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II

(Non-legislative acts)

REGULATIONS

COUNCIL REGULATION (EU) 2023/888**of 28 April 2023****concerning restrictive measures in view of actions destabilising the Republic of Moldova**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 215 thereof,

Having regard to Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/891 of 28 April 2023 concerning restrictive measures in view of actions destabilising the Republic of Moldova ⁽¹⁾,

Having regard to the joint proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) On 28 April 2023, the Council adopted Decision (CFSP) 2023/891, which establishes a framework for targeted restrictive measures in view of actions destabilising the Republic of Moldova. The political context and the policy reasons for establishing the restrictive measures are set out in the recitals to that Decision. That Decision provides for a travel ban, the freezing of funds and economic resources of, and the prohibition to make funds and economic resources available to, natural and legal persons, entities or bodies responsible for, supporting or implementing actions or policies which undermine or threaten the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Moldova in accordance with international law, and democracy, the rule of law, stability or security in the Republic of Moldova. Natural and legal persons, entities and bodies subject to the restrictive measures are listed in the Annex to Decision (CFSP) 2023/891.
- (2) These measures fall within the scope of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and, therefore, notably with a view to ensuring their uniform application by economic operators in all Member States, regulatory action at the level of the Union is necessary in order to implement them.
- (3) This Regulation respects the fundamental rights and observes the principles recognised by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular the right to an effective remedy and a fair hearing, the right to defence, and the right to the protection of personal data. This Regulation should be applied in accordance with those rights.
- (4) The procedure for amending the list set out in Annex I to this Regulation should include providing designated natural or legal persons, entities or bodies with the grounds for listing, so as to give them an opportunity to submit observations.

⁽¹⁾ See page 15 of this Official Journal.

- (5) For the implementation of this Regulation, and in order to ensure maximum legal certainty within the Union, the names and other relevant data concerning natural and legal persons, entities and bodies whose funds and economic resources are to be frozen in accordance with this Regulation should be made public. Any processing of personal data should comply with Regulations (EU) 2016/679 ⁽²⁾ and (EU) 2018/1725 ⁽³⁾ of the European Parliament and of the Council.
- (6) Member States and the Commission should inform each other of the measures taken pursuant to this Regulation and of other relevant information at their disposal in connection with this Regulation.
- (7) Member States should lay down rules on penalties applicable to infringements of the provisions of this Regulation and make sure that they are implemented. Those penalties should be effective, proportionate and dissuasive,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

For the purposes of this Regulation, the following definitions apply:

- (a) 'claim' means any claim, whether asserted by legal proceedings or not, made before or after the date of entry into force of this Regulation, under or in connection with a contract or transaction, and in particular:
 - (i) a claim for performance of any obligation arising under or in connection with a contract or transaction;
 - (ii) a claim for extension or payment of a bond, financial guarantee or indemnity of whatever form;
 - (iii) a claim for compensation in respect of a contract or transaction;
 - (iv) a counterclaim;
 - (v) a claim for the recognition or enforcement, including by the procedure of exequatur, of a judgment, an arbitration award or an equivalent decision, wherever made or given;
- (b) 'contract or transaction' means any transaction of whatever form and whatever the applicable law, whether comprising one or more contracts or similar obligations made between the same or different parties; for this purpose 'contract' includes a bond, guarantee or indemnity, particularly a financial guarantee or financial indemnity, and credit, whether legally independent or not, as well as any related provision arising under, or in connection with, the transaction;
- (c) 'competent authorities' means the competent authorities of the Member States as identified on the websites listed in Annex II;
- (d) 'economic resources' means assets of every kind, whether tangible or intangible, movable or immovable, which are not funds, but may be used to obtain funds, goods or services;
- (e) 'freezing of economic resources' means preventing the use of economic resources to obtain funds, goods or services in any way, including, but not limited to, by selling, hiring or mortgaging them;
- (f) 'freezing of funds' means preventing any move, transfer, alteration, use of, access to, or dealing with funds in any way that would result in any change in their volume, amount, location, ownership, possession, character, destination or other change that would enable the funds to be used, including portfolio management;

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1).

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39).

