

Russia Classifies Customs Data as Sanctions Bite

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Russian Federal Customs Service officer stands next to a Customs Control Zone sign at the Leningradsky customs station. **Mikhail Metzel/TASS**

Russian customs officials have [classified](#) export and import data to avoid “misinterpretations” ahead of an anticipated drop in trade amid heavy Western sanctions for Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

The Federal Customs Service (FTS) follows Russia’s Central Bank and Energy Ministry in deciding to [withhold](#) data as the country faces dropping living standards, recession and the collapse of parts of the economy.

“It’s a temporary measure,” FTS head Vladimir Bulavin was quoted as saying by the state-owned RIA Novosti news agency Thursday.

“This decision is justified in order to avoid incorrect estimates, speculation and discrepancies in imports,” Bulavin told reporters.

He did not indicate when the data would be available to the public again.

The latest available data for January 2022 showed Russian exports increasing 69.9% to \$45.8 billion and imports growing by 38.6% to \$23.3 billion.

In February 2022, imports into Russia increased 27.3% to \$23.5 billion. Export data was not published for that period, but President Vladimir Putin's economic aide Maxim Oreshkin estimated a double-digit drop.

Western countries have imposed hard-hitting sanctions on Russia since its attack on Ukraine.

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