JUDGMENT OF THE COURT (Tenth Chamber)

15 October 2026 (*)

(Appeal – Restrictive measures taken in view of the military aggression against Ukraine – Decision 2014/145/CFSP – Article 2(1) in fine – Restrictive measures imposed on a natural person associated with another natural person who is in turn subject to restrictive measures – Concept of ‘association’ in the case of two persons with a family relationship between them)

In Case C-695/23 P,

APPEAL under Article 56 of the Statute of the Court of Justice of the European Union, brought on 16 November 2023,

Galina Evgenyevna Pumpyanskaya, residing in Ekaterinburg (Russia), represented initially by A. Egger, P. Goeth, G. Lansky and E. Steiner, Rechtsanwälte, and subsequently by M.F. Ciancio and A. Saccucci, avvocati,

appellant,

the other party to the proceedings being:

Council of the European Union, represented by B. Driessen and S. Van Overmeire, acting as Agents,

defendant at first instance,

THE COURT (Tenth Chamber),

composed of B. Smulders, President of the Chamber, M.L. Arastey Sahún (Rapporteur), President of the Fifth Chamber, and J. Passer, Judge,

Advocate General: L. Medina,

Registrar: V. Di Bucci,

having regard to the written procedure,

having decided, after hearing the Advocate General, to proceed to judgment without an Opinion,

gives the following

Judgment

1 By her appeal, the appellant seeks to have set aside the judgment of the General Court of the European Union of 6 September 2023, *Pumpyanskaya* v *Council* (T-272/22, ‘the judgment under appeal’, EU:T:2023:491), by which the General Court dismissed her action seeking annulment of Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/397 of 9 March 2022 amending Decision 2014/145/CFSP concerning restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine (OJ 2022 L 80, p. 31) and of Council Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/396 of 9 March 2022 implementing Regulation (EU) No 269/2014 concerning restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine (OJ 2022

L 80, p. 1) (together, ‘the acts at issue’), in so far as both those acts include her name on the lists annexed thereto.

Legal context and background to the dispute

2 The factual and legal background of the present case is set out in paragraphs 2 to 17 of the judgment under appeal. For the purposes of the present case, that background may be summarised and supplemented as follows.

3 The case arises in the context of the restrictive measures adopted by the European Union since 2014 in response to actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine.

4 The appellant is a Russian national.

5 On 17 March 2014, the Council of the European Union adopted, on the basis of Article 29 TEU, Decision 2014/145/CFSP concerning restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine (OJ 2014 L 78, p. 16).

6 On the same date, the Council adopted, on the basis of Article 215(2) TFEU, Regulation (EU) No 269/2014 concerning restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine (OJ 2014 L 78, p. 6).

Decision 2014/145

7 Article 1(1) of Decision 2014/145, as amended, inter alia, by Decision 2022/329 (‘Decision 2014/145’), requires Member States to take the necessary measures, subject to the derogations set out in Article 1(2), (3) and (6), to prevent the entry into, or transit through, their territories of, inter alia, natural persons meeting the criteria laid down in point (e) of Article 1(1) and natural persons associated with them.

8 Article 2(1)(g) of Decision 2014/145 provides for the freezing of the funds and economic resources belonging, inter alia, to natural persons meeting the criteria defined in that point (g) and to natural persons associated with them, that criteria being, in essence, identical to that laid down in Article 1(1)(e) of that decision. Article 2(1) of that decision reads as follows:

‘All funds and economic resources belonging to, or owned, held or controlled by:

…

(g) leading businesspersons or legal persons, entities or bodies involved in economic sectors providing a substantial source of revenue to the Government of the Russian Federation, which is responsible for the annexation of Crimea and the destabilisation of Ukraine,

…

and natural or legal persons, entities or bodies associated with them, as listed in the Annex, shall be frozen.’

9 Article 2(3) to (5), (7) and (8) of Decision 2014/145 provides, in essence, that the competent authorities of the Member States may, in certain circumstances and under certain conditions, authorise the release of certain frozen funds or economic resources and authorise payments to certain entities, and that the natural or legal persons, entities or bodies listed in the annex to that decision may make a payment due under a contract entered into prior to the date on which they were listed.

10 Under the third paragraph of Article 6 of that decision, the decision is to be kept under constant review and is to be renewed, or amended as appropriate, if the Council deems that its objectives have not been met.

Regulation No 269/2014

11 Article 3(1)(g) of Regulation No 269/2014, as amended, inter alia, by Regulation 2022/330 ('Regulation No 269/2014'), provides, in conjunction with Article 2 of that regulation, for the freezing of funds and economic resources belonging, inter alia, to natural persons meeting the criteria defined in that point (g), and to natural persons associated with them, in terms identical to those of Article 2(1)(g) *in fine* of Decision 2014/145.

12 Articles 4 to 6b of that regulation reproduce, in essence, the same provisions as those contained in paragraphs 3 to 5, 7 and 8 respectively of Article 2 of Decision 2014/145.

13 Article 14(4) of Regulation No 269/2014 provides that the list in Annex I to that regulation is to be reviewed at regular intervals and at least every 12 months.

