



Business for Ukraine <contact@b4ukraine.org>

Request for a meeting with Sucden regarding the company's business operations in Russia

press@sucden.com <press@sucden.com>
To: Business for Ukraine <contact@b4ukraine.org>
Cc: "press@sucden.com" <press@sucden.com>

16 March 2026 at 11:17

Dear B4Ukraine Coalition,

Sucres et Denrées ("Sucden") has, since 2022, implemented a dedicated compliance framework to ensure strict adherence to all obligations imposed by the European Union on EU-based companies having subsidiaries located in Russia.

The alleged events mentioned in a recent documentary posted by Arte TV channel on their dedicated website — originating from local publications or social media — were previously unknown to Sucden's headquarters. They are said to concern sugar and agricultural production facilities operated by Russian companies in which Sucden holds a majority shareholdings.

Under no circumstances are these subsidiaries intended to host activities unrelated to their corporate purpose, which is strictly limited to the local production and processing of agricultural commodities (primarily sugar and grains) and their distribution.

Following the information communicated by the Arte journalist, instructions were given locally to ensure that such events shall not occur within Sucden subsidiaries.

Yours faithfully,

Sucden

From: Business for Ukraine <contact@b4ukraine.org>

Sent: mardi 3 mars 2026 21:58

Subject: [POSSIBLE SPAM]Request for a meeting with Sucden regarding the company's business operations in Russia

EXTERNAL MESSAGE: This message comes from outside Sucden and is not without risk, remain vigilant before clicking on an unverified link and/or opening an unexpected attachment.

[Quoted text hidden]

Serge Varsano
Chairman and CEO
Sucden
20/22, rue de la Ville l'Évêque
75008 Paris
FRANCE

March 03, 2026

Dear Mr. Varsano and the Sucden Leadership Team,

We write to you as [B4Ukraine](#), a coalition of Ukrainian and international civil society organizations committed to curbing the financial support that fuels Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine. In the spirit of respect for the fundamental rights of all people, the rules-based international order, and a prosperous global economy, we expect companies to demonstrate public support for the people, democracy, and territorial integrity of Ukraine, opposition to Russia's war of aggression, and alignment with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). We are writing to request a dialogue about [Sucden's](#) ongoing operations in the Russian market and the reported [support to the Russian military](#) and their aggressive war efforts in Ukraine.

We call on Sucden to:

- Immediately cease operations and completely exit the Russian market.
- Refrain from any future business, trade, or investment in Russia until Russia ends its war against Ukraine, territorial integrity of Ukraine is restored, and accountability imposed for war crimes and the destruction of Ukrainian infrastructure and property.
- Ensure that any re-engagement with the Russian market occurs only after all of the following conditions are met:
 - Ukraine's sovereignty and complete territorial integrity are restored, as recognized by international law.
 - Reparations are paid in full for all damages caused by Russian aggression, covering infrastructure, economic losses, and human suffering.
 - Accountability is imposed for violations of international law, including the crime of aggression, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

[Sucden](#) has maintained a significant and long-standing commercial presence in Russia. The company operates across the agriculture, industrial and distribution segments of the soft commodities sector. In Russia, Sucden is recognized as one of the country's top four sugar producers, directly managing around 250,000 hectares of arable land and cultivating a range of crops including sugar beet, wheat, barley, sunflower, peas and corn, while also processing these through multiple sugar plants, such as the Dobrinsky and Eletsy facilities in the Lipetsk region, the Atmis Sakhar plant in Penza, and the Tbilissky plant in Krasnodar, with a combined sugar production capacity approaching 800,000 metric tons annually. Its operations include integrated agricultural production, processing, and logistics to supply sugar, molasses and related products in Russia. In August 2019, Sucden completed the acquisition of a majority stake in the Russian sugar business TRIO Group, even further enhancing its footprint in the region, and in 2020 consolidated full ownership of that joint venture, making it one of the largest processors in the Russian sugar market.

While Sucden's revenue in Russia decreased significantly according to Kyiv School of Economic's tracker [LeaveRussia](#), these operations continue to this day, four years into Russia's aggressive war against Ukraine. Moreover, according to recent reporting from *Interfax* in March 2026, Sucden's Russian division (SDS) [officially denied plans to sell](#) these Russian subsidiaries, stating that reports about potential asset sales are incorrect and that there are no such plans to divest.