- (g) 'funds' means financial assets and benefit of every kind, including, but not limited to:
- (i) cash, cheques, claims on money, drafts, money orders and other payment instruments;
 - (ii) deposits with financial institutions or other entities, balances on accounts, debts and debt obligations;
 - (iii) publicly and privately-traded securities and debt instruments, including stocks and shares, certificates representing securities, bonds, notes, warrants, debentures and derivatives contracts;
 - (iv) interest, dividends or other income on or value accruing from or generated by assets;
 - (v) credit, right of set-off, guarantees, performance bonds or other financial commitments;
 - (vi) letters of credit, bills of lading, bills of sale;
 - (vii) documents showing evidence of an interest in funds or financial resources;
- (h) 'territory of the Union' means the territories of the Member States to which the Treaty is applicable, under the conditions laid down in the Treaty, including their airspace.

Article 2

1. All funds and economic resources belonging to, owned, held or controlled by any natural or legal person, entity or body as listed in Annex I shall be frozen.
2. No funds or economic resources shall be made available, directly or indirectly, to or for the benefit of natural or legal persons, entities or bodies listed in Annex I.
3. Annex I shall include:
 - (a) natural or legal persons, entities or bodies responsible for, supporting or implementing actions or policies which undermine or threaten the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Moldova, or democracy, the rule of law, stability or security in the Republic of Moldova, through any of the following actions:
 - (i) obstructing or undermining the democratic political process, including by obstructing or seriously undermining the holding of elections or attempting to destabilise or overthrow the constitutional order;
 - (ii) planning, directing, engaging in, directly or indirectly, supporting or otherwise facilitating violent demonstrations or other acts of violence; or
 - (iii) serious financial misconduct concerning public funds and the unauthorised export of capital;
 - (b) natural or legal persons, entities or bodies, who are associated with the natural or legal persons, entities or bodies designated under point (a).

Article 3

1. By way of derogation from Article 2, the competent authorities may authorise the release of certain frozen funds or economic resources, or the making available of certain funds or economic resources, under such conditions as they deem appropriate, after having determined that the funds or economic resources concerned are:
 - (a) necessary to satisfy the basic needs of natural or legal persons, entities or bodies listed in Annex I, and dependent family members of such natural persons, including payments for food, rent or mortgage, medicines and medical treatment, taxes, insurance premiums, and public utility charges;
 - (b) intended exclusively for the payment of reasonable professional fees or the reimbursement of incurred expenses associated with the provision of legal services;

- (c) intended exclusively for the payment of fees or service charges for the routine holding or maintenance of frozen funds or economic resources;
 - (d) necessary for extraordinary expenses, provided that the relevant competent authority has notified the competent authorities of the other Member States and the Commission of the grounds on which it considers that a specific authorisation should be granted, at least two weeks prior to the authorisation; or
 - (e) to be paid into or from an account of a diplomatic or consular mission or an international organisation enjoying immunities in accordance with international law, insofar as such payments are intended to be used for official purposes of the diplomatic or consular mission or international organisation.
2. The Member State concerned shall inform the other Member States and the Commission of any authorisation granted under paragraph 1 within two weeks of the authorisation.

Article 4

1. Article 2(2) shall not apply to funds or economic resources made available by organisations and agencies which are pillar-assessed by the Union and with which the Union has signed a financial framework partnership agreement on the basis of which the organisations and agencies act as humanitarian partners of the Union, provided that the provision of such funds or economic resources is necessary for exclusively humanitarian purposes in the Republic of Moldova.
2. In cases not covered by paragraph 1 of this Article, and by way of derogation from Article 2, the competent authorities may grant specific or general authorisations, under such general or specific conditions as they deem appropriate, to release certain frozen funds or economic resources or to make available certain funds or economic resources, provided that the provision of such funds or economic resources is necessary for exclusively humanitarian purposes in the Republic of Moldova.
3. In the absence of a negative decision, a request for information or a notification for additional time from the competent authority within 5 working days of the date of receipt of a request for authorisation under paragraph 2, the authorisation shall be considered granted.
4. The Member State concerned shall inform the other Member States and the Commission of any authorisation granted under paragraphs 2 and 3 within 2 weeks of the authorisation.

Article 5

1. By way of derogation from Article 2(1), the competent authorities may authorise the release of certain frozen funds or economic resources, if the following conditions are met:
- (a) the funds or economic resources are the subject of an arbitral decision rendered prior to the date on which the natural or legal person, entity or body referred to in Article 2 was listed in Annex I, or of a judicial or administrative decision rendered in the Union, or a judicial decision enforceable in the Member State concerned, prior to or after that date;
 - (b) the funds or economic resources will be used exclusively to satisfy claims secured by such a decision or recognised as valid in such a decision, within the limits set by applicable laws and regulations governing the rights of persons having such claims;
 - (c) the decision is not for the benefit of a natural or legal person, entity or body listed in Annex I; and
 - (d) recognition of the decision is not contrary to public policy in the Member State concerned.
2. The Member State concerned shall inform the other Member States and the Commission of any authorisation granted under paragraph 1 within two weeks of the authorisation.