The acts at issue

14 On 9 March 2022, in view of the gravity of the situation in Ukraine, the Council adopted the acts at issue. By those acts, the appellant's name was added respectively to the list annexed to Decision 2014/145 and to that in Annex I to Regulation No 269/2014, on the following grounds:

'[The appellant] is the Chairwoman of the Board of trustees of BF "Sinara", a foundation that acts as operator of charitable activities of large companies, including PJSC Pipe Metallurgical Company. She is the spouse of Dmitry Alexandrovich [Pumpyanskiy], Chairman of the Board of Directors of PJSC Pipe Metallurgical Company, a Russian global manufacturer of steel pipes for the oil and gas industry. Dmitry A. [Pumpyanskiy] is a Russian billionaire businessman. He is also a President and board member of Group Sinara. Both companies support and benefit from cooperation with authorities of Russian Federation and State-owned enterprises, including Russian railways, Gazprom and Rosneft.

[The appellant] is therefore a natural person associated with a leading businessperson involved in economic sectors providing a substantial source of revenue to the Government of the Russian Federation, which is responsible for the annexation of Crimea and the destabilisation of Ukraine.'

The procedure before the General Court and the judgment under appeal

15 By application lodged at the Registry of the General Court on 17 May 2022, the appellant brought an action seeking annulment of the acts at issue in so far as they concern her. In the context of her action for annulment, she disputed, by a first plea in law, the Council's assessment that her situation fulfilled the criterion laid down in Article 1(1) *in fine* and in Article 2(1) *in fine* of Decision 2014/145, and in Article 3(1) *in fine* of Regulation No 269/2014 ('the criterion of association'), in so far as she was found to be 'associated' with her husband who himself had been subject to restrictive measures under the criterion laid down in Article 1(1)(e) and in Article 2(1)(g) of Decision 2014/145, and in Article 3(1)(g) of Regulation No 269/2014 ('the (g) criterion'). By a second plea in law, she also claimed that the Council infringed her fundamental rights and failed to observe the principle of proportionality.

16 In the judgment under appeal, the General Court dismissed the appellant's action. Having found, in paragraphs 49 to 60 of that judgment, that the Council did not err in its assessment by including the appellant's husband on the list annexed to Decision 2014/145 and in Annex I to Regulation No 269/2014 on the basis of the (g) criterion, the General Court held, in paragraphs 62 to 84 of that judgment, that the Council had been entitled to find that the appellant was indeed associated with her husband, within the meaning of the criterion of association.

17 In that latter regard, the General Court stated, in paragraph 63 of the judgment under appeal, that the concept of 'association' refers to natural or legal persons who are generally connected by common interests, without, however, it being necessary for there to be a relationship by means of an economic activity, but which cannot, nevertheless, be based exclusively on a family relationship. The General Court then found, in paragraph 70 of the judgment under appeal, that although the appellant did not hold a position directly within the two companies in which her husband was involved, she and her husband were connected by common interests going beyond the family relationship between them, since the appellant held positions of importance in a foundation responsible for managing the charitable activities of those two companies. The General Court then drew the conclusion, in paragraph 71 of the judgment under appeal, that the Council had adduced a set of indicia that were sufficiently specific, precise and consistent to demonstrate that the appellant was associated with a leading businessperson, within the meaning of the (g) criterion, on account both of their family relationship and of the business relationship between them. Having found that the other arguments put forward by the appellant did not call into question that conclusion, the General Court, in paragraph 85 of that judgment, rejected the first plea as unfounded.

18 The General Court also rejected, in paragraph 121 of the judgment under appeal, the second plea, alleging failure to observe the principle of proportionality and infringement of the appellant's fundamental rights. In essence, it found, in paragraphs 89 to 109 of that judgment, that the limitation on the exercise of the appellant's fundamental rights, caused by the restrictive measures adopted against her, satisfied the four conditions laid down in Article 52(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, including that relating to the principle of proportionality. It also held, in paragraphs 110 to 120 of that judgment, that, by adopting restrictive measures against the appellant, the Council had not failed to observe the principle of equal treatment and that of legal certainty either even though the concept of 'association' was worded in broad terms and conferred discretion on the Council.

19 Having thus rejected the two pleas in law put forward by the appellant, the General Court, in paragraph 121 of the judgment under appeal, dismissed the action in its entirety.

Procedure before the Court and forms of order sought

20 By her appeal, the appellant claims that the Court should:

– set aside the judgment under appeal;

– give final judgment in the matter and annul the acts at issue in so far as they concern her, and

– order the Council to pay the costs, including those incurred at first instance, or

– alternatively, set aside the judgment under appeal, refer the case back to the General Court and reserve the costs.

21 The Council contends that the Court should:

– dismiss the appeal;

– alternatively, if the Court decides to set aside the judgment under appeal and dispose of the case, dismiss the action on the merits; and

– order the appellant to pay the costs at first instance and on appeal.

22 By decision of 18 September 2024, the President of the Court of Justice decided to stay proceedings pending delivery of the judgment in Case C-696/23. On 26 March 2026, the Court handed down its judgment in *Pumpyanskiy and Others* v *Council* (C-696/23 P, C-704/23 P, C-711/23 P, C-35/24 P and C-111/24 P, EU:C:2026:245). By decision of the same date, proceedings were resumed in the present case.

23 By letters from the Registry of the Court of Justice of 21 April 2026, the parties were informed that that judgment had been delivered and were asked about the possible consequences that might be inferred from it for the purposes of the present case. The Council and the appellant lodged their observations in that regard by letters of 13 May 2026 and of 21 May 2026 respectively.