Recent investigative reporting has raised serious concerns that Sucden's ongoing Russia-based operations may be materially connected to Russia's war effort in Ukraine, and therefore to a context characterized by widespread violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and grave human rights abuses. An investigation summarized by [Ukrainska Pravda](#) alleges that multiple Sucden-linked Russian entities provided equipment and materials to Russian military units between 2023 and 2025, including, for example, the alleged provision by the Yelets Sugar Plant of machinery used to cut materials for camouflage, and the alleged supply by the Dobrinsky Sugar Plant of rubber materials reportedly requested for military-related use.

If accurate, these activities go far beyond the ordinary risks of "doing business in a high-risk jurisdiction." They implicate the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) in their most heightened form: the duty to conduct enhanced human rights due diligence in conflict-affected areas, to identify and prevent involvement in adverse impacts, and to use leverage to stop or mitigate harm. The [Ukrainska Pravda](#) summary, drawing on *Arte's* [investigative](#) work, also alleges supportive conduct by an affiliated agricultural firm (Yeletsky) in 2025 in connection with procurement for Russian forces, which underscores the risk that support may be embedded across Sucden's Russia-linked value chain, not limited to a single facility.

Multiple European media references add to the gravity of these allegations. [Mediapart](#) reported that the investigation found Russian subsidiaries of Sucden provided "numerous materials used at the front," and that company leadership asserted it was unaware of such support. [Télérama](#) likewise reported describing Sucden's continuing Russia presence as having remained under the radar and pointing to purported operational-level support to the Russian army, including vehicles and other contributions referenced in the reporting.

These allegations are especially acute because [Sucden](#) itself describes Russia as a major, vertically integrated footprint, as noted above. Where a group maintains a large operational base in a belligerent state, the [UNGP](#) expectation is that the parent company must have effective governance, controls, and escalation mechanisms to prevent subsidiaries and business units from contributing to abuse. Continued operations in a context of armed conflict heightens the expectation under the UNGPs that Sucden must demonstrate robust, transparent due diligence, and must be able to show it has used its leverage to prevent subsidiaries from providing any form of support that could facilitate IHL violations or broader human rights violations.

In light of the above, we are writing to ask Sucden to clarify the following:

- Can Sucden clarify whether any sale, donation, transfer, or provision of goods, equipment, services, or resources from its Russia-based entities has been authorised or approved (explicitly or implicitly) for Russian state bodies, state-controlled entities, or military-linked actors since February 24, 2022?
- In light of investigative reporting alleging that Sucden-linked Russian entities provided materials or equipment supportive of Russian forces between 2023 and 2025, does Sucden confirm or deny these allegations, and will it publish the findings of any internal or independent investigation into these claims?

- What policies, mechanisms, and tools does Sucden have in place to conduct enhanced human rights due diligence in Russia and other conflict-affected or high-risk contexts, including screening of suppliers, intermediaries, customers, and end-users to prevent its products, assets, or services from contributing to Russia's war effort?
- Has Sucden or any of its Russian subsidiaries received requests or directives under Russian law to conduct military registration of employees, deliver conscription notices, provide employee data, or otherwise assist mobilization efforts? If so, how has Sucden responded?
- How many Sucden employees in Russia have been mobilized or conscripted since February 2022, and what measures has Sucden taken to safeguard its employees from forced mobilization or participation in war-related activities? Have any Sucden employees been deployed to the battlefield, injured, or killed in combat, and what role, if any, did Sucden play in the mobilization process?
- What steps has Sucden taken to ensure that its facilities, vehicles, equipment, or other material assets have not been requisitioned, repurposed, or otherwise used to support Russia's military operations?
- Given the scale of Sucden's agricultural production and industrial footprint in Russia, does Sucden acknowledge that continued operations, tax payments, and economic activity may materially contribute to Russia's war economy, and how does it assess and mitigate this risk?
- Is Sucden aware of the documented pattern of asset expropriations and hostile legislative measures targeting foreign businesses in Russia, and how does it assess the risk that its assets could be seized or placed under state control in a manner that would support the war effort?
- Has Sucden developed a contingency or responsible exit plan to ensure that, in the event of divestment or forced expropriation, its assets, intellectual property, and operations would not be used to facilitate or sustain violations of international humanitarian or human rights law?
- What enhanced human rights and supply-chain due diligence measures has Sucden implemented, in line with UNGPs 17–21, to prevent, mitigate, and account for how it addresses the risk that its products, technologies, or services may contribute, directly or indirectly, to Russia's war effort or war-time economy?
- In light of the ongoing armed conflict, documented war crimes, and the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant for the head of the Russian state, has Sucden considered fully exiting the Russian market to avoid even indirect association with violations of international humanitarian and human rights law?

