

Concerning compliance with sanctions imposed on Belarus

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The Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the coordinating authority in the field of sanctions would like to draw attention to obligations set out in the Law on International Sanctions and National Sanctions of the Republic of Latvia concerning compliance with international sanctions, national sanctions of the Republic of Latvia and sanctions imposed by a Member State of the European Union or of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs draws attention to the fact that pursuant to Section 2 of the Law, it applies to all persons, and they have the obligation to comply with and enforce international sanctions, namely, those imposed by the United Nations Security Council and the European Union as well as national sanctions of the Republic of Latvia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recalls that the violation or circumvention of international and national sanctions is a serious crime punishable by imprisonment for a term of four to eight years.

In the cases specified in the law, subjects governed by public law must also observe sanctions imposed by the Member States of the European Union or the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, where compliance with those sanctions affect significantly the interests of the participants of financial and capital markets or financial and capital market interests, such as, for instance, sanctions by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the US Department of Treasury (OFAC).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reminds that on 2 December 2021, OFAC designated a Belarusian company, Belorusskaya Kalinaya Kompaniya, and the transitional period set by OFAC in relation to sanctions against the Belaruskali company expired on 8 December. Although the violations of OFAC sanctions are not criminalised, the United States can apply secondary sanctions on persons non-compliant with OFAC designations by imposing the same type of financial restrictions, and deny access to US markets and the use of US dollar. The United States can impose such financial restrictions on any natural or legal person, institution, local authority, port, political party or any other subject in any country worldwide. Besides, under the law, Latvian financial institutions shall not cooperate with persons sanctioned by OFAC. OFAC continues focusing closely on suspicious international transactions including those that could be implemented through Latvia's natural persons or legal entities.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs points out that non-compliance with sanctions undermines the international reputation and national economy of the country, as well

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs intends to convene a meeting of the Sanctions Coordination Council in the near future in order to discuss recent information concerning compliance with sanctions against Belarus in Latvia.

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