



# What are sanctions?

Sanctions are economic and political measures that aim to influence the behaviour of a state, a group or individuals. For example, sanctions can be introduced in an attempt to change the policies of a state that threatens international peace and security, or to induce a state to cease systematic violations of human rights.


Sanctions mean that restrictions limiting the freedom of a state, a group or individuals are imposed through a unilateral decision by a state or a collective decision by several states. For example, financial restrictions such as freezing assets, trade restrictions on specific goods or travel restrictions may be introduced.

These include both geographical sanctions targeting specific countries or regions and thematic sanctions targeting specific problems, such as terrorism or cyber attacks.

Sanctions differ from other foreign policy instruments in that they are regulated through legal provisions. They are precisely formulated and violating them may entail criminal responsibility. There are provisions on this in the Act on Certain International Sanctions. The penalty may be a fine or a maximum of two years' imprisonment or, if the offence is gross, imprisonment for a maximum of four years.

Sanctions are intended to be temporary in nature and subject to regular review in light of developments. When their objective has been achieved, they are to be removed.

## About sanctions

- 
- > International sanctions
  - > What are sanctions?
  - > UN sanctions and EU sanctions
  - > Government agencies responsible for sanctions
  - > EU sanctions map 
  - > EUR-lex 