Article 6

1. By way of derogation from Article 2(1) and provided that a payment by a natural or legal person, entity or body listed in Annex I is due under a contract or agreement that was concluded by, or an obligation that arose for, the natural or legal person, entity or body concerned, before the date on which that natural or legal person, entity or body was included in Annex I, the competent authorities may authorise, under such conditions as they deem appropriate, the release of certain frozen funds or economic resources, provided that the competent authority concerned has determined that:

- (a) the funds or economic resources will be used for a payment by a natural or legal person, entity or body listed in Annex I; and
- (b) the payment is not in breach of Article 2(2).

2. The Member State concerned shall inform the other Member States and the Commission of any authorisation granted under paragraph 1 within two weeks of the authorisation.

Article 7

1. Article 2(2) shall not prevent the crediting of frozen accounts by financial or credit institutions that receive funds transferred by third parties onto the account of a listed natural or legal person, entity or body, provided that any additions to such accounts will also be frozen. The financial or credit institution shall inform the relevant competent authority about any such transaction without delay.

2. Article 2(2) shall not apply to the addition to frozen accounts of:

- (a) interest or other earnings on those accounts;
- (b) payments due under contracts, agreements or obligations that were concluded or arose before the date on which the natural or legal person, entity or body referred to in Article 2 was included in Annex I; or
- (c) payments due under judicial, administrative or arbitral decisions rendered in a Member State or enforceable in the Member State concerned,

provided that any such interest, other earnings and payments are frozen in accordance with Article 2(1).

Article 8

1. Without prejudice to the applicable rules concerning reporting, confidentiality and professional secrecy, natural and legal persons, entities and bodies shall:

- (a) supply immediately any information which would facilitate compliance with this Regulation, such as information on accounts and amounts frozen in accordance with Article 2(1), to the competent authority of the Member State where they are resident or located, and transmit such information, directly or through the Member State, to the Commission; and
- (b) cooperate with the competent authority in any verification of the information referred to in point (a).

2. Any additional information received directly by the Commission shall be made available to the Member States.

3. Any information provided or received in accordance with this Article shall be used only for the purposes for which it was provided or received.

Article 9

It shall be prohibited to participate, knowingly and intentionally, in activities the object or effect of which is to circumvent the measures referred to in Article 2.

Article 10

1. The freezing of funds and economic resources, or the refusal to make funds or economic resources available, carried out in good faith on the basis that such action is in accordance with this Regulation, shall not give rise to liability of any kind on the part of the natural or legal person or entity or body implementing it, or its directors or employees, unless it is proved that the funds and economic resources were frozen or withheld as a result of negligence.
2. Actions by natural or legal persons, entities or bodies shall not give rise to any liability of any kind on their part if they did not know, and had no reasonable cause to suspect, that their actions would infringe the measures set out in this Regulation.

Article 11

1. No claims in connection with any contract or transaction the performance of which has been affected, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, by the measures imposed under this Regulation, including claims for indemnity or any other claim of this type, such as a claim for compensation or a claim under a guarantee, notably a claim for extension or payment of a bond, guarantee or indemnity, particularly a financial guarantee or financial indemnity, of whatever form, shall be satisfied, if they are made by:
 - (a) natural or legal persons, entities or bodies listed in Annex I;
 - (b) any natural or legal person, entity or body acting through or on behalf of one of the natural or legal persons, entities or bodies referred to in point (a).
2. In any proceedings for the enforcement of a claim, the onus of proving that satisfying the claim is not prohibited by paragraph 1 shall be on the natural or legal person, entity or body seeking the enforcement of that claim.
3. This Article is without prejudice to the right of the natural or legal persons, entities and bodies referred to in paragraph 1 to judicial review of the legality of the non-performance of contractual obligations in accordance with this Regulation.

Article 12

1. The Commission and Member States shall inform each other of the measures taken under this Regulation and share any other relevant information at their disposal in connection with this Regulation, in particular information in respect of:
 - (a) funds frozen under Article 2 and authorisations granted under Articles 3, 5 and 6;
 - (b) violation and enforcement problems and judgments handed down by national courts.
2. The Member States shall immediately inform each other and the Commission of any other relevant information at their disposal which might affect the effective implementation of this Regulation.

