

Explanatory Statement

Issued by the Authority of the Minister for Foreign Affairs

Autonomous Sanctions Regulations 2011

Autonomous Sanctions (Export Sanctioned Goods—Russia) Amendment (No. 1) Designation 2025

Autonomous sanctions are measures not involving the use of armed force which a government imposes as a matter of foreign policy – as opposed to an international obligation under a United Nations Security Council decision – in response to situations of international concern. They are a discretionary tool which the Government can apply, alone or with like-minded countries where appropriate, to address egregious situations of international concern.

The *Autonomous Sanctions Regulations 2011* (the Regulations) make provision for, amongst other things, the designation of goods as ‘export sanctioned goods’ for a country or part of a country. The supply, sale or transfer of ‘export sanctioned goods’ to Russia, for use in Russia or for the benefit of Russia is prohibited under regulations 4 and 12 of the Regulations. For Russia, the provision of services which assist with, or which are provided in relation to, the supply, sale or transport of export sanctioned goods or the manufacture, maintenance or use of export sanctioned goods is also prohibited under regulations 5 and 13.

The purpose of the *Autonomous Sanctions (Export Sanctioned Goods—Russia) Amendment (No. 1) Designation 2025* (the Russia Designation) is to amend the *Autonomous Sanctions (Export Sanctioned Goods—Russia) Designation 2022*. The amendments expand, under subregulation 4(3) of the Regulations, what goods are ‘export sanctioned goods’ for Russia to include unmanned aerial vehicles. The unmanned aerial vehicles designated as export sanctioned goods for Russia in the Russia Designation are described by reference to codes in the Australian Harmonized Export Commodity Classification (AHECC), as released on 21 January 2022. This document could, in February 2025, be freely accessed on the Australian Bureau of Statistics website (Australian Harmonized Export Commodity Classification (AHECC) 2022, Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)).

The prohibition on the export of such goods is in response to Russia’s ongoing illegal and immoral aggression against Ukraine. Russia’s aggression towards Ukraine presents a serious threat to the international rules-based order which underpins global security. Prohibiting the export of unmanned aerial vehicles and related parts to Russia would assist with ensuring that Australian goods are not aiding Russia’s aggression in Ukraine.

When considering whether to apply autonomous sanctions, the Government considers Australia’s national interest, including bilateral, regional and multilateral equities, and the impact of sanctions on Australia’s economic, security or other interests.

Details of the Russia Designation are set out at **Attachment A**.

The legal framework for the imposition of autonomous sanctions by Australia, of which the Regulations are part, was the subject of extensive consultation with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders when introduced, and when amended to include the Russia/Ukraine sanctions.

The Office of Impact Analysis (OIA) has advised that a detailed analysis is not required (reference: OIA25-08984). The OIA determined that expanding the Russia Designation is unlikely to result in more than minor impacts on Australian individuals, business or community organisations. For this reason, DFAT did not undertake public consultation in preparing this measure.

The Russia Designation is compatible with the human rights and freedoms recognised or declared in the international instruments listed in section 3 of the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011*. A statement of compatibility with human rights is at **Attachment B**.

*Autonomous Sanctions (Export Sanctioned Goods—Russia) Amendment (No. 1)
Designation 2025*

Section 1

The title of the instrument is the *Autonomous Sanctions (Export Sanctioned Goods—Russia) Amendment (No. 1) Designation 2025* (the Russia Designation).

Section 2

Subsection 2(1) provides that the Russia Designation commences the day after it is registered.

Subsection 2(2) is a technical provision that makes clear that any information inserted in column 3 of the table about the specific date of commencement is not part of the Russia Designation and can be inserted or edited at a later date.

Section 3

The Russia Designation is made under subregulation 4(3) of the *Autonomous Sanctions Regulations 2011* (the Regulations).

Section 4

Goods listed in Schedule 1 of the Designation are designated as export sanctioned goods for Russia, for use in Russia, and for the benefit of Russia.

Schedule 1

Regulation 4 of the Regulations sets out what constitutes a sanctioned supply for a country or part of country. Provision of a sanctioned supply is prohibited under regulation 12, unless the Minister has granted a permit under regulation 18.

