

EU to Establish Task Force to Discuss Impact of Russia's Food Import Ban

By [The Moscow Times](#)

August 08, 2014



A worker arranges slabs of meat for sale at a grocery store in Moscow.

PARIS/BRUSSELS — European agriculture officials will on Monday set up a task force to analyze the impact of a Russian ban on EU food imports and expect to call an emergency meeting to coordinate an EU response, the European Commission has said.

Moscow banned most food imports from the West on Thursday in retaliation for U.S. and EU sanctions imposed over Russia's actions in Ukraine. The commission, the EU executive, said it reserved the right to take action without specifying what.

The commission takes a summer break in August, but agriculture commissioner Dacian Cioloș will return to Brussels at the weekend, and on Monday his department will set up a task force to work out the impact of Russia's ban, the commission said.

The commissioner has already been in contact with the Italian and French agriculture

ministers and others.

Roughly 10 percent of EU agricultural exports go to Russia, worth about 11 billion euros (\$14.7 billion), per year, according to commission figures.

"The loss of one market does not mean that we cannot export our healthy, quality products elsewhere in the world," commission spokesman Roger Waite said.

As evidence, he cited Russia's ban of EU pork earlier this year, saying it had only a small impact as lost Russian sales were offset by the impact of a pig disease in North America and sales in Asia.

In June, the commission said it was taking Russia to the World Trade Organisation to try to overturn Russia's ban on EU pork.

Leading EU agricultural nation France said an emergency meeting of an expert committee representing member states would be called next week.

In a statement, French agriculture minister Stephane Le Foll said contact had been made with the governments of Germany and Poland about reaching a co-ordinated position between the three countries.

Waite said the timing of an emergency meeting was not yet clear and the commission was seeking to coordinate with all 28 member states.

See also:

[Russia Bans Food Imports From U.S., EU, Australia, Canada, Norway](#)

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