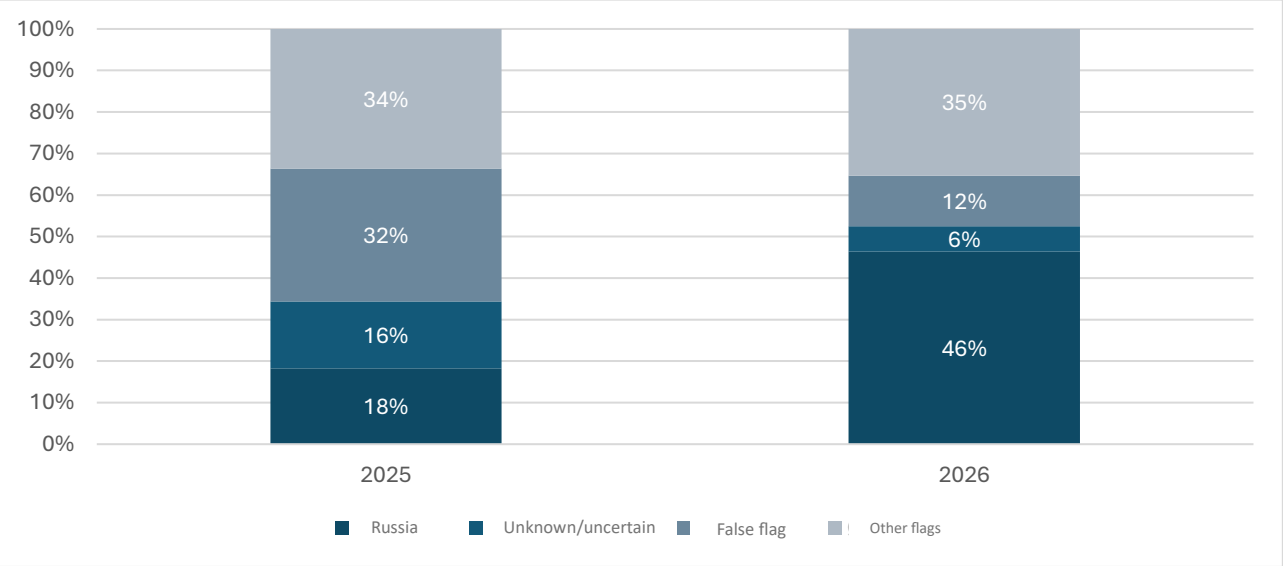
Russian flagged vessels now dominate the EU's list of sanctioned vessels

The Russian flag has become significantly more prevalent among vessels listed by the EU under Article 3s of the Russia Sanctions Regulation. In September 2025, 18% of the vessels on the list were sailing under the Russian flag. By September 2026, this share had increased to 46%, making Russia by far the largest flag state among the vessels on the list.

At the same time the share of vessels registered under the so-called false flag has decreased from 32 percent to 12 percent, while the share of vessels with unknown flag status has fallen from 16 percent to 6 percent. SP Maritime Portal defines false flags as vessels whose declared flag registration cannot be confirmed or is considered invalid.

The development means that vessels registered on the EU's sanctions list, in a decreasing degree is tied to questionable or unidentified registrations. While almost half of the vessels in 2025 either sailed under a false flag or had an unidentified flag registration, this was the case for fewer than one in five vessels in 2026. Meanwhile, the share of vessels registered under other flags has remained largely unchanged.

The flag distribution among vessels on the EU's sanction list, 2025-2026



Notes: The analysis covers vessels included on the EU's list of sanctioned vessels under Article 3s of Council Regulation (EU) No 833/2014. Flag status data were obtained from the SP Maritime Portal in September 2025 and September 2026. "False flag" refers to vessels with unverified or invalid flag registrations, while "Unknown/uncertain" refers to vessels with no identified flag status. Vessels that have been scrapped, are undergoing repairs or are otherwise no longer part of the active fleet have been excluded from the analysis. The number of vessels included in the analysis increased from 428 in 2025 to 642 in 2026 due to ongoing expansions of the EU sanctions list.

DanishShipping

This analysis has been drawn up by Danish Shipping, for any further information please contact:
Jacob K. Clasen, Deputy Director General & Deputy CEO, +45 30231973, jc@danishshipping.dk
Simon Martin Hansen, Analyst, +45 81774831, smh@danishshipping.dk