Item 3A of the table in subregulation 4(2) of the Regulations provides that export sanctioned goods for Russia are: (i) arms and related materiel and (ii) specified items suited to use in certain categories of oil exploration or production projects in Russia. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has the authority, under subregulation 4(3) of the Regulations, to designate by legislative instrument, additional goods as export sanctioned goods for a country or part of a country mentioned in the designation. This mechanism exists to ensure that the Australian Government is able to act swiftly to expand the existing export prohibitions that apply in respect of a sanctioned country, enabling Australia to be responsive to evolving situations of international concern.

Goods that are designated as export sanctioned goods for Russia under subregulation 4(3) are set out in the *Autonomous Sanctions (Export Sanctioned Goods—Russia) Designation 2022* (the Principal Designation). Item 1 of Schedule 1 of the Russia Designation amends Schedule 1 of the Principal Designation to insert a new Part 4 to designate unmanned aerial vehicles and parts thereof as export sanctioned goods for Russia. A good is captured if it falls within a specified Australian Harmonized Export Commodity Classification (AHECC) code.

STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

Prepared in accordance with Part 3 of the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011.

AUTONOMOUS SANCTIONS (EXPORT SANCTIONED GOODS—RUSSIA) AMENDMENT (NO. 1) DESIGNATION 2025

The *Autonomous Sanctions (Export Sanctioned Goods—Russia) Amendment (No. 1) Designation 2025* (the Russia Designation) is compatible with the human rights and freedoms recognised or declared in the international instruments listed in section 3 of the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011*.

Overview of the Designation

Autonomous sanctions are measures not involving the use of armed force which the Australian Government imposes and implements as a matter of foreign policy. They are a discretionary tool which the Government can apply, alone or with like-minded countries where appropriate, to address egregious situations of international concern.

The *Autonomous Sanctions Regulations 2011* (the Regulations) make provision for, amongst other things, the designation of goods as ‘export sanctioned goods’ for a country or part of a country. The supply, sale or transfer of ‘export sanctioned goods’ to Russia, for use in Russia or for the benefit of Russia is prohibited under regulations 4 and 12 of the Regulations.

Russia’s aggression towards Ukraine presents a serious threat to the international rules-based order which underpins global security. The purpose of the Russia Designation is to expand, under subregulation 4(3) of the Regulations, what goods are ‘export sanctioned goods’ for Russia to include unmanned aerial vehicles and related parts. In prohibiting the export of such goods, Australia is demonstrating its condemnation of Russia’s illegal and unjustified invasion of Ukraine.

When considering whether to apply autonomous sanctions, the Government considers Australia’s national interest, including bilateral, regional and multilateral equities, and the impact of sanctions on Australia’s economic, security or other interests.

Human rights implications

The Russia Designation is compatible with the human rights and freedoms recognised or declared in the international instruments listed in section 3 of the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011*.

The Russia Designation expands, under subregulation 4(3) of the Regulations, what goods are ‘export sanctioned goods’ for Russia to include unmanned aerial vehicles and related parts. The supply, sale or transfer of such goods will therefore become subject to the existing prohibition on making a sanctioned supply under regulation 12 of the Regulations. The Russia Designation does not change the overarching operation of the Regulations.

The human rights obligation that may possibly be affected by including unmanned aerial vehicles and related parts as ‘export sanctioned goods’ for Russia is the presumption of innocence. Article 14(2) of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) provides that everyone charged with a criminal offence shall have the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law. As strict liability offences allow for the imposition of criminal liability without the need to prove fault, all strict liability offences engage the presumption of innocence in Article 14(2) of the ICCPR. A strict liability offence will not necessarily violate the presumption of innocence provided that it is: (i) aimed at achieving a purpose which is legitimate; (ii) based on reasonable and objective criteria; and (iii) proportionate to the aim to be achieved.

Regulation 12 of the Regulations provides that strict liability applies unless the sanctioned supply is authorised by a permit under regulation 18 of the Regulations. The Russia Designation has the effect of making unmanned aerial vehicles and related parts ‘export sanctioned goods’ for Russia. The effect of this is that strict liability applies to the existence or otherwise of a sanctions permit. For an individual, strict liability will not apply to any other element of the offence.

The Russia Designation is compatible with human rights because the limitations that arise are reasonable, necessary and proportionate measures which enable Australia to maintain its foreign policy and national security interests.

Conclusion

The Russia Designation is compatible with human rights as the measures in the Russia Designation do not raise any human rights issues.