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European Union sanctions

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Restrictive measures, or sanctions, are one of the EU's tools to promote the objectives of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). These include safeguarding the EU's values, its fundamental interests and security; consolidating and supporting democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law; preserving peace; preventing conflicts and strengthening international security.

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WHY ARE SANCTIONS IMPOSED?

EU sanctions do not target a country or population, but are always targeted at specific policies or activities, the means to conduct them and those responsible for them. Moreover, the EU makes every effort to minimise adverse consequences for the civilian

WHAT TYPES OF SANCTIONS CAN THE EU ADOPT?

Restrictive measures imposed by the EU may target governments of third countries, or non-state entities (e.g. companies) and individuals (such as terrorist groups and terrorists). For a majority of sanctions regimes, measures are targeted at individuals

population or for non-sanctioned activities or persons. They always form part of a wider, comprehensive policy approach involving political dialogue and complementary efforts. They are not punitive.

EU sanctions are reviewed at regular intervals. The Council of the EU decides whether sanctions should be renewed, amended or lifted. All legal acts related to EU sanctions are published in the [Official Journal of the EU](#) [↗].

and entities and consist of **asset freezes and travel bans**. The EU can also adopt **sectoral measures**, such as **economic and financial measures** (e.g. import and export restrictions, restrictions on banking services) or **arms embargoes** (prohibition on exporting goods set out in the EU's common military list).

There are three types of sanctions regimes in place in the EU. First, there are **sanctions imposed by the UN** which the EU transposes into EU law. Secondly, **the EU may reinforce UN sanctions** by applying stricter and additional measures (e.g. vis-à-vis [DPRK](#) [↗]). Finally, **the EU may also decide to impose fully autonomous sanctions regimes** (e.g. vis-à-vis [Syria](#) [↗], [Venezuela](#) [↗], [Ukraine](#), [↗] [Russia](#) [↗]).

All sanctions adopted by the EU are fully compliant with obligations under international law including those regarding the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.



WHICH EU SANCTIONS REGIMES?

There are **over 30 EU autonomous and UN transposed sanctions regimes** in place globally. For example, sanctions have been imposed in light of the situation in e.g.: Syria ([see details](#)), Iran ([see details](#) [↗]), Democratic Republic of Congo, Venezuela ([see details](#) [↗]), Libya, Russia and Ukraine ([see details](#) [↗]) as well as North Korea ([see details](#) [↗]).

In addition, the EU has also adopted **horizontal regimes** targeting: terrorism, cyber-attacks, proliferation and the use of chemical weapons.

For a full overview see the [EU sanctions map](#) [↗]



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HOW DOES THE EU IMPOSE SANCTIONS?

The development of sanctions regimes is a **complex process involving different actors**. All decisions to adopt, amend, lift or renew sanctions are taken by the Council following examination in the relevant Council working groups. EU Member States are responsible for the implementation of all sanctions within their respective jurisdictions.

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy contributes through his/her proposals to the development of CFSP. Together with the Council, the HR ensures the unity, consistency and effectiveness of action by the EU in the area of the CFSP.

The European External Action Service (EEAS) assists the HR/VP in fulfilling his/her mandate and has a **key role in the preparation, maintenance and review of sanctions**, as well as in the communication and outreach activities concerning them in close cooperation with Member States, relevant EU delegations and the European Commission.

In the legislative process in the Council regarding sanctions, the EEAS has a particular role to play. This includes preparing, on behalf of the High Representative proposals for a decision, and jointly with the European Commission proposals for regulations which are subsequently reviewed and adopted by the Council. Decisions are binding on the Member States themselves. Regulations are directly applicable within the European Union and are binding on individuals and entities, including economic operators.

For its part the European Commission presents proposals, jointly with the High Representative for regulations. Once regulations are adopted the Commission works to facilitate their implementation in the EU and addresses questions of interpretation by economic operators.

The European Commission is responsible for ensuring the uniform application of sanctions.

WHERE DO EU SANCTIONS APPLY?

EU sanctions apply within the jurisdiction (territory) of the EU; to EU nationals in any location; to companies and organisations incorporated under the law of a Member State – including

WHICH OTHER COUNTRIES IMPLEMENT EU SANCTIONS?

EU candidate countries, European Free Trade Association and European Economic Area countries (e.g. Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

branches of EU companies in third countries; on board aircraft or vessels under Member States' jurisdiction.