The appeal

24 In support of her appeal, the appellant puts forward three grounds of appeal alleging errors of law made by the General Court (i) in holding that her husband could be classified as a 'leading businessperson involved in economic sectors providing a substantial source of revenue to the Government of the Russian Federation' within the meaning of the (g) criterion; (ii) in finding that she was 'associated' with her husband within the meaning of the criterion of association, and (iii) in ruling that the restrictive measures adopted against her were proportionate and did not infringe her fundamental rights.

The first ground of appeal

25 By her first ground of appeal, the appellant claims that the General Court erred in law by holding, in paragraphs 49 and 54 of the judgment under appeal, that the Council did not make an error of assessment in classifying her husband as a 'leading businessperson involved in economic sectors providing a substantial source of revenue to the Government of the Russian Federation' within the meaning of the (g) criterion.

26 The Council contends that the first ground of appeal is inadmissible in so far as the appellant seeks to challenge the General Court's findings and factual assessments. In any event, the Council disputes the merits of the appellant's arguments.

27 The Court notes that, when asked about the consequences to be inferred from the judgment of 26 March 2026, *Pumpyanskiy and Others* v *Council* (C-696/23 P, C-704/23 P, C-711/23 P, C-35/24 P and C-111/24 P, EU:C:2026:245), the appellant declared that she was withdrawing her first ground of appeal.

28 In those circumstances, there is no longer any need to rule on that ground or on the plea of inadmissibility raised by the Council.

The second ground of appeal

Arguments of the parties

29 By her second ground of appeal, the appellant submits that the General Court erred in law by finding that the Council was entitled to classify her as a person 'associated' with her husband within the meaning of the criterion of association. According to the appellant, the General Court, in paragraphs 64, 65, 70, 71, 74 to 76, and 78 of the judgment under appeal, placed undue weight on the family relationship between her and her husband, even though it had stated, in paragraph 63 of the judgment under appeal, that the common interests between two members of a family could not be based exclusively on the family relationship between those persons in order for the criterion of association to be met.

30 Furthermore, by holding, in that paragraph and in paragraph 70 of the judgment under appeal, that the concept of 'association' covers persons connected by common interests going beyond the family relationship between them, in her view the General Court adopted, in breach of the principle of legal certainty, an interpretation that was not only excessively broad but also conceptually unclear, since a family relationship is commonly characterised by common interests which are not capable of establishing the existence of a connection going beyond such a relationship.

31 The appellant also claims that the General Court erred in law by holding that she entertained a business relationship with her husband. First of all, the appellant claims that, contrary to the General Court's statement in paragraph 64 of the judgment under appeal, she never held any position within the companies

in which her husband was involved, namely TMK and Group Sinara, which, according to the appellant, the General Court moreover acknowledged in paragraph 70 of that judgment.

32 Furthermore, the appellant complains that the General Court considered that the respective activities carried out by her and her husband in different entities established to the requisite standard the existence of a business relationship between them. She argues in particular that the General Court ignored the fact that she held merely an honorary volunteer position in the foundation, with the result that it should not have held, in paragraph 78 of the judgment under appeal, that the question of the appellant's lack of control over that foundation was irrelevant. She further claims that the General Court distorted the evidence in paragraph 70 of that judgment by considering that the foundation was 'closely' linked to TMK and Group Sinara, even though it had found, in paragraph 69 of that judgment, that those two companies were mere investors among other investors in the foundation and that there was thus a weak link between them. Lastly, in her view, the General Court concluded, incorrectly, that there was a business relationship between the appellant and her husband whereas her husband had divested himself of his shares in those companies and had formally held a position within those companies only to ensure a smooth handover before resigning.

33 The appellant also submits that the General Court was unclear in its finding, in paragraphs 64, 70, 71 and 74 of the judgment under appeal, that she was associated with her husband based on both a business relationship and a common interest. Furthermore, according to the appellant, the judgment under appeal lacks sufficient grounds to establish that the appellant's position within the charity was such as to establish an interest which concerned not only herself but also her husband, such an interest having to reach at the very least a minimum degree of intensity to enable association between two individuals.

34 In addition, the appellant argues that the application of restrictive measures to a non-executive member of the board of trustees of a charity, such as the appellant, would not be consistent with the objectives pursued both by Article 21 TEU and by the acts at issue and not founded, under Article 215 TFEU, on a sufficient nexus with the third State against which the European Union takes a stand, namely, in the present case, the Russian Federation.

35 Finally, the appellant submits that the judgments cited by the General Court in support of its interpretation of the concept of association, namely the judgments of 8 March 2023, *Prigozhina* v *Council* (T-212/22, EU:T:2023:104); of 28 July 2016, *Tomana and Others* v *Council and Commission* (C-330/15 P, EU:C:2016:601); and of 4 September 2015, *NIOC and Others* v *Council* (T-577/12, EU:T:2015:596), do not apply to her case, since, respectively, she does not co-own any companies with her husband, she does not hold any senior posts in Russia and she is not an entity.

36 While taking the view that, by her arguments summarised in paragraph 32 of the present judgment, the appellant seeks to challenge the General Court's factual determinations, which would render them inadmissible, the Council disputes the merits of all of the appellant's arguments.

Findings of the Court

37 In the first place, the appellant's complaint alleging failure by the General Court to observe the principle of legal certainty in its interpretation of the concept of 'association' in paragraph 63 of the judgment under appeal must be rejected.