Article 13

1. Where the Council decides to subject a natural or legal person, entity or body to the measures referred to in Article 2, it shall amend Annex I accordingly.
2. The Council shall communicate the decision referred to in paragraph 1, including the grounds for listing, to the natural or legal person, entity or body concerned, either directly, if the address is known, or through the publication of a notice, providing that natural or legal person, entity or body with an opportunity to present observations.
3. Where observations are submitted, or where substantial new evidence is presented, the Council shall review the decisions referred to in paragraph 1 and inform the natural or legal person, entity or body concerned accordingly.

4. The list in Annex I shall be reviewed at regular intervals and at least every 12 months.
5. The Commission shall be empowered to amend Annex II on the basis of information supplied by Member States.

Article 14

1. Annex I shall include the grounds for the listing of natural or legal persons, entities or bodies concerned.
2. Annex I shall contain, where available, the information necessary to identify the natural or legal persons, entities or bodies concerned. With regard to natural persons, such information may include: names and aliases; date and place of birth; nationality; passport and identity card numbers; gender; address, if known; and function or profession. With regard to legal persons, entities or bodies, such information may include: names; place and date of registration; registration number; and place of business.

Article 15

1. Member States shall lay down the rules on penalties applicable to infringements of the provisions of this Regulation and shall take all measures necessary to ensure that they are implemented. The penalties provided for must be effective, proportionate and dissuasive.
2. Member States shall notify the Commission of the rules referred to in paragraph 1 without delay after the entry into force of this Regulation and shall notify it of any subsequent amendment.

Article 16

1. The Council, the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (the 'High Representative') shall process personal data in order to carry out their tasks under this Regulation. These tasks include:
 - (a) as regards the Council, preparing and making amendments to Annex I;
 - (b) as regards the High Representative, preparing amendments to Annex I;
 - (c) as regards the Commission:
 - (i) adding the contents of Annex I to the electronic, consolidated list of persons, groups and entities subject to Union financial sanctions and to the interactive sanctions map, both publicly available;
 - (ii) processing information on the impact of the measures provided for in this Regulation such as the value of frozen funds and information on authorisations granted by the competent authorities.
2. The Council, the Commission and the High Representative may process, where applicable, relevant data relating to criminal offences committed by listed natural persons, to criminal convictions of such persons or to security measures concerning such persons, only to the extent that such processing is necessary for the preparation of Annex I.
3. For the purposes of this Regulation, the Council, the Commission and the High Representative are designated as 'controller' within the meaning of point (8) of Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, in order to ensure that the natural persons concerned can exercise their rights under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

Article 17

1. Member States shall designate the competent authorities referred to in this Regulation and identify them on the websites listed in Annex II. Member States shall notify the Commission of any changes in the addresses of their websites listed in Annex II.

2. Member States shall notify the Commission of their competent authorities, including the contact details of those competent authorities, without delay after the entry into force of this Regulation, and shall notify it of any subsequent amendment.

3. Where this Regulation sets out a requirement to notify, inform or otherwise communicate with the Commission, the address and other contact details to be used for such communication shall be those indicated in Annex II.

Article 18

Any information provided to or received by the Commission in accordance with this Regulation shall be used by the Commission only for the purposes for which it was provided or received.

Article 19

This Regulation shall apply:

- (a) within the territory of the Union, including its airspace;
- (b) on board any aircraft or vessel under the jurisdiction of a Member State;
- (c) to any natural person inside or outside the territory of the Union who is a national of a Member State;
- (d) to any legal person, entity or body, inside or outside the territory of the Union, which is incorporated or constituted under the law of a Member State;
- (e) to any legal person, entity or body in respect of any business done in whole or in part within the Union.

Article 20

This Regulation shall enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels, 28 April 2023.

For the Council
The President
J. ROSWALL

ANNEX I

List of natural and legal persons, entities and bodies referred to in Article 2

[...]

ANNEX II

Websites for information on the competent authorities and address for notifications to the Commission

BELGIUM

https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/policy/policy_areas/peace_and_security/sanctions

BULGARIA

<https://www.mfa.bg/en/EU-sanctions>

CZECHIA

www.financnianalytickyurad.cz/mezinarodni-sankce.html

DENMARK

<http://um.dk/da/Udenrigspolitik/folkeretten/sanktioner/>

GERMANY

<https://www.bmwi.de/Redaktion/DE/Artikel/Aussenwirtschaft/embargos-aussenwirtschaftsrecht.html>

ESTONIA

<https://vm.ee/sanktsioonid-ekspordi-ja-relvastuskontroll/rahvusvahelised-sanktsioonid>