The EU refrains from adopting sanctions having extra-territorial application in breach of international law.


Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine) are systematically invited to align themselves with EU restrictive measures. Countries that have aligned with a Council Decision ensure that their national policies conform to the Council Decision in question.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING EU SANCTIONS?

Implementation and enforcement of EU sanctions is primarily the responsibility of the EU Member States. The competent authorities in the Member States have to assess whether there has been a breach of the legislation and to take adequate steps.

The European Commission has prepared guidance on how to implement the provisions concerning sectoral cooperation and exchanges with Russia (the "economic" sanctions), as well as guidance regarding Crimea and Sevastopol, Iran, North Korea and Syria.

WHICH SANCTIONS ARE IN PLACE? CONSOLIDATED LIST OF PERSONS, GROUPS AND ENTITIES SUBJECT TO EU FINANCIAL SANCTIONS

The consolidated list of persons, groups and entities subject to EU financial sanctions can be downloaded from **Financial Sanctions Database - FSF platform** accessible via the following address: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fsd/fsf> 

In order to access the FSF platform you need to have an "EU Login" account.

Please follow the instructions provided on the EU Login page displayed when you click on the above link.

The correct application of financial sanctions is crucial in order to meet the objectives of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and especially to help prevent the financing of terrorism. The application of financial sanctions constitutes an obligation for both the public and private sector. In this regard, the EU assigns particular responsibility to credit and financial institutions, since they are involved in the bulk of financial transfers and transactions affected by the relevant Regulations.

In order to facilitate the application of financial sanctions, the European Banking Federation, the European Savings Banks Group, the European Association of Co-operative Banks and the European Association of Public Banks ("the EU Credit Sector Federations") and the Commission recognised the need for an EU consolidated list of persons, groups and entities subject to CFSP related financial sanctions. It was therefore agreed that the Credit Sector Federations would set up a database containing the consolidated list for the Commission, which would host and maintain the database and keep it up-to-date. This database was developed first and foremost to assist the members of the EU Credit Sector Federations in their compliance with financial sanctions.

Disclaimer: While every effort is made to ensure that the database and the consolidated list correctly reproduce all relevant data of the officially adopted texts published in the Official Journal of the European Union, neither the Commission nor the EU credit sector federations accepts any liability for possible omissions of relevant data or mistakes, and for any use made of the database or of the consolidated list. Only the information published in the Official Journal of the EU is deemed authentic.

EXAMPLE: EU GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS SANCTIONS REGIME

“Human rights are under attack around the world. The new EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime will be a powerful tool to hold accountable those responsible for serious human rights violations and abuses around the world. This is an opportunity for Europe not only to stand up for its values but to act”



“We need a global regime to gain more flexibility to go after human rights violators and abusers regardless of where they are. With the new EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, we will be able to proceed quicker and to be more efficient.”

Josep Borrell, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President for a Stronger Europe in the World

On 07/12/2020, the Foreign Affairs Council adopted the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, which seeks to address serious human rights violations and abuses worldwide. To do so, it can impose a travel ban and an asset freeze on individuals and entities responsible for or involved in violations and abuses such as crimes against humanity, torture, sexual and gender-based violence or the suppression of the freedom of religion or belief. For details, please see the links below.

Legal acts

The EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime is set out in two legal acts:

- [Council Decision \(CFSP\) 2020/1999 concerning restrictive measures against serious human rights violations and abuses](#) 
- [Council Regulation \(EU\) No 1998/2020 concerning restrictive measures against serious human rights violations and abuses](#) 

Q&A/Guidance


The below EEAS Q&A and Commission guidance further explain the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime's legal acts and assists EU citizens and economic operators in complying with the restrictive measures:

- European External Action Service (EEAS) “Questions and Answers on the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (EUGHRSR)”


- [EN version](#)
- [FR version](#)
- [DE version](#)
- [AR version](#)
- [Commission Guidance Note on the Implementation of Certain Provisions of Regulation \(EU\) No 1998/2020](#) [↗](#)

The new EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime

The new EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime

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For inquiries and suggestions you can contact the EEAS Sanctions Division (sanctions@eeas.europa.eu).

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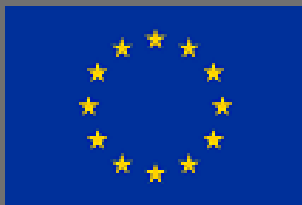
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