38 In that regard, it must be recalled that that principle requires, on the one hand, that the rules of law be clear and precise and, on the other, that their application be foreseeable for those subject to the law, in particular where they may have adverse consequences. It requires, inter alia, that legislation must enable those concerned to know precisely the extent of the obligations imposed on them, and those persons must be able to ascertain unequivocally their rights and obligations and take steps accordingly. However, those requirements cannot be interpreted as precluding the EU legislature from having recourse, in a provision that it adopts, to an abstract legal notion, nor as requiring that such an abstract provision refer to the various specific hypotheses in which it applies, given that all those hypotheses could not be determined in

advance by the legislature or even by the Courts of the European Union when they interpret that provision (judgment of 26 March 2026, *Pumpyanskiy and Others* v *Council*, C-696/23 P, C-704/23 P, C-711/23 P, C-35/24 P and C-111/24 P, EU:C:2026:245, paragraph 188 and the case-law cited).

39 In paragraph 63 of the judgment under appeal, the General Court held, in essence, that the concept of 'association' refers to persons who are generally connected by common interests without it being necessary for there to be a relationship by means of an economic activity or it being based exclusively on a family relationship.

40 First of all, that definition does not amount to limiting the concept of association, as far as natural persons are concerned, to the existence of a mere family relationship. The interpretation adopted by the General Court means that it is necessary to establish common interests that objectively go beyond such a relationship in order for it to be possible to find the members of a family to be 'associated' within the meaning of the criterion of association. The General Court thereby held that the common interests of those family members must go beyond the mere commonality of interests inherent in any family relationship (judgment of 1 August 2025, *Timchenko* v *Council*, C-703/23 P, EU:C:2025:608, paragraphs 29 and 30).

41 Moreover, the General Court, in paragraph 63 of the judgment under appeal, identified sufficiently clear and precise criteria for the purpose of applying that concept in the case of two persons who have a family relationship, even though the General Court was not required to refer in detail to the hypotheses in which that concept could apply because, first, that concept must be interpreted broadly and, second, as the General Court noted in paragraph 63 of the judgment under appeal and as the appellant herself concedes in her written submissions to the Court of Justice, the types of relationship that it can encompass are contingent 'on the context and circumstances at issue' (see, to that effect, judgment of 1 August 2025, *Timchenko* v *Council*, C-703/23 P, EU:C:2025:608, paragraphs 32 and 34).

42 In the second place, contrary to the appellant's assertions, the General Court did not, in paragraphs 64, 65, 70, 71, 74 to 76, and 78 of the judgment under appeal, place undue weight on the family relationship between her and her husband. While it is true that the General Court repeatedly states, in paragraphs 64, 71, 74 and 78 of that judgment, that the Council considered that the appellant was connected to her husband on account of their family relationship and a business relationship, and that it further notes, in paragraph 65 of that judgment, that the appellant is married to Mr Pumpyanskiy, the fact remains that, in accordance with the definition of the concept of 'association' set out in paragraph 63 of that judgment, the General Court stated, in paragraphs 70, 75 and 76 of that judgment, that that business relationship between the appellant and her husband reflected the existence of common interests going beyond the family relationship between them and that their association was thus not based exclusively on that latter relationship.

43 Furthermore, the General Court was not unclear when it allegedly found that the appellant was associated with her husband by means both of a business relationship and of common interests. Indeed, it is apparent from paragraphs 70 and 71 of the judgment under appeal, read in conjunction with the definition of the concept of 'association' in paragraph 63 of that judgment, that, in order to determine whether there is an association between two persons, it is necessary to establish the existence of common interests between them, such interests being capable, inter alia, of taking the form of a business relationship. Thus, the General Court held, in paragraphs 70 and 71, that the appellant and her husband shared common interests in the form of a business relationship, for the purposes of the criterion of association.

44 In the third place, in claiming that the General Court erred in its statement, in paragraph 64 of the judgment under appeal, that she held positions within TMK or Group Sinara, the appellant misreads that paragraph. In that paragraph, the General Court merely noted that the Council had concluded that the appellant was associated with her husband because of their family relationship and the business relationship between them in view of their 'respective' positions within TMK, Group Sinara and BF Sinara Foundation. It is apparent from the adjective 'respective', read in conjunction with the General Court's factual determinations in paragraphs 67 and 68 of the judgment under appeal, that the appellant held

positions within BF Sinara Foundation, whereas her husband held positions within TMK and Group Sinara, which, moreover, is confirmed by the General Court's conclusion in paragraph 70 of that judgment.

45 As regards, in the fourth place, the appellant's arguments summarised in paragraph 32 of the present judgment, the admissibility of which is disputed by the Council, it should be borne in mind that, under Article 256 TFEU and Article 58 of the Statute of the Court of Justice of the European Union, appeals are limited to points of law and the General Court has exclusive jurisdiction, first, to establish the facts, except where the substantive inaccuracy of its findings is apparent from the documents submitted to it, and, second, to assess those facts. Save where the evidence produced before the General Court has been distorted, that assessment does not constitute a point of law which is, as such, subject to review by the Court of Justice. When the General Court has found or assessed the facts, the Court of Justice has jurisdiction under Article 256 TFEU to review the legal characterisation of those facts by the General Court and the legal conclusions it has drawn from them (judgment of 26 March 2026, *Pumpyanskiy and Others* v *Council*, C-696/23 P, C-704/23 P, C-711/23 P, C-35/24 P and C-111/24 P, EU:C:2026:245, paragraph 158 and the case-law cited).

