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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**RIGHT OF REPLY BY  
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RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY  
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1052nd PLENARY MEETING  
OF THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

19 July 2023

**Agenda item: General statements  
Subject: The Istanbul agreements**

Madam Chairperson,

In connection with the categorically untrue assessments voiced today by a number of Western delegations as regards the situation concerning the Istanbul agreements, which include the Black Sea Initiative and the Russia-United Nations Memorandum, I should like to state the following.

The grain deal has been a lopsided game for the entire past year. While exports of forage maize and wheat from Ukraine to high- and above-average-income countries remained stable – they received 90 per cent and 60 per cent of total exports of those commodities, respectively – the least developed countries received less than 3 per cent of them. In other words, contrary to the declared humanitarian goals, the export of Ukrainian foodstuffs was almost at once put on a purely commercial footing and, to the very end, it was geared towards serving the narrowly selfish interests of the Ukrainian Government and its Western handlers.

Another aggravating factor is that, during the year that the Black Sea Initiative was implemented, the Kyiv regime repeatedly carried out provocations and attacks against Russian civilian and military facilities under the guise of the humanitarian maritime corridor for the export of Ukrainian grain. To eloquent silence from the United Nations, it blew up the Togliatti-Odessa ammonia pipeline, which had been an element of the deal.

The Russia-United Nations Memorandum also failed to bring about the normalization of Russian exports of agricultural products and fertilizers: none of the five systemic issues covered by the Memorandum has been addressed.

Given the sabotaging of the Istanbul agreements' implementation, the Russian Federation objects to a further extension of the grain deal. This implies revocation of guarantees for the safety of navigation, curtailment of the maritime humanitarian corridor, the return of the north-western waters of the Black Sea to the status of a temporarily dangerous area and the disbandment of the Joint Co-ordination Centre in Istanbul.

That being said, we commit ourselves to fulfilling our contractual obligations in their entirety as regards the delivery of Russian grain to our buyers, and to continuing to help developing States. We are willing to replace, free of charge, Ukrainian grain shipments for countries in need.

If Western governments genuinely value the Black Sea Initiative, then they should seriously consider honouring their obligations and actually lifting the sanctions from Russian fertilizers and foodstuffs. As Russian President Vladimir Putin has said, our country will be ready to consider reinstating the deal only once concrete results are obtained, as opposed to promises.

For the time being, though, countries bordering Ukraine are inordinately occupied with economic protectionism and are exhorting the European Commission to extend the ban on the import of Ukrainian agricultural products. So there you have the imaginary “friendship” between Europe and Ukraine being tested – in grain deals and at NATO summits – and can see how it is shaping up.

Thank you for your attention.