answer P-001146/2024/rev.1  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Russian oil tankers escaping EU sanctions in the Baltic Sea

Following Russia's well-known circumvention of sanctions through the sale of oil in the Middle East, it has now turned its attention to Europe. Over the past two months, more than 50 Russian oil tankers have been sailing in the Baltic Sea and refuelling right outside maritime borders, particularly to the east of the Swedish island of Gotland.

*Zircone*, a Cypriot-registered vessel owned by a Latvian company, has been refuelling these shadow tankers, thus fuelling Russia's war on Ukraine.

These Russian tankers are usually old and inadequately maintained, and lack international certifications and insurance. They usually operate with their AIS transmitters switched off, making them invisible to other vessels. This environmentally hazardous activity is a result of Russia's quest to control oil shipments and avoid sanctions.

The situation is a ticking environmental bomb. It is an accident waiting to happen in our waters, and EU companies are helping these tankers to operate.

1. What is the Commission doing to prevent an environmental disaster in EU waters?
2. What tools does the Commission have at its disposal to prevent EU-flagged vessels from refuelling Russian oil tankers?
3. Is the Commission planning to target Russian tankers and sanction evasion in the next EU sanctions package?

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