46 Moreover, where an appellant alleges that the General Court distorted facts or evidence, that person must, under Article 256 TFEU, the first paragraph of Article 58 of the Statute of the Court of Justice of the European Union and Article 168(1)(d) of the Rules of Procedure, indicate precisely the evidence or facts alleged to have been distorted by the General Court and show the errors of appraisal which, in that person's view, led to that distortion. In addition, according to settled case-law, that distortion must be obvious from the documents in the file, without there being any need to carry out a new assessment of the facts and the evidence (judgment of 26 March 2026, *Pumpyanskiy and Others* v *Council*, C-696/23 P, C-704/23 P, C-711/23 P, C-35/24 P and C-111/24 P, EU:C:2026:245, paragraph 378 and the case-law cited).

47 First, as regards the appellant's argument that the General Court concluded, incorrectly, that there was a business relationship between her and her husband whereas her husband had divested himself of his shares in those companies and had formally held a position within the governing bodies thereof only to ensure a smooth handover, it must be held that that argument is closely linked to the first ground of appeal, to which the appellant refers. In view of the fact that she has withdrawn that ground of appeal, it must be held that there is no longer any need to rule on that argument. In any event, the Court of Justice, in paragraphs 183 to 185 of the judgment of 26 March 2026, *Pumpyanskiy and Others* v *Council* (C-696/23 P, C-704/23 P, C-711/23 P, C-35/24 P and C-111/24 P, EU:C:2026:245), confirmed that, in paragraphs 63 and 65 of its judgment of 6 September 2023, *Pumpyanskiy* v *Council* (T-270/22), the General Court did not err in law by finding, in essence, that it was not necessary, for the purposes of classifying the appellant's husband as a 'leading businessperson', to establish whether, up to the date on which the restrictive measures against him were adopted, he still exercised actual and effective control over those companies.

48 Second, the remainder of the appellant's arguments summarised in paragraph 32 of the present judgment must be declared admissible in their entirety, in the light of the case-law referred to in paragraph 45 of the present judgment. Contrary to the Council's contentions, the appellant, by those arguments, does not seek simply to challenge the General Court's findings and factual assessments, but criticises the General Court's legal characterisation of the business relationship, alleging, inter alia, a distortion of the evidence.

49 Third, in the light of the considerations set out in paragraphs 40 to 43 of the present judgment, it must be held that, contrary to the appellant's assertions, the General Court did not err in law by holding, in essence, in paragraph 70 of the judgment under appeal, that, depending on the circumstances, two natural persons such as the appellant and her husband may, while occupying positions in different entities linked to each other, share common interests in the form of a business relationship and, therefore, be 'associated' within the meaning of the criterion of association, since the business relationship thus generated objectively goes beyond the family relationship between those persons.

50 With regard more specifically to the General Court's alleged error of law in paragraph 78 of the judgment under appeal, suffice it to note that, contrary to the appellant's submissions and as is expressly stated in paragraph 77 of that judgment, the General Court did not disregard the fact that she held an honorary

volunteer position in the exercise of her duties as Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees of the foundation, which did not allow her to control the affairs of that foundation. However, it correctly held that that alleged lack of control resulting from the voluntary nature of the appellant's duties within that foundation was irrelevant for the purposes of determining whether she was associated with her husband.

51 In paragraph 78 of that judgment, read in conjunction with paragraph 70 thereof, the General Court correctly held, in accordance with the definition of the concept of 'association' given in paragraph 63 of that judgment and reproduced, in essence, in paragraph 39 of the present judgment, that that association, which need not necessarily be an economic activity, resulted from the fact that the appellant shared common interests with her husband, in the form of a business relationship, by holding positions, even if of a voluntary nature and not allowing her to control the affairs thereof, in BF Sinara Foundation, which is responsible for managing the charitable activities of two companies in which her husband was involved.

52 As regards the alleged distortion of the evidence by the General Court in paragraph 70 of the judgment under appeal, it should be noted that the General Court, far from ignoring the content of the evidence in question, did state, in paragraph 69 of that judgment, that BF Sinara Foundation carried out the charitable activities of several large companies and acted as the uniform operator of the largest companies in the Urals. However, it cannot be considered that it distorted that fact or the underlying evidence by stating, in paragraph 70 of that judgment, that that foundation was 'closely' linked to two of those companies in particular, namely TMK and Group Sinara. In order to establish the existence of a business relationship between the appellant and her husband, the General Court was entitled, in the light of the considerations set out in the preceding paragraph of the present judgment, to confine itself to examining the relationship between, on the one hand, that foundation, in which the appellant held the position of Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees, and, on the other hand, TMK and Group Sinara, in which, as is apparent from paragraph 67 of the judgment under appeal, the appellant's husband was involved on the date on which the acts at issue were adopted.

53 In the fifth place, as regards the appellant's argument that the business relationship found by the General Court to exist between the appellant and her husband is not of a sufficient degree to be regarded as objectively going beyond the common interests which two family members may usually share in the context of the family relationship between them, it must be held that the reasoning of the General Court in paragraph 70 of the judgment under appeal demonstrates to the requisite legal standard that the common interests shared by two spouses in the form of a business relationship objectively go beyond the marital relationship between them because of the close links between the respective entities in which they are involved and the importance of those entities.

