

Russia using weapons supplied by France, Germany against Ukraine - report

France, Germany and a number of other EU countries used loopholes in the 2014 Russian arms embargo in order to continue supplying military equipment.

Russia has been using weapons manufactured and exported by France and Germany in its war against Ukraine, British newspaper The Telegraph reported a European Union analysis as saying.

While The Telegraph claims to have exclusively gained access to the EU analysis, independent investigative reports since the war began have arrived at the same conclusion.

Despite a 2014 EU decision on an arms embargo to Russia after it invaded Crimea, between 2015-2020 10 EU member states continued to supply it with 346 million euro's worth of military equipment, 44% of which came from France and 35% from Germany, a March 17 report by the independent European news agency Investigate Europe found.

The other countries were Italy, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Finland, Spain and Croatia.

The equipment provided by France were labeled under the "bombs, rockets, torpedoes, missiles and explosive charges" category, as well as "imaging equipment, aircraft with their components and 'lighter-than-air vehicles,'" Investigate Europe found.

The report also quoted a March 14 publication by French investigative journalism NGO Disclose as saying that French exports also included thermal imaging cameras for over 1,000 Russian tanks, navigation systems and infrared detectors for fighter jets and combat helicopters. Some of these are now being used on the Ukrainian front, the report said.

Germany's exports to Russia included icebreaker vessels, rifles and "special protection" vehicles.

“No I didn’t!” The loopholes

France and Germany claim that they did not violate the embargo, each basing its argument on a different loophole. France claims that the exports were merely implementations of prior contracts, which was not explicitly prohibited in the EU embargo. Germany claimed that the equipment it exported were “dual use” items and they were guaranteed by Russia that they would be used for civilian purposes alone.

The EU closed the German loophole in its fifth sanctions package that was ratified on April 8. The decision imposed “further restrictions on exports of dual-use goods and technology and on the provision of related services, as well as restrictions on exports of certain goods and technology which might contribute to Russia’s technological enhancement of its defense and security sector,” the EU legislation says.

“It also introduces restrictions on the provision of related services. Limited exemptions to such restrictions are envisioned for legitimate and pre-determined purposes.”

Source: <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-704877>

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