We urge Sucden to immediately suspend and cease all commercial activities in the Russian Federation and to take concrete steps toward a complete and responsible exit from the Russian market.

We are open to discussing these matters in greater detail and therefore invite you to a meeting. Should you wish to participate in a meeting with Ukrainian and international civil society representatives, please confirm your availability by **March 17, 2026**. Kindly note that after this date, this letter and any responses will be published on the B4Ukraine website.

Sincerely,

The B4Ukraine Coalition

The Risks of Operating and Re-engaging in the Russian Market

Russia remains subject to significant sanction efforts due to its illegal and aggressive war against Ukraine. The United States still maintains its comprehensive [sanctions regime](#), while the European Union recently approved its [nineteenth package](#) of sanctions. The UK announced the [biggest sanctions package](#) against Russia four years on from full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The reality remains that all G7 members, including France, and numerous other countries and organisations have imposed sanctions on Russia, making it the most sanctioned country in the world, due to its crime of aggression against its sovereign neighbour.

Further, economic and regulatory conditions in Russia are no longer conducive to stable business operations. Companies face a landscape of restricted [supply chains, financial barriers, and legal uncertainties](#).

Russia has demonstrated a pattern of malignant and systematic asset seizures, expropriations, and regulatory manipulation, using foreign businesses as leverage in political disputes. According to a study conducted by the London School of Economics, since 2022, [over 500 Western firms](#) have seen their assets expropriated under various pretexts, including companies in industries ranging from brewing and consumer goods (e.g., [Danone, Carlsberg](#)) to energy (e.g., [Uniper, Fortum](#)). The scope of legislation and Russian domestic case law showing the readiness for expropriation has skyrocketed since the start of the full-scale invasion. Businesses operating in Russia must expect that their assets would meet a similar fate.

These patterns show a blatant disregard for property rights, investor and shareholder rights, and are a general indicator of an authoritarian government. Accordingly, any western business faces the [risk of Kremlin](#) decrees that introduce new fees, taxes, and price controls; limit the repatriation of profits and dividends; restrict asset sales and management decisions; and expropriate private businesses.

The [economic outlook](#) in Russia further devalues the case for any operations or re-engagement. Interest rates have soared to 21 percent, labour shortages are worsening, and consumer purchasing power has significantly declined. The country's middle class is shrinking, and the infrastructure that once supported international trade and investment has deteriorated.

The Russian legislative framework continues to pose a high risk of business complicity in the war. Under [Federal Law No. 31-FZ](#) businesses, including international companies that are operating on a full or limited scale in Russia, are required to conduct military registration of the staff if at least one of the employees is eligible for military service. They must also assist with delivering the military summons to their employees, ensure the delivery of equipment to assembly points or military units, and provide information, buildings, communications, land plots, transport, and other material means of support to the war effort.

Beyond financial and legal risks, reputational risks remain high. Any company with ongoing business in Russia may be seen as disregarding the human cost of the war in Ukraine. Some Russian officials have even suggested that businesses seeking to re-enter should [contribute financially to the Russian military or establish operations in occupied Ukrainian territories](#). These decisions directly associate a company's name with a government engaged in an ongoing conflict, one that has been widely condemned for violations of international law. Moreover, they could render the company complicit in violations of international law.

It has been four years since Russia invaded Ukraine, committing the crime of aggression and breaching the UN Charter. Russia is violating international humanitarian and human rights law, committing over 150,000 documented war crimes. In recognition of the severity of abuses, in March 2023 the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Vladimir Putin to answer charges of war crimes.

As affirmed by international frameworks, in conflict-affected and high-risk areas, businesses are not neutral actors. The company's continued presence in Russia is not passive, but part of the system that enables and sustains Russia's aggressive war against Ukraine.