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Finland to Tighten Curbs on Medical Equipment Exports to Russia

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Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency

Finland is planning to tighten restrictions on exports of medical equipment and healthcare technology to Russia, citing concerns that such products could ultimately be used for military purposes, Finnish broadcaster Yle reported, as Western sanctions continue to disrupt Russia's healthcare sector.

"We have now become aware that medical and pharmaceutical products may end up being used in Russia for military purposes, and that is why we made this decision," Elina Rimppi, head of sanctions at Finland's Foreign Ministry, told Yle.

Rimppi did not specify what evidence prompted the move, saying only that Finnish authorities regularly assess the implementation of sanctions.

The decision marks a further tightening of Finland's export controls on Russia, which have expanded since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

While some medical goods are already included on European Union sanctions lists, Finland had until now continued allowing certain exports under exemptions granted by national authorities.

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The Finnish Foreign Ministry has prepared a decree that will abolish those exemptions starting in July, Yle reported. The new restrictions will apply to a range of medical products and technologies, including dental equipment, though hospital beds will remain exempt.

Products not covered by EU sanctions will still be permitted for export, while some restricted items may continue to be supplied on humanitarian grounds.

Among the largest Finnish suppliers of medical equipment to Russia is Lojer-Merivaara Oy, which exports operating tables and hospital beds to several Russian regions, including Murmansk, Rostov and Sakhalin as well as the republics of Chuvashia and Karelia.

Other companies involved in exports include Dexis and PaloDEx, which manufacture dental equipment, and Pribori Holding Oy, which produces ultrasound devices for pregnant women.

Russia's healthcare system has faced growing difficulties obtaining and servicing medical equipment since Western countries imposed sweeping sanctions after the invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's Health Ministry said worn-out equipment accounted for 24.8% of all machinery in state hospitals in 2024, while plans to modernize equipment fleets have been postponed until 2030.

Russian clinics have also struggled to repair modern imported equipment, with repairs of broken CT and MRI machines in some cases taking up to a year, Forbes Russia previously reported.

Forbes' sources said nearly 90% of heavy medical equipment installed in Russia is manufactured by companies based in countries that introduced export restrictions after 2022.

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