54 In the sixth place, as regards the appellant's argument that the application of restrictive measures to her situation is not consistent with the objectives pursued by Article 21 TEU and is not founded, under Article 215 TFEU, on a sufficient nexus with the Russian Federation, it must be noted, first, that to allow a party to put forward for the first time before the Court of Justice a plea and arguments which it did not raise before the General Court would be to authorise it to bring before the Court of Justice, whose jurisdiction in appeals is limited, a case of wider ambit than that which came before the General Court. In an appeal, the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice is confined to review of the findings of law on the pleas and arguments debated before the General Court (judgment of 17 October 2024, *PT Pelita Agung Agrindustri and PT Permata Hijau Palm Oleo* v *Commission*, C-112/23 P, EU:C:2024:899, paragraph 67 and the case-law cited).

55 However, by the abovementioned argument and in the absence of any reference to any specific paragraph of the judgment under appeal in the context of that argument, it seems that the appellant is not seeking to criticise the General Court's legal reasoning in the judgment under appeal, but rather to challenge the validity of the criterion of association or the Council's application of that criterion to her individual situation, under Article 21 TEU and Article 215 TFEU, irrespective of that reasoning. Accordingly, it must be held that she is putting forward a new argument which must be rejected as inadmissible.

56 Second, in so far as the appellant, in that she refers in that regard to the first part of her third ground of appeal, intends, by that argument, only to anticipate, partially, a similar argument which she puts forward in the context of the first part of her third ground of appeal concerning observance of the principle of legal certainty, that argument will be dealt with when that part is examined.

57 In the seventh place, as regards the argument by which the appellant complains that the General Court relied, in the judgment under appeal, on case-law precedents whose factual circumstances she claims are fundamentally different from those of the present case, suffice it to note, in addition to the fact that the appellant does not explain to what extent such allegedly irrelevant references might have affected the General Court's reasoning and the operative part of the judgment under appeal, that those precedents were cited by the General Court, in paragraphs 63, 111, 113, 115 and 118 of that judgment, only by reference to general legal concepts and principles, independent of the factual circumstances of the cases which gave rise to those precedents.

58 In the light of the foregoing, the second ground of appeal must be dismissed.

The third ground of appeal

Arguments of the parties

59 By her third ground of appeal, the appellant claims that the General Court erred in law by ruling, in essence, that the restrictive measures adopted by the Council against her were proportionate and did not infringe her fundamental rights or fail to observe the principle of legal certainty.

60 By the first part of her third ground of appeal, the appellant submits that the General Court erred in law by holding, in paragraphs 119 and 120 of the judgment under appeal, that the criterion of association does not fail to observe the principle of legal certainty, even though it established, in paragraphs 114 and 115 of that judgment, that the criterion of association was worded very broadly and in vague terms. The appellant submits that the General Court should have inferred from this that such wording provides no basis for limiting the scope of the Council's discretion, in particular with regard to selecting persons capable of meeting that criterion. She claims that, contrary to the General Court's finding in paragraph 111 of the judgment under appeal, that would lead to arbitrary results, as evidenced by the fact that, out of the 1 100 persons who were subject to restrictive measures at the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the Council referred only to two spouses in total.

61 Moreover, she claims that the General Court attempted in vain to justify, in paragraph 116 of the judgment under appeal, the unfettered discretion provided to the Council by referring to the legal framework clearly delimited by the objectives pursued by the EU legislation adopted in the context of the war in Ukraine, whereas the appellant held only a position as a non-executive member of a charity. The appellant also submits that, contrary to the General Court's statement in paragraph 118 of the judgment under appeal, her husband could no longer, following the sale of his shares, circumvent, through her, the restrictive measures to which he was himself subject and that such a risk of circumvention, which she argues would also exist in the case of two persons with a family relationship between them but who do not meet the criterion of association, is not mentioned in the grounds to justify the restrictive measures imposed on her.

62 By the second part of her third ground of appeal, the appellant criticises the General Court for refusing to find that the restrictive measures to which she and her husband are subject were not appropriate for serving to attain the objective pursued by the acts at issue, which, as is apparent from paragraph 104 of the judgment under appeal, consists of bringing pressure to bear on Russian decision-makers responsible for the situation in Ukraine. So far as she is concerned, the appellant asserts that she is of no relevance to the Government of the Russian Federation, with the result that the imposition of restrictive measures on her would neither allow pressure to be brought to bear on that government nor lead to an increase in the cost of the war in Ukraine for that Federation. Moreover, according to the appellant, it would be inconsistent to request, as the General Court did in paragraph 104 of the judgment under appeal, that the appellant propose

less restrictive measures, since such measures would be equally inappropriate for attaining the abovementioned objective.

63 The appellant also states that, in paragraphs 96, 97 and 107 of the judgment under appeal, the General Court placed undue weight on the relevance of the periodic reviews of the restrictive measures. According to the appellant, the listing of her name was unduly extended on several occasions and the periodic reviews were carried out in part without proper diligence. She also claims that the Council amended the (g) criterion and the criterion of association in order to confine the latter to a mere family relationship, thus enabling that institution to maintain the restrictive measures against her.

