



23.2.2024

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

**Subject: Petition No 0920/2023 by A. Z. (Lithuanian) on allegedly incorrect application of EU sanctions against Russia by Lithuania banning entry to vehicles with Russian license plates**

### 1. Summary of petition

The petitioner claims that the Lithuanian customs service incorrectly implements EU sanctions against Russia regarding entry into the territory of the European Union in a private car with Russian license plates. The petitioner states that these sanctions apply to all Russian citizens, with the exception of EU citizens and their immediate relatives. The petitioner denounces, that he and his son, citizens of Lithuania living in Russia, do not have the opportunity to visit relatives in Lithuania because he has a car with Russian license plates. According to the petitioner, he only has two possibilities to enter the territory of Lithuania: by bus or on foot. In view of the petitioner, by incorrectly implementing sanctions against Russia Lithuania is violating his right to freedom of movement and right to visit relatives.

### 2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 13 December 2023. Information requested from Commission under Rule 227(6).

### 3. Commission reply, received on 23 February 2024

The petitioner claims that Lithuanian customs services erroneously interpret EU sanctions against Russia by refusing entry into the country to cars with Russian license plates owned by EU citizens. The petitioner thus claims that Lithuania is violating his EU rights, especially his right to freedom of movement.

The Commission's observations

Article 3i(1) of Council Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine lays down prohibition on purchase, import, or transfer, directly or indirectly, of goods which generate significant revenues for Russia into the Union if they originate in Russia or are exported from Russia.

Article 3i(3a) of Council Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 provides for an exemption to the prohibition, among others, for purchases in Russia necessary for the personal use of EU citizens and their immediate family members.

Furthermore, the Commission's Consolidated Frequently Asked Questions on the implementation of Council Regulation No 833/2014 and Council Regulation No 269/2014<sup>1</sup>, provides further guidance of the exemption laid down under Article 3i(3a) of Council Regulation specifically for vehicles registered in Russia. In an answer to the question 13 of "Chapter D. Trade and customs, point 5. Import, purchase and transfer of listed goods", the Commission explains that "national competent authorities may grant authorisations for the entry of cars owned by EU citizens or their immediate family members residing in Russia, provided they are driving the car into the Union for strict personal use and without intention to sell. An example is an EU citizen living in Russia visiting their home country by car for holidays."

### Conclusion

Lithuania should allow EU citizens to enter the country with a car registered in Russia, if they are travelling for personal reasons, such as visiting their family or visiting a doctor. Should there be no other reasons, refusal of entry in such cases would seem to be an incorrect implementation of Council Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 by Lithuania.

The Commission is in contact with Lithuanian authorities in order to address the issue.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://finance.ec.europa.eu/document/download/66e8fd7d-8057-4b9b-96c2-5e54bf573cd1\\_en?filename=faqs-sanctions-russia-consolidated\\_en.pdf](https://finance.ec.europa.eu/document/download/66e8fd7d-8057-4b9b-96c2-5e54bf573cd1_en?filename=faqs-sanctions-russia-consolidated_en.pdf)