IRELAND

<https://www.dfa.ie/our-role/policies/ireland-in-the-eu/eu-restrictive-measures/>

GREECE

<http://www.mfa.gr/en/foreign-policy/global-issues/international-sanctions.html>

SPAIN

<https://www.exteriores.gob.es/es/PoliticaExterior/Paginas/SancionesInternacionales.aspx>

FRANCE

<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/autorites-sanctions/>

CROATIA

<https://mvep.gov.hr/vanjska-politika/medjunarodne-mjere-ogranicavanja/22955>

ITALY

https://www.esteri.it/it/politica-estera-e-cooperazione-allo-sviluppo/politica_europea/misure_deroghe/

CYPRUS

<https://mfa.gov.cy/themes/>

LATVIA

<http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/security/4539>

LITHUANIA

<http://www.urm.lt/sanctions>

LUXEMBOURG

<https://maee.gouvernement.lu/fr/directions-du-ministere/affaires-europeennes/organisations-economiques-int/mesures-restrictives.html>

HUNGARY

<https://kormany.hu/kulgaszdasagi-es-kulugyminisztium/ensz-eu-szankcios-tajekoztato>

MALTA

<https://foreignandeu.gov.mt/en/Government/SMB/Pages/SMB-Home.aspx>

NETHERLANDS

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/internationale-sancties>

AUSTRIA

<https://www.bmeia.gv.at/themen/aussenpolitik/europa/eu-sanktionen-nationale-behoerden/>

POLAND

<https://www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja/sankcje-miedzynarodowe>

<https://www.gov.pl/web/diplomacy/international-sanctions>

PORTUGAL

<https://portaldiplomatico.mne.gov.pt/politica-externa/medidas-restritivas>

ROMANIA

<http://www.mae.ro/node/1548>

SLOVENIA

http://www.mzz.gov.si/si/omejevalni_ukrepi

SLOVAKIA

https://www.mzv.sk/europske_zalezitosti/europske_politiky-sankcie_eu

FINLAND

<https://um.fi/pakotteet>

SWEDEN

<https://www.regeringen.se/sanktioner>

Address for notifications to the European Commission:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union (DG FISMA)
Rue Joseph II 54
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

Email: relex-sanctions@ec.europa.eu

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) 2023/889**of 25 April 2023****conferring protection under Article 99 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the name 'De Voerendaalse Bergen' (PDO)**

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 922/72, (EEC) No 234/79, (EC) No 1037/2001 and (EC) No 1234/2007 ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 99 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) In accordance with Article 97(2) and (3) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013, the Commission has examined the application to register the name 'De Voerendaalse Bergen' forwarded by the Netherlands and has published it in the *Official Journal of the European Union* ⁽²⁾.
- (2) No statement of objection has been received by the Commission under Article 98 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013.
- (3) In accordance with Article 99 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013, the name 'De Voerendaalse Bergen' should be protected and entered in the register referred to in Article 104 of that Regulation.
- (4) The measures provided for in this Regulation are in accordance with the opinion of the Committee for the Common Organisation of the Agricultural Markets,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

The name 'De Voerendaalse Bergen' (PDO) is hereby protected.

*Article 2*This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels, 25 April 2023.

*For the Commission,
On behalf of the President,
Janusz WOJCIECHOWSKI
Member of the Commission*

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 671.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 444, 23.11.2022, p. 24.

COUNCIL IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) 2023/890
of 28 April 2023
implementing Regulation (EU) No 36/2012 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation
in Syria

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EU) No 36/2012 of 18 January 2012 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria and repealing Regulation (EU) No 442/2011 ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 32 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

- (1) On 18 January 2012, the Council adopted Regulation (EU) No 36/2012.
- (2) Following the judgment of the General Court in Case T-426/21, one entry should be deleted from the list of natural and legal persons, entities or bodies set out in Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 36/2012.
- (3) Regulation (EU) No 36/2012 should therefore be amended accordingly,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 36/2012 is amended in accordance with the Annex to this Regulation.

Article 2

This Regulation shall enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels, 28 April 2023.

For the Council
The President
J. ROSWALL

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 16, 19.1.2012, p. 1.

ANNEX

The following entry is deleted from the list set out in Section A (Persons) of Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 36/2012:

‘36. Nizar AL-ASSAD’.