64 Lastly, the appellant submits that, in paragraphs 98, 99, 105 and 106 of the judgment under appeal, the General Court put undue weight on the possibilities of requesting authorisation to use frozen funds or to obtain a travel permit on humanitarian grounds, whereas the restrictive measures to which she is subject have materially undermined the essence of her fundamental rights by depriving her of the possibility of taking care of her grandchildren in Switzerland.

65 The Council disputes the merits of the appellant's arguments.

Findings of the Court

66 By the first part of her third ground of appeal, the appellant submits, in essence, that the General Court erred in law by holding, in paragraphs 111, 114 to 116 and 118 to 120 of the judgment under appeal, that the criterion of association did not confer excessive discretion on the Council and thus observed the principle of legal certainty.

67 In that regard, it must be held that the General Court correctly applied the case-law relating to the principle of legal certainty, referred to in paragraph 38 of the present judgment and in paragraphs 113 and 115 of the judgment under appeal, by ruling, in paragraphs 114 and 115 of the latter judgment, that the discretion conferred on the Council by virtue of the abstract and general wording of the criterion of association is not incompatible, in itself, with the principle of legal certainty, provided that it is not arbitrary and not inconsistent with the requirement of foreseeability laid down by that principle. It is apparent from that case-law that there is no disregard for that principle on the ground that the EU legislature has recourse to an abstract legal notion without referring to the various specific hypotheses in which it applies, where the scope and the manner in which the resulting discretion is exercised are indicated or capable of being ascertained with sufficient clarity.

68 The General Court also did not err in law by ruling, in paragraphs 116 and 118 to 120 of the judgment under appeal, that, in the present case, the criterion of association observes the principle of legal certainty because it forms part of a legal framework clearly delimited by the objectives pursued by the legislation governing restrictive measures against the Russian Federation, namely the risk of circumvention which that criterion seeks to combat.

69 In that regard, it should be noted that the appellant does not dispute the fact, noted by the General Court in paragraph 117 of the judgment under appeal, that the criterion of association is subject, in her case, to the 'substantive criterion relating to leading businesspersons', namely the (g) criterion, which covers, according to that paragraph, leading businesspersons 'who may provide sources of revenue to finance Russia's actions undermining Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence', in such a way as to bring pressure to bear on the Russian authorities, as is apparent from paragraph 104 of the judgment under appeal.

70 It is in that context that the General Court, in essence and correctly, recalled in paragraph 118 of the judgment under appeal that, as a criterion subject to a substantive criterion, the criterion of association is intended to prevent or preclude the non-negligible risk that a person subject to restrictive measures under that substantive criterion might bring pressure to bear on persons associated with him or her in order to circumvent the effect of the measures concerning that person, it being noted that the Court of Justice has

already held, in the context of Decision 2014/145, that the imposition of restrictive measures on persons associated with other persons who are themselves subject to such measures pursues such an objective (see, to that effect, judgment of 1 August 2025, *Timchenko* v *Council*, C-703/23 P, EU:C:2025:608, paragraph 32). The General Court then correctly inferred therefrom, in paragraphs 119 and 120 of the judgment under appeal, that the criterion of association objectively defines a limited category of persons, with the result that the Council's discretion is thus limited and consistent with the principle of legal certainty.

71 Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that it is neither necessary to ascertain whether the risk of circumvention is established in each individual case (see, to that effect, judgment of 25 June 2020, *VTB Bank* v *Council*, C-729/18 P, EU:C:2020:499, paragraph 66), nor whether the associated person has a link to the actions of the authorities to undermine the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, nor whether the restrictive measures imposed on that person under the criterion of association serve to achieve the objectives pursued by the restrictive measures regime adopted by the European Union against the Russian Federation, namely to bring pressure to bear on the Russian authorities (see, to that effect, judgment of 1 August 2025, *Timchenko* v *Council*, C-703/23 P, EU:C:2025:608, paragraphs 55, 61 and 63).

72 Lastly, the General Court correctly pointed out, in paragraph 111 of the judgment under appeal, that, although the Council cannot adopt restrictive measures against persons who do not satisfy the criteria on the basis of which such measures are imposed, it has a broad discretion enabling it to decide to impose such measures on persons who satisfy them. As is apparent from the case-law referred to in paragraph 67 of the present judgment, the Council's broad discretion to identify the persons who may be subject to restrictive measures under a criterion such as that of association cannot be interpreted as a breach of the principle of legal certainty, nor can it be claimed that the Council, in view of that broad discretion and of the fact that, as in the present case, that criterion is consistent with the principle of legal certainty, acted in breach of that principle because the restrictive measures adopted by it do not apply to all the natural persons capable of satisfying the conditions laid down by that criterion (see, by analogy, judgment of 26 March 2026, *Pumpyanskiy and Others* v *Council*, C-696/23 P, C-704/23 P, C-711/23 P, C-35/24 P and C-111/24 P, EU:C:2026:245, paragraphs 307 and 308 and the case-law cited).

73 In the second part of her third ground of appeal, the appellant, first, criticises the General Court for refusing to find that the restrictive measures adopted against her and her husband were not appropriate for attaining the objectives pursued, namely, as is apparent from paragraph 104 of the judgment under appeal, bringing pressure to bear on Russian decision-makers responsible for the situation in Ukraine.

