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EU Grants Kazakhstan Sanctions Waiver to Export Coal via Russian Ports

By AFP

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Alexander Ryumin / TASS

Kazakh authorities said Tuesday that the EU had granted the country permission to export coal to the bloc via Russian ports despite sanctions targeting Moscow.

Kazakhstan, the EU's top Central Asian trading partner, is rich in natural resources, but relies heavily on Russian transportation infrastructure to export goods due to its landlocked geography.

"The European side introduced amendments providing for an exception to the ban on transactions with certain Russian ports for the transit of Kazakh coal," Kazakhstan's Trade Ministry said in a statement, coming after Brussels introduced its latest round of sanctions on Moscow.

The European Commission had already indicated in March that Kazakhstan, the EU's fifth-

largest coal supplier, could qualify for such an exemption.

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Kazakh coal accounted for 6.5% of the EU's coal imports in the first quarter of 2025, according to the European Commission.

Authorities in Kazakhstan said the EU waiver would be valid only if the coal comes exclusively from Kazakhstan, is not owned by sanctioned entities and if Russian ports are used strictly for transportation.

Since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine and the EU's ban on Russian fossil fuel imports, Brussels has sought to deepen ties with Kazakhstan, particularly in the energy sector.

Despite these efforts, Kazakhstan maintains close political and economic ties with Russia, with which it shares a 7,500-kilometer (4,700-mile) border.

Western governments have accused Kazakhstan of helping Russia evade sanctions by allowing restricted goods to cross the border, allegations that authorities in Astana deny.

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