DECISIONS

COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2023/891

of 28 April 2023

concerning restrictive measures in view of actions destabilising the Republic of Moldova

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Article 29 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) On 23 June 2022, the European Council granted the status of candidate country to the Republic of Moldova.
- (2) In its conclusions of 23 March 2023, the European Council pledged to continue to provide all relevant support to the Republic of Moldova, including to strengthen the country's resilience, security, stability, economy and energy supply in the face of destabilising activities by external actors.
- (3) The current leadership of the Republic of Moldova has made important progress in strengthening democracy and the rule of law, as well as fighting corruption, and has deployed considerable efforts in implementing the steps specified in the European Commission's Opinion on its application for EU membership.
- (4) While continuing on its ambitious reform agenda, the Moldovan government has also been tackling multiple crises and has been increasingly faced with direct threats to its stability coming from both internal groups with vested interests and from Russia, which often collude to derail the country from its reform path.
- (5) The Union remains ready to use all policy instruments at its disposal in order to contribute to an effective way out of the current crisis and to react to destabilising actions posing a serious threat to democracy and the rule of law in the Republic of Moldova, also by strengthening the implementation of technical assistance and capacity-building programmes to enhance the Republic of Moldova's ability to autonomously prevent and fight such actions by way of judiciary and police cooperation with Member States.
- (6) The unprecedentedly high intensity of such destabilising actions calls for immediate reaction, also given the importance of a stable Republic of Moldova, an EU candidate country bordering the Union and Ukraine.
- (7) A threat to democracy and the rule of law, as well as to the stability and security of the Republic of Moldova, is posed by persons who obstruct or undermine the holding of elections or attempt to overthrow the constitutional order, including through acts of violence, in the Republic of Moldova. The efforts to destabilise the Republic of Moldova increased in particular since the beginning of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.
- (8) A threat to stability, to democracy and to the rule of law is also posed by persons who engage in serious financial misconduct concerning public funds and the unauthorised export of capital, insofar as they could take control over or seriously influence the activities of state authorities. Such acts may also threaten the constitutional order.
- (9) Destabilisation efforts against the Republic of Moldova threaten the stability and security of the external borders of the Union.
- (10) The Republic of Moldova has requested Union support against actions which threaten to destabilise the country by adopting restrictive measures.

- (11) In the current circumstances, travel restrictions and asset freeze measures should be imposed against persons responsible for, supporting or implementing actions or policies which undermine or threaten the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Moldova, and democracy, the rule of law, stability or security in the Republic of Moldova, and persons, entities or bodies associated with them.
- (12) Further action by the Union is needed in order to implement certain measures,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

1. Member States shall take the necessary measures to prevent the entry into, or transit through, their territories of:
 - (a) natural persons responsible for, supporting or implementing actions or policies which undermine or threaten the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Moldova, or democracy, the rule of law, stability or security in the Republic of Moldova through any of the following actions:
 - (i) obstructing or undermining the democratic political process, including by obstructing or seriously undermining the holding of elections or attempting to destabilise or overthrow the constitutional order;
 - (ii) planning, directing, engaging in, directly or indirectly, supporting or otherwise facilitating violent demonstrations or other acts of violence; or
 - (iii) serious financial misconduct concerning public funds and the unauthorised export of capital;
 - (b) natural persons associated with persons designated under point (a);
as listed in the Annex.
2. Paragraph 1 shall not oblige a Member State to refuse its own nationals entry into its territory.
3. Paragraph 1 shall be without prejudice to the cases where a Member State is bound by an obligation of international law, namely:
 - (a) as a host country of an international intergovernmental organisation;
 - (b) as a host country to an international conference convened by, or under the auspices of, the United Nations;
 - (c) under a multilateral agreement conferring privileges and immunities; or
 - (d) under the 1929 Treaty of Conciliation (Lateran pact) concluded by the Holy See (State of the Vatican City) and Italy.
4. Paragraph 3 shall also apply in cases where a Member State is host country of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).
5. The Council shall be duly informed in all cases where a Member State grants an exemption pursuant to paragraphs 3 or 4.
6. Member States may grant exemptions from the measures imposed under paragraph 1 where travel is justified on the grounds of urgent humanitarian need or on grounds of attending intergovernmental meetings or meetings promoted or hosted by the Union, or hosted by a Member State holding the Chairmanship in office of the OSCE, where a political dialogue is conducted that directly promotes the policy objectives of the restrictive measures, including support for the rule of law, democracy, stability and security of the Republic of Moldova.
7. Member States may also grant exemptions from the measures imposed under paragraph 1 where entry or transit is necessary for the fulfilment of a judicial process.

