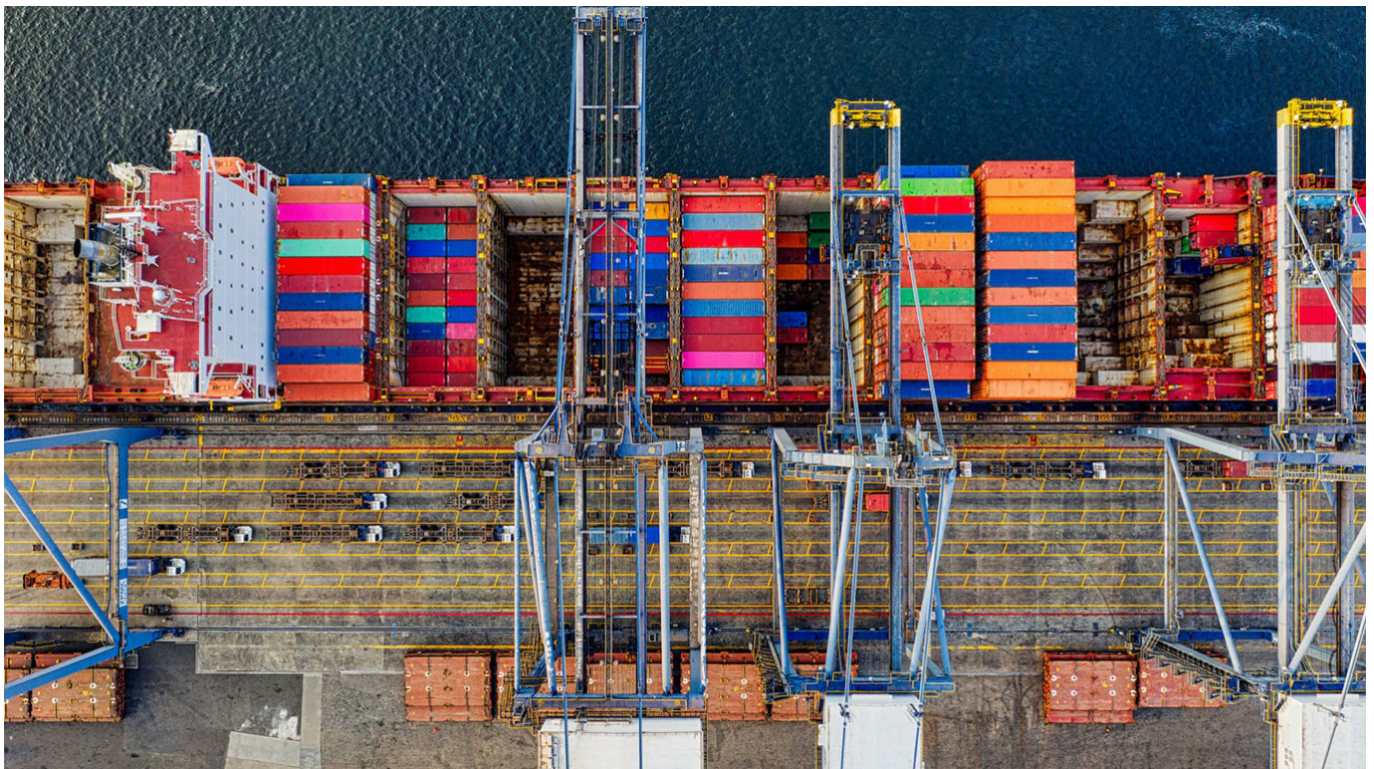# Sanctions Loophole Closed as Turkey Blocks Parallel Imports to Russia

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Tom Fisk / pexels

Turkish customs officials have suddenly stopped permitting the transit of sanctioned goods bound for Russia through Turkish territory, Russia's Kommersant FM radio station reported on Thursday citing Russian logistics operators.

Turkey has been a key hub for Russia's sanction-busting efforts ever since President Vladimir Putin signed the country's "parallel import" scheme into law in June.

The parallel import scheme allows the continued supply of sanctioned goods to Russia that were originally intended for foreign markets without approval from trademark owners and exempts such imports from import duties.

In August, NATO-member Turkey reported the value of its exports to Russia had exceeded $738 million in one month, setting an all-time record.

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"We are not expecting to receive any official orders or decrees because then Turkey would have to admit that it was linked to facilitating [illegal] shipments of sanctioned goods to Russia over the past year," Valeriya Savenkova, commercial director of Transasia Logistics, said according to Kommersant FM.

"As of today, Turkey's system for processing transit and export shipments to Russia isn't working," added Savenkova.

The managing director of transport logistics operator Optimalog, Georgiy Vlastopulo, told the radio station that previously booked transport operations from Turkey to Russia had been on hold since Wednesday.

"Last night we started to receive notifications that Turkish customs are preventing the processing of transit goods of non–Turkish origin," Kommersant FM cited Vlastopulo as saying.

Kommersant FM's source cited pressure from U.S. officials as a probable reason for Turkey's sudden policy switch.

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