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European Parliament calls for EU human rights sanctions regime

Human rights

Members of the European Parliament have just voted in favour of the creation of an EU-wide human rights sanctions regime, that would allow for the freezing of assets and visa bans against individuals who have committed grave violations of human rights. For years the Greens/EFA group have been at the forefront of the push for such a regime, which would complement the existing country and thematic sanctions.

There are on-going discussions between EU Member States on the political opportunity of a targeted human rights sanctions regime at EU level. The European Parliament's vote sends a clear signal to EU countries to develop this regime without delay.

Heidi Hautala, co-author of the 'European human rights violations sanctions regime' resolution comments:

"For too long individuals have been able to get away with the most reprehensible of crimes by moving around or being sheltered by governments. The perpetrators of grave violations of human rights must be held to account for their actions directly, instead of hiding under the auspices of a state that remains off limits to EU action due to geostrategic or other considerations.

"An EU-wide human rights sanctions regime would be an essential part of the EU's foreign policy and would embolden the EU to act as global human rights defender. Europe must be able to close our banks and borders to those who attack human rights and this proposal will give us the tools to do exactly that.

"The fact that the European Parliament overwhelmingly backs an EU-wide human rights sanctions mechanism sends a clear signal to the Member States on the pressing need for this flexible and reactive human rights tool.

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Responsible MEPs



Heidi Hautala

EP Vice-President, Member

Contact person



Alex Johnson

Press & Media Advisor EN (English language press)

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