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### **INFORMATION NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Council

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Subject: Developments in response to the Russia's war of aggression against  
Ukraine – Solidarity Lanes Initiative and Sanctions  
– Information from the Commission

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Delegations will find attached an information note prepared by the Commission on the above-mentioned subject for consideration under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) on 1 June 2023.

**Background note**

**AOB – Developments in response to the Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine –  
Solidarity Lanes Initiative and Sanctions**

*Information from the Commission*

TTE (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) Council – 1 June 2023

**1. Solidarity Lanes**

In response to Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes provide vital alternative transport routes to facilitate Ukraine’s agricultural exports and trade with the EU and the world. Solidarity Lanes support the supply of Ukrainian grain to the rest of the world, acting as a safeguard of food security. In addition, Solidarity Lanes provide the only open route for other (non-agricultural) Ukrainian exports and for all their imports. They have provided important economic benefits for EU Member States and have become a lifeline for Ukraine's economy, helping to sustain the war effort.

Over the past weeks, pressure on the Solidarity Lanes has increased and is likely to continue in view of the uncertain outlook for the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI). Member States sharing a border with Ukraine, as well as Bulgaria, have expressed concerns that some of Ukraine’s agricultural exports via the Solidarity Lanes have not reached their traditional markets in third or other EU countries, but have remained in the neighbouring Member States.

In this situation, it is key to facilitate the transit of Ukrainian grain exports via the Solidarity Lanes to the regions that need it the most, in the EU and beyond. To facilitate transit of Ukrainian agricultural goods to markets beyond the neighbouring Member States, a two-step approach is needed: reducing transport and logistics costs along Solidarity Lanes through (1) improved procedures, and (2) targeted investments.

Improving the efficiency of border crossings, abolish undue restrictions and reduce non-trade barriers remain critical and can have the quickest impact. For that, continued work is needed to enhance communication and coordination between the Commission, Member States and Ukraine and Moldova and to improve and streamline administrative procedures, for instance at the border crossing points and ports.

Several other short-term actions could help enhance capacity, such as better navigation traffic management along the Danube, or dedicated lanes for smoother clearance of Ukrainian grain for trucks using the Common Transit Convention or the TIR system. It is also important to keep promoting the use of the e-queue system at the borders and the setting up of coordinated controls (currently in place only between Ukraine and Moldova and between Moldova and Romania).

Investments will also be needed to increase the capacity of the Solidarity Lanes. The EUR 1 billion to support the Solidarity Lanes infrastructure announced by the Commission last November, jointly with the IFIs (International Financial Institutions), is a tangible sign of the strong commitment to invest in these transport routes. The Commission stands ready to work closely with Ukraine and frontline states to develop robust projects that can tackle the key bottlenecks. Under the latest CEF (Connecting Europe Facility) call 2022, several joint projects have been submitted aiming at increasing the capacity at the BCP (Border Crossing Point). The evaluation of projects is ongoing, and results will be known in second half of June.

## **2. Sanctions**

Sanctions in the transport sector are far reaching, covering aviation, maritime and land transport. Sanctions enforcement and prevention of circumvention is a key priority. The Commission is in continuous contact with stakeholders and with national authorities, for example through regular meetings with Member States' maritime directors and DGs for civil aviation and is available to provide clarification and guidance on how to apply and comply with sanctions. The Commission has also some dedicated communication channels for Member States and stakeholders on all matters related to sanctions. Member State feedback on obstacles to sanctions enforcement and risks of sanctions avoidance is highly valuable.

## *2.1 Aviation*

Stringent sanctions have effectively impacted Russian aviation, hampering connectivity and Russia's ability to maintain their Western built fleet and keep their operations safe. Russian individuals and companies have been trying to escape the flight ban by changing the ownership structure of the aircraft and hiding the ultimate beneficial owner. The Commission sees a number of areas where the impact of our sanctions can be strengthened in the aviation sector by better ensuring their proper implementation and enforcement. European aeronautical companies are adhering to the sanctions, and to increase their effectiveness we should strengthen outreach and encourage companies to move towards a pro-active policy of prevention. It has become evident that some third countries are being used as locations to circumvent sanctions both for exports and for basing aircraft. Highly visible anti-circumvention cases and enforcement actions by Member States that can be used to send a deterring signal throughout the sector would be highly welcome.

## *2.2 Maritime*

The Commission is monitoring the implementation of the price cap and the rest of the maritime sanctions by using the Union maritime information and exchange system and services hosted in EMSA (European Maritime Safety Agency). Until now there are no cases of violations which have led to an infringement.

Feedback from Member States indicates that sanctions implementation works well. However, the Commission has proposed to strengthen sanctions provisions in the maritime sector to tackle sanctions circumvention risks and safety and environmental hazards. This requires renewed efforts for coordination at EU level and support from Member States in monitoring activities of operators based in their territory using third country flags.

To tackle part of these issues, the Commission proposal for an 11th sanctions package includes measures to limit the entry into EU ports of vessels used in the shadow fleet or carrying out Ship-to-Ship (STS) transfers to undermine the oil price cap and other trade restrictions.

### 2.3 Road

In the road sector the Commission has so far not encountered any major issues regarding enforcement and implementation. However, to close remaining loopholes, the Commission proposal for an 11th sanctions package includes a ban for Russian and Belarussian trailers and semi-trailers to enter the EU.

#### **Additional support measures**

The European ATM Voluntary Solidarity Fund was established by the EUROCONTROL Member States to support Ukraine (and Moldova) with the funding of their air navigation services, following the loss of revenues resulting from the war. Following its creation, an amount of **40.8M EUR** has been committed by States and made available to support the staff/training/maintenance costs, as well as costs to ensure operational readiness when air traffic recovers. Ukraine has requested an extension of the Fund for 2024 – this will be discussed at EURCONTROL’s Provisional Council on 15 June.

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