



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Minister for Europe and the
Americas
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

10 January 2018

Sir William Cash MP
Chair, European Scrutiny Committee
14 Tothill St
London
SW1H 9NB

Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2426 of 21 December 2017 amending Decision 2014/512/CFSP concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine

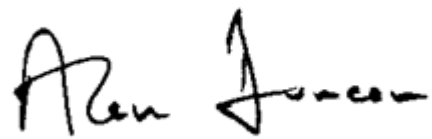
I am writing with regard to the attached EU Council Decision concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine. This Decision renews the sectoral “Tier III” sanctions against Russian entities, including an arms embargo, ban on the supply of equipment and services to Russian deep water, Arctic and shale oil exploration and production projects, and a ban on Russian access to certain EU financial instruments and services.

Following the conclusions of the March 2015 European Council, the duration of the Tier III sanctions was explicitly linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements. There has since been little progress on Minsk, and Russia has not fulfilled the obligations it signed up to. Due to the importance of the Russia Tier III regime, the political decision to rollover the Russia Tier III sanctions regime was taken at the December European Council; 14 December 2017. Rolling over these sanctions immediately after the December European Council was essential to keeping the pressure on Russia and unfortunately meant that, due to time constraints, I had to override Parliamentary Scrutiny.

The EU formally adopted these measures on the 21 December 2017, and the Council Decision to extend the measures from 21 December 2017 until 31 July 2018 was published in the Official Journal on the same day.

As you know, the responsibility to ensure your Committee can scrutinise sanctions decisions is something I take seriously but the need for the override of scrutiny on this occasion was regrettably unavoidable.

I am writing in similar terms to Lord Boswell of Aynho, Chair of the House of Lords Select Committee on European Union and copying this letter to the Clerk of this Committee, Les Saunders at the Department for Exiting the European Union, and Sheila Underwood, FCO Select Committee Liaison Officer.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Duncan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'n'.

RT HON SIR ALAN DUNCAN MP