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**EFFECTS OF RESTRICTIVE MEASURES ON EUROPEAN UNION MEMBERS**

**ABSTRACT.** *Cui prodest*? These two Latin words that can be translated as “*who is taking advantage of*” is a very important question the European community should ask when assessing the restrictive measures inflicted to Russia. Since March 2014, the EU has progressively imposed restrictive measures against Russia. These measures were adopted in response to the alleged Russian annexation of Crimea and the supposed attempt to destabilise the situation in the Eastern Ukraine. At present, there are different types of restrictive measures imposed by the EU: economic sanctions, diplomatic measures, individual restrictive measures (asset freeze and travel restrictions), restrictions on economic relations with Crimea and Sevastopol, restrictions on economic cooperation. In response, Russia applied counter-sanctions to boycott the import of some goods and raw materials from the European states. Inevitably those restrictive measures on both sides have negatively affected the economy of some of the EU members.

This article intends to examine the case of the European Union in general and the case of Italy, in particular, to demonstrate that the imposition of sanctions is against the country’s national interests. In fact, in 2013 Italy was the Russian second largest European trade partner, exporting goods and services for the amount of over 10,8 billion Euros, with the total trade turnover of over 40 billion Euros, with an 8% of annual growth. In 2016, three years after the imposition of sanctions, according to the Italian Statistic Institute, the amount of Italian export to Russia collapsed by 3,7 billion – to 7,1 billion Euros. Given the negative impact of sanctions on all the parties involved, this article aims to answer the question above: “*Cui prodest*?” For some, the conclusion of this paper might seem surprising.

**KEYWORDS: sanctions, Italy, counter-sanctions**