8. A Member State wishing to grant exemptions referred to in paragraph 6 or 7 shall notify the Council in writing. The exemption shall be deemed to be granted unless one or more Member States raise an objection in writing within two working days of receiving notification of the proposed exemption. Should one or more Member States raise an objection, the Council, acting by qualified majority, may decide to grant the proposed exemption.

9. Where, pursuant to paragraphs 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8, a Member State authorises the entry into, or transit through its territory of persons listed in the Annex, the authorisation shall be limited to the purpose for which it is given to the person concerned thereby.

Article 2

1. All funds and economic resources belonging to, owned, held or controlled by:

(a) natural persons, entities or bodies responsible for, supporting or implementing actions or policies which undermine or threaten the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Moldova, or democracy, the rule of law, stability or security in the Republic of Moldova through any of the following actions:

(i) obstructing or undermining the democratic political process, including by obstructing or seriously undermining the holding of elections or attempting to destabilise or overthrow the constitutional order;

(ii) planning, directing, engaging in, directly or indirectly, supporting or otherwise facilitating violent demonstrations or other acts of violence; or

(iii) serious financial misconduct concerning public funds and the unauthorised export of capital;

(b) natural or legal persons, entities or bodies associated with persons designated under point (a);

as listed in the Annex, shall be frozen.

2. No funds or economic resources shall be made available, directly or indirectly, to or for the benefit of natural or legal persons, entities or bodies listed in the Annex.

3. By way of derogation from paragraphs 1 and 2, the competent authorities of the Member States may authorise the release of certain frozen funds or economic resources, or the making available of certain funds or economic resources, under such conditions as they deem appropriate, after having determined that the funds or economic resources concerned are:

(a) necessary to satisfy the basic needs of the persons listed in the Annex and their dependent family members, including payments for foodstuffs, rent or mortgage, medicines and medical treatment, taxes, insurance premiums, and public utility charges;

(b) intended exclusively for the payment of reasonable professional fees and the reimbursement of incurred expenses associated with the provision of legal services;

(c) intended exclusively for the payment of fees or service charges for the routine holding or maintenance of frozen funds or economic resources;

(d) necessary for extraordinary expenses, provided that the competent authority has notified the competent authorities of the other Member States and the Commission of the grounds on which it considers that a specific authorisation should be granted, at least two weeks prior to the authorisation; or

(e) to be paid into or from an account of a diplomatic mission or consular post or an international organisation enjoying immunities in accordance with international law, insofar as such payments are intended to be used for official purposes of the diplomatic mission or consular post or international organisation.

The Member State concerned shall inform the other Member States and the Commission of any authorisation granted under this paragraph.

4. By way of derogation from paragraph 1, the competent authorities of the Member States may authorise the release of certain frozen funds or economic resources, provided that the following conditions are met:

- (a) the funds or economic resources are the subject of an arbitral decision rendered prior to the date on which the person, entity or body referred to in paragraph 1 was listed in the Annex, or of a judicial or administrative decision rendered in the Union, or of a judicial decision enforceable in the Member State concerned, prior to or after that date;
- (b) the funds or economic resources will be used exclusively to satisfy claims secured by such a decision or recognised as valid in such a decision, within the limits set by applicable laws and regulations governing the rights of persons having such claims;
- (c) the decision is not for the benefit of a natural or legal person, entity or body listed in the Annex; and
- (d) recognition of the decision is not contrary to public policy in the Member State concerned.

The Member State concerned shall inform the other Member States and the Commission of any authorisations granted under this paragraph within two weeks of the authorisation.

5. Paragraph 1 shall not prevent a listed natural or legal person, entity or body from making a payment due under a contract entered into prior to the date on which such natural or legal person, entity or body was listed in the Annex, provided that the Member State concerned has determined that the payment is not, directly or indirectly, received by a natural or legal person, entity or body referred to in paragraph 1.

6. Paragraph 2 shall not apply to the addition to frozen accounts of:

- (a) interest or other earnings on those accounts;
- (b) payments due under contracts, agreements or obligations that were concluded or arose prior to the date on which those accounts became subject to the measures provided for in paragraphs 1 and 2; or
- (c) payments due under judicial, administrative or arbitral decisions rendered in the Union or enforceable in the Member State concerned,

provided that any such interest, other earnings and payments remain subject to the measures provided for in paragraph 1.

7. The prohibition set out in paragraph 2 shall not apply to organisations and agencies which are pillar-assessed by the Union and with which the Union has signed a financial framework partnership agreement on the basis of which the organisations and agencies act as humanitarian partners of the Union, provided that the provision of the funds or economic resources referred to in paragraph 2 is necessary for exclusively humanitarian purposes in the Republic of Moldova.

