

Prohibition to access EU ports

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – AS OF 11 April 2022

Q1. How is the port access ban monitored?

The monitoring will be done via the Union Maritime Information and Exchange System¹ (which also links to EQUASIS², a public database providing, among other, safety related information on ships and companies). This system supports EU Member States with operational maritime surveillance capabilities in particular by providing the situational maritime awareness picture, tracking any ship movements in near real time. All EU Member States have access to this system and share information via this system.

Q2. What is meant by the term “relevant international conventions”?

The term refers to SOLAS, MARPOL or Load Lines conventions and the ships falling under their scope (so called convention ships). Effective it means ships of 500 GT and beyond (from smaller to the biggest) sailing commercially in international shipping.

Q3. How can EU port authorities and operators know if a Russian vessel has changed flag?

Every ship worldwide has to be assigned a unique identification number which is provided on behalf of the International Maritime Organization (the ‘IMO number’). The IMO number of the vessel is assigned from the time it is built and remains the same throughout her servicing.

As a result, any attempt to circumvent the sanctions by change of flag could be easily identified by the port authorities through a check of the IMO number of the vessel together with the records onboard the ship. In this regard, under SOLAS (International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea), the ships are also obliged to keep onboard the synopsis report which tracks the history of change of flags. Also port authorities have access to the monitoring system mentioned above.

Q4. How to address a ship transporting goods the transport of which may be authorised?

The derogations provided for in Article 3ea(5) are subject to prior authorisation from the relevant national competent authority, which can only be granted under strict and specific conditions. If a ship falling under the scope of the prohibition and carrying goods the transport of which may justify an authorisation to access a port requests access to a port in the Union, it is the responsibility of the port authorities to make a case-by-case assessment and supervise that the unloading concerns only goods falling under the derogations and that their unloading is not otherwise prohibited by the Regulation.

¹ Established under Directive 2002/59/EC

² Electronic Quality Shipping Information System