

AIDE MEMOIRE
on global food security
in the context of unilateral coercive measures

The actions of Western countries with regard to Belarusian potash fertilizers raise serious concerns of the Belarusian side. The illegal ban on the transit of fertilizers has an extremely negative impact on global food security and the elimination of hunger.

The backlog of commitments to end hunger and malnutrition in the world by 2030 goes back to the pre COVID-19 pandemic times. Within the pandemic, the task has only become more difficult. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that between 720 million to 811 million people suffered from hunger in 2020. That exceeds the level of 2019 by 161 million (taking the upper limit).

The latest FAO report «The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021» notes that economic downturns resulting from COVID-19 containment measures around the world have contributed to one of the largest increases in hunger in decades, with the potential to erode gains in nutrition.

In addition, there have been food prices rising. According to the FAO, the FAO Food Price Index averaged to 133.7 points in December 2021, 23.1 percent plus to December 2020. According to the FAO, an additional threat to strengthening food security in developing countries is the rapid increase in fertilizer prices, which may lead to a reduction in their use and a decrease in crop yields in 2022.

In these circumstances, it is puzzling that Western countries continue to use the practice of sanctions and economic coercion.

Belarus has always made a significant contribution to global food security, but the sanctions pressure of Western countries on Belarus poses a direct threat, placing the population of vulnerable countries on the verge of starvation.

Given Belarus' 20% share in the global potash market, the export ban on potash fertilizers would, and already has, predictably lead to the rise in prices of both fertilizers and food products.

We would also like to draw your attention to the non-compliance of the Lithuanian side with its obligations on the transit of Belarusian potash fertilizers through its territory.

On April 3, 2000 the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania signed the Agreement on the conditions of transit of cargoes of the Republic of Belarus using the ports and other transport infrastructure of the Republic of Lithuania.

Article 5 of the Agreement stipulates that «the Republic of Lithuania as a transit state grants the Republic of Belarus as a landlocked state the right to transit transport and cargoes through the territory of the Republic of Lithuania to and from ports. The Republic of Belarus shall use the services of the ports and other transport infrastructure of the Republic of Lithuania on the principles of freedom of transit».

The agreement was signed by the parties to develop the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, ratified by the EU, the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Belarus. In accordance with article 125 of the Convention, landlocked States have the right of access to the sea for the purpose of exercising the rights provided by the Convention. For this purpose, landlocked States enjoy freedom of transit through the territories of transit States by all means of transport.

Pursuant to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania of June 22, 1999 «On international treaties» international agreements prevail over national acts and decisions.

Thus, the actions of the Lithuanian side with regard to fertilizers are a severe violation of both the national legislation and a number of international treaties and agreements.

Meanwhile, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Treasury Department has confirmed that the sanctions against JSC «Belaruskali» are not binding for the Lithuanian state railway company «Lithuanian Railways».

Belarus is requesting to use the UN potential with regard to Lithuania in order to persuade it to refuse from political manipulation, economic blackmail and abuse of its transit position. Lithuania shall return to implementation of its international obligations, which the Lithuanian side undertook voluntarily. Lithuania's actions not only prevent Belarus from implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but also run counter to the UN Charter and the core UN human rights conventions.