8. In cases not covered by paragraph 7, and by way of derogation from paragraphs 1 and 2, the competent authorities of a Member State may grant specific or general authorisations, under such general or specific conditions as they deem appropriate, to release certain frozen funds or economic resources or to make available certain funds or economic resources, provided that the provision of such funds or economic resources is necessary for exclusively humanitarian purposes in the Republic of Moldova.

Article 3

1. The Council, acting by unanimity upon a proposal by a Member State or by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (the 'High Representative'), shall decide to establish and amend the list in the Annex.

2. The Council shall communicate the decision referred to in paragraph 1, including the grounds for the listing, to the natural or legal person, entity or body concerned, either directly, if the address is known, or through the publication of a notice, providing such person, entity or body with an opportunity to present observations.

3. Where observations are submitted, or where substantial new evidence is presented, the Council shall review the decision referred to in paragraph 1 and inform the person, entity or body concerned accordingly.

Article 4

1. The Annex shall include the grounds for listing the natural and legal persons, entities and bodies referred to in Articles 1 and 2.
2. The Annex shall contain, where available, the information necessary to identify the natural or legal persons, entities or bodies concerned. With regard to natural persons, such information may include: names and aliases; date and place of birth; nationality; passport and identity card numbers; gender; address, if known; and function or profession. With regard to legal persons, entities or bodies, such information may include: names; place and date of registration; registration number; and place of business.

Article 5

1. The Council and the High Representative may process personal data in order to carry out their tasks under this Decision, in particular:
 - (a) as regards the Council, for preparing and making amendments to the Annex;
 - (b) as regards the High Representative, for preparing amendments to the Annex.
2. The Council and the High Representative may process, where applicable, relevant data relating to criminal offences committed by listed natural persons, to criminal convictions or to security measures concerning such persons, only to the extent that such processing is necessary for the preparation of the Annex.
3. For the purposes of this Decision, the Council and the High Representative are designated as 'controllers' within the meaning of point (8) of Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁾, in order to ensure that the natural persons concerned can exercise their rights under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

Article 6

No claims in connection with any contract or transaction the performance of which has been affected, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, by the measures imposed under this Decision, including claims for indemnity or any other claim of this type, such as a claim for compensation or a claim under a guarantee, in particular a claim for extension or payment of a bond, guarantee or indemnity, in particular a financial guarantee or financial indemnity, of whatever form, shall be satisfied, if they are made by:

- (a) designated natural or legal persons, entities or bodies listed in the Annex;
- (b) any natural or legal person, entity or body acting through or on behalf of one of the persons, entities or bodies referred to in point (a).

Article 7

In order to maximise the impact of the measures set out in this Decision, the Union shall encourage third States to adopt restrictive measures similar to those provided for in this Decision.

Article 8

This Decision shall apply until 29 April 2024.

This Decision shall be kept under constant review. It shall be renewed, or amended as appropriate, if the Council deems that its objectives have not been met.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39).

In reviewing restrictive measures taken pursuant to Articles 1(1)(a)(iii) and 2(1)(a)(iii), the Council shall take into account as appropriate whether the persons in question are subject to judicial proceedings or not in respect of the conduct for which they were listed.

Article 9

This Decision shall enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels, 28 April 2023.

For the Council
The President
J. ROSWALL

*ANNEX***List of natural and legal persons, entities and bodies referred to in Articles 1 and 2**

[...]

COUNCIL IMPLEMENTING DECISION (CFSP) 2023/892**of 28 April 2023****implementing Decision 2013/255/CFSP concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Article 31(2) thereof,

Having regard to Council Decision 2013/255/CFSP of 31 May 2013 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 30(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

- (1) On 31 May 2013, the Council adopted Decision 2013/255/CFSP.
- (2) Following the judgment of the General Court in Case T-426/21, one entry should be deleted from the list of natural and legal persons, entities or bodies set out in Annex I to Decision 2013/255/CFSP.
- (3) Decision 2013/255/CFSP should therefore be amended accordingly,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Annex I to Decision 2013/255/CFSP is amended in accordance with the Annex to this Decision.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels, 28 April 2023.

For the Council
The President
J. ROSWALL

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 147, 1.6.2013, p. 14.

ANNEX

The following entry is deleted from the list set out in Section A ('Persons') of Annex I to Decision 2013/255/CFSP:

'36. Nizar AL-ASSAD'.

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