74 As a preliminary point, it must be noted that, as is apparent from the appellant's arguments summarised in paragraph 86 of the judgment under appeal, she had merely argued that the imposition of restrictive measures on her, and not her husband, did not serve to achieve the objectives of Regulation No 269/2014, as amended. In those circumstances, the appellant relies, at the appeal stage, on a new argument as regards her husband, with the result that, in accordance with the case-law referred to in paragraph 54 of the present judgment, that argument is inadmissible, contrary to the argument concerning her.

75 With the benefit of that preliminary observation, it must be borne in mind that, in order to determine whether the restrictive measures enacted by the European Union comply with the principle of proportionality or whether the interference with the rights or freedoms guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights as a result of limitations on those rights or freedoms by an EU act imposing restrictive measures is proportionate, it is necessary to ascertain, first, whether those measures meet an objective of general interest recognised by the European Union; second, whether they are not manifestly inappropriate having regard to that objective, that is to say, whether they are not manifestly unsuitable for achieving it, and, third, whether those measures or, as the case may be, the limitation concerned manifestly exceed what is necessary to achieve that objective (see, by analogy, judgment of 26 March 2026, *Pumpyanskiy and Others* v *Council*, C-696/23 P, C-704/23 P, C-711/23 P, C-35/24 P and C-111/24 P, EU:C:2026:245, paragraph 233 and the case-law cited).

76 In the present case, suffice it to note that the General Court, in paragraphs 102 and 103 of the judgment under appeal, did examine whether the restrictive measures adopted against the appellant were appropriate. In that regard, given that, as has been stated in paragraphs 70 and 71 of the present judgment, the purpose of the restrictive measures imposed on persons such as the appellant is to avoid a risk of circumvention of the restrictive measures imposed in the first instance on the person with whom they are associated, it was not necessary for the Court to verify, in the context of that examination of appropriateness, whether the restrictive measures adopted against the appellant were also suitable for bringing pressure to bear on Russian decision-makers responsible for the situation in Ukraine.

77 As regards, second, the argument that the General Court, in paragraph 104 of the judgment under appeal, incorrectly required the appellant to propose less restrictive measures than those provided for by the restrictive measures, that argument is unfounded. In that paragraph, the General Court, after itself setting out a number of such less restrictive measures and finding that they could not be as effective in achieving the objectives pursued, noted that the appellant had failed to give other examples of such measures. In the absence of such examples, the General Court cannot remedy the appellant's omission nor can it be assumed that any alternative measures which the appellant might have been able to indicate would necessarily have been found by the General Court to be inappropriate (see, by analogy, judgment of 26 March 2026, *Pumpyanskiy and Others* v *Council*, C-696/23 P, C-704/23 P, C-711/23 P, C-35/24 P and C-111/24 P, EU:C:2026:245, paragraph 241).

78 As regards, third, the argument that the General Court, in paragraphs 96 to 99 and paragraphs 105 to 107 of the judgment under appeal, placed undue weight on the relevance of the periodic reviews of the restrictive measures and the possibilities of requesting authorisation to use the funds or to obtain a travel permit on humanitarian grounds, it should be noted that, in paragraphs 96 to 99 of that judgment, the General Court examined those elements in order to ascertain whether the limitation of the appellant's fundamental rights by the restrictive measures adopted against her respected the essence of those rights, whereas it re-examined those elements, in paragraphs 105 to 107 of that judgment, for the purposes of reviewing the proportionality of the interference with her fundamental rights. In those circumstances, it cannot be held that the General Court placed 'undue weight' on those elements. In any event, the appellant has not made clear the reasons why the General Court allegedly placed 'undue weight' on them or the error of law which it thus allegedly made (see, by analogy, judgment of 26 March 2026, *Pumpyanskiy and Others* v *Council*, C-696/23 P, C-704/23 P, C-711/23 P, C-35/24 P and C-111/24 P, EU:C:2026:245, paragraphs 245 and 246).

79 In so far as the appellant claims that the listing of her name was unduly extended on several occasions, that the periodic reviews were carried out in part without proper diligence, and that the Council subsequently amended the (g) criterion and the criterion of association in order to confine the latter to a mere family relationship, suffice it to note that those allegations constitute new arguments which, moreover, seek to challenge other acts adopted against the appellant, with the result that they must be held, in accordance with the case-law referred to in paragraph 54 of the present judgment, to be inadmissible.

80 In the light of the foregoing, the third ground of appeal must be rejected and, accordingly, the appeal dismissed in its entirety.

Costs

81 Pursuant to Article 184(2) of the Rules of Procedure of the Court of Justice, where the appeal is unfounded, the Court is to make a decision as to the costs. Under Article 138(1) of those Rules of Procedure, applicable to appeal proceedings by virtue of Article 184(1) thereof, the unsuccessful party is to be ordered to pay the costs if they have been applied for in the successful party's pleadings.

82 Since the Council has applied for costs and the appellant has been unsuccessful, the latter must be ordered to bear her own costs and to pay those incurred by the Council.

On those grounds, the Court (Tenth Chamber) hereby:

1. **Dismisses the appeal;**

2. **Orders Ms Galina Evgenyevna Pumpyanskaya to bear her own costs and to pay those incurred by the Council of the European Union.**

Smulders Arastey Sahún Passer

Delivered in open court in Luxembourg on 15 October 2026.

V. Di Bucci B. Smulders

Registrar President of the Chamber